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THURSDAY, 30 JANUARY 2025



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Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 7TH SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Thursday, 30 January 2025

Parliament met at 10.09 a.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

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

PRAYERS

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

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF THE NATIONAL BUDGET FRAMEWORK PAPER FOR THE FINANCIAL YEARS 2025/2026 TO 2029/2030

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I welcome you to today's sitting. Last night, we got very sad news of the passing of Brig. Gen. Charles Oluka, the Director General of the Internal Security Organisation (ISO). Brig. Gen. Oluka was a gentleman who served this country diligently; a lot of good things had really started happening in his life. He wedded last year and just got a promotion. Life was getting exciting for him. I think he had brought out the image of ISO; it is no longer the old ISO that had issues day in, day out. I think the image of ISO, under his leadership, has greatly improved. He died last evening and I am sure we shall be informed of burial arrangements and the rest.

Today morning, I spoke to his deputy, Col Emmanuel Katabazi, who is still in shock. I delivered our condolences, as Parliament and we shall be joining the country in mourning him as we get more details on what happened and the burial arrangements. I, therefore, request you, honourable colleagues, that we stand to observe a moment of silence.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I just got information that the Minister of State for Finance, Hon. Henry Musasizi who had been assigned this, got an emergency in the village, but he is about to reach here. So, I requested Hon. Bahati to move the motion on behalf of the Government so that we can start.

10.13

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Mr Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to move a motion for the consideration of the National Budget Framework Paper for the Financial Year 2025/2026 to 2029/2030. I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded? *(Members rose_)* Okay, it is seconded by Hon. Martin Mugarra, Hon. Rusoke, the honourable member from Karamoja, Hon. Solomon, Gen. Elwelu, Hon. Mushemeza, Hon. Byakatonda, Hon. Kayondo, Hon. Rwabushaija, Hon. Kateshumbwa, Hon. Paparu, Hon. Muhanga, Hon. Okori-Moe, Minister for People with Disabilities, the honourable member from Kanungu and the

majority of the House. Hon. Opendi, do you have a procedural matter?

MS OPENDI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Order Paper for today was circulated quite early and what we are going to consider is a very important aspect of the budgeting process. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has four ministers - Hon. Matia Kasaija, Hon. Lugoloobi - *(Interjection)*- they are five.

If Hon. Musasizi, who is the Minister of State for General Duties, is away, where are the other four ministers? I think we need to get serious because this is an important paper for them as a ministry; that all of them are absent and then we are proceeding with the former minister of state - I do not know, Mr Speaker, whether we are proceeding properly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, we are proceeding properly. I was informed about the rota for the ministry and that today Hon. Musasizi is the one supposed to be here. However, as I told you, the honourable minister was kind enough - because I know he had an emergency in the constituency and started driving late in the night to come back; he is just stuck in the jam, he is about to get here.

The report is big. So, let us receive it. The report is uploaded and it is digital. Members can read it from wherever they are. We only ensure that by the time we go into the debate, the minister is here – Oh! He has even entered; Hon. Musasizi is already here. *(Applause)* He sent me a message at 3.00 a.m. that he was leaving Rubanda to come and fulfil his duty. That level of commitment must be applauded.

I will request Hon. Musasizi to justify the motion because Hon. Bahati only moved it. Yes, point of procedure?

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, I was ready to proceed, even without the ministers, because judging National Resistance Movement (NRM) by their standards, this would not be a surprise. But I am very happy that Hon. Musasizi has

come because I saw Hon. Bahati fidgeting with a huge Budget Framework Paper, looking for justification. He has just thrown it down - *(Laughter)* - the cameras will show how you were fidgeting. So, do not -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of Order.

MR BAHATI: Mr Speaker, is it in order for Hon. Ssemujju to allege that I was fidgeting? A man who ran the budget for six years - a very qualified chartered accountant - that I can fidget with a Budget Framework Paper? Is he in order? He should instead be thanking me that I moved the motion, so that the House can go on. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think, Hon. Ssemujju, that was unkind -

MR SSEMUJJU: I am sorry to the former minister in charge of borrowing. The Baganda say, “Even a dog when you throw meat at it, it will first run, then it will realise that what you were throwing was meat.” The way this motion was thrown at Hon. Bahati - that is why he was fidgeting, not because he does not know. But I am sorry. I did not mean that you do not have the knowledge but I was only explaining that they had given you a task you had not prepared for. Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: For the record, Hon. Bahati has never fidgeted here and he was not fidgeting at all. Maybe Hon. Ssemujju expected him to fidget.

We need to move because this is a big report and I could not hold on for any minute. I sat in my office, I was watching TV, not seeing Members, until I said, “No, with a few who are in, let us go in and we start, so that we can have time to discuss this very important topic.” Hon. Musasizi, you can do the justification.

10.19

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. In justifying the motion,

I would like to start by saying that the theme of the budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026 remains: “Full Monetisation of Uganda’s Economy through Commercial Agriculture, Industrialisation, Expanding and Broadening Social Services, Digital Transformation and Market Access.”

Mr Speaker, the preliminary resource envelope is Shs 57.44 trillion. Our focus in the National Budget Framework Paper is that the Financial Year 2025/2026 will be the first year of the implementation of the National Development Plan IV, whose goal is higher household incomes, full monetisation of the economy, and employment for sustainable socio-economic transformation. The goal will be pursued under the theme: “Sustainable industrialisation for inclusive growth, employment, and wealth creation.”

Our focus this financial year is the implementation of the Area-Based Transformative Measures (ATMs) and the rollout of the ten-fold growth strategy, but also not forgetting the enablers; the factors, which enable the ATMs to function. These are defence and security, electricity, strategic roads, and the Parish Development Model (PDM), among others.

We shall also be finalising the tax and revenue Bills but this does not mean we intend to introduce new taxes this financial year. We shall only bring proposals to enable us improve efficiency in tax administration.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank you, the Committee on Budget, and all other sectoral committees. When we laid this National Budget Framework Paper, it was presented to various committees, and the Committee on Budget has been working closely with us. They have finalised the report, which can enhance my justification. At this stage, I beg that you allow the Committee on Budget to present to us the detailed report. I submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, honourable minister. Honourable colleagues, I have instructed the Sergeant-at-

Arms; those of you who are in at this time and want to submit on the report should register so that I give you priority. I do not want colleagues who come late to be prioritised over you. Please, put for me four papers so that I have the names here. When we start the debate, I will start with you. Yes, Hon. Sarah?

MS OPENDI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. When we clock in, it is my thinking that the ICT department gets to know how many people are in the House. They would, therefore, simply do a print out of the names of those who have clocked in – *(Interjection)* – it is my - *(Interjection)* - Yes, I assume that everybody that comes in, clocks in first.

With the digital record, I thought it would be easier to simply print than us going into writing.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I do not want to assume; I want to be sure. Okay? I do not want to work on assumptions. Additionally, I said this to only those who want to submit; I am not taking a roll call. Those who want to submit are the only ones who should give me their names so that I give them priority. That is the aim. Sometimes people come in early but they never get picked to contribute – Yes, procedure, Hon. Kayondo?

MR KAYONDO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the wise ruling. Yesterday, you made it clear that today, we shall be discussing the Budget Framework Paper.

The budget issue is a very important item and one of the roles of a Member of Parliament has to do with budgeting. There are very many Ugandans who are on their television sets watching the proceedings of this Parliament. Wouldn’t it be procedurally right, Mr Speaker, for you to guide that once people have submitted, they should not go away? This way, the people who are watching will not get a bad picture of an empty House.

I wish – wouldn’t it be procedurally right for us to stay after submitting so that the House does not appear empty to those watching? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. That is why, honourable colleagues, whenever I am picking you to speak and you start putting me under pressure by writing me notes and all that, I do not pick you. I wait until the end because most of you want to submit and go away.

The House runs - we must run together until we adjourn. Hon. Kayondo's submission is encouraging you to stay. Let us not waste any more time. Honourable chairperson, please, present the report of the committee. Only those who want to submit during the debate should write their names there.

10.26

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON BUDGET (Mr Remigio Achia): Mr Speaker, I rise to present the Report of the Committee on Budget on the National Budget Framework Paper for the Financial Years 2025/2026 to 2029/2030. Mr Speaker, as you guided, the major report, which is signed, is being uploaded and with -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is already there.

MR ACHIA: I am waiting for the minutes, for which I beg your indulgence to permit me to lay on the Table at a later time, together with the NDP IV and the Budget Framework Paper.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before you finish your submission, you can lay them.

MR ACHIA: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us go to the report.

MR ACHIA: The report starts with the introduction.

Introduction

Mr Speaker, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 90, and 155(4) of the Constitution; Sections 9(1) to 9(8) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended; and Rule 145 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament,

committees are mandated to consider, discuss, and review the Budget Framework Paper and through the Committee on Budget, present a report to the House for approval by the 1st of February of each financial year. So, there is a legal requirement.

In compliance with the above provisions, I beg to present the report of the Committee on Budget on the National Budget Framework Paper for the Fiscal Year 2025/2026, for the consideration and approval by this House as required by Section 9(8) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, and Rule 145(3) of our Rules of Procedure.

Mr Speaker, this report is structured in two major parts. Part one is on the generic aspects of the requirements in compliance with the requirements of the law, the legal compliance, the economic and budget performance highlights, the budget strategy as presented by the Government to the committee, the medium-term outlook, and the indicative resource allocations for Financial Year 2025/2026.

In part one, we also make some observations about this budget — the indicative planning figures and make proposals to the Government.

This time around, based on the guidance of the Speaker, we have decided to put part two as recommendations from the committee, as they came. The committee also gives guidance on the emphasis, where members and the country gave emphasis, and I will speak to that aspect later on.

Methodology

The methodology adopted by the committee involved the examination of relevant documents –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson, you will not read everything. Otherwise, it will take the whole day.

MR ACHIA: So, the methodology – the documents that we referred to are there, plus the minutes, which I want to lay here. I want

to go to legal compliance because this is important for us.

2.1 Compliance with the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015

Mr Speaker, in accordance with Section 9 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, it is required that:

- i) The minister shall, for each financial year, prepare a Budget Framework Paper which shall be consistent with the National Development Plan and the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility; and
- ii) The Budget Framework Paper shall be in the format prescribed.

2.2 Submission of the Budget Framework Paper to Parliament

The National Budget Framework Paper for this year was submitted to Parliament and laid on 19 December 2024, accompanied by the Certificate of Gender and Equity Responsiveness, and the Certificate of Climate Change Responsiveness.

The committee observed that the Budget Framework Paper was presented to Parliament in line with Section 9(5), 9(6a) and 9(6b) of the PFMA, 2015 and Section 30(b) of the National Climate Change Act.

2.3 Compliance with Schedule 3 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015

An assessment by the committee indicates that the national BFP largely conforms to the requirements of Schedule 3 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015. However, the following information was not provided, and this is an ongoing process. I hope that at the Ministerial Policy Statement stage, we shall receive these details.

- i) Alternate fiscal framework hinged on the fiscal risks, as required by law;
- ii) The flow of Government investments in the financial year, as required by law; and
- iii) The rate of employment and unemployment in our country, as required by law.

These three were not submitted.

The committee observed that the above information has not been provided to Parliament, even in the previous National Budget Framework Papers.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development reports on all the requirements, as per Schedule 3 of the Public Finance Management Act.

2.4 Consistency with the National Development Plan IV

Mr Speaker, the goal of this plan is to achieve higher household incomes, full monetisation of the economy and employment for sustainable socio-economic transformation. This goal will be achieved under the theme, “Sustainable Industrialisation for Inclusive Growth, Employment and Wealth Creation.”

To achieve this goal, the Government has set out five objectives in the NDP IV and these include:

- i. Sustainably increase production, productivity, and value addition in agriculture, minerals, oil and gas, tourism, ICT and financial services;
- ii. Enhance human capital development along the entire life cycle;
- iii. Support the private sector to drive growth and create jobs;
- iv. Build and maintain strategic sustainable infrastructure in transport, housing, energy, water industry and ICT; and
- v. Strengthen good governance, security and the role of the state in development.

2.5 Consistency with the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility (CFR)

Mr Speaker, the second Charter for Fiscal Responsibility was approved by Parliament on 27 January 2022. The purpose of this charter is to provide the Government’s fiscal policy objectives in the next five years that will ensure sustainable delivery of the country’s goal of a socio-economic transformation.

The CFR for financial years 2021/2022 to 2025/2026 has the following fiscal objectives:

1. Total public debt in nominal terms is reduced to below 50 per cent of GDP by Financial Year 2025/2026;
2. Total domestic debt interest payments to total revenues (excluding grants) are reduced to 12.5 per cent;
3. Nominal publicly guaranteed debt to GDP is maintained below five per cent;
4. The Government may borrow from the Bank of Uganda only in accordance with Section 36(5)(a) and (b) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended, and Section 33 of the Bank of Uganda Act;
5. The overall fiscal balance, including grants, should gradually adjust to a deficit not exceeding three per cent of non-oil GDP by Financial Year 2025/2026;
6. The ratio of non-oil revenue to GDP shall grow by at least 0.5 percentage points on an annual basis;
7. The growth rate in recurrent spending, as a percentage of GDP, shall not exceed the growth rate of revenue as a percentage of GDP; and
8. A maximum of oil revenue worth 0.8 per cent of the preceding year's estimated non-oil GDP outturn shall be transferred to the Consolidated Fund.

Mr Speaker, our assessment of the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility targets against the National Budget Framework Paper are in the table below. You can see that the growth rate in recurrent spending, as a percentage of GDP, is less than the growth rate in revenue, which is a positive thing.

The overall fiscal balance, including grants to non-oil, is a little off the point; it should be -3.0 but it is not so bad. The nominal debt stock to GDP is okay. So, largely, Mr Speaker, the committee made these observations:

- i. The Budget Framework Paper is not generally compliant in two areas, that is, total domestic debt interest payments to total revenues (excluding grants), and the

overall fiscal balance including grants to non-oil GDP, as indicated in the table above. Out of eight points, two were not met; and

- ii. The Budget Framework Paper does not provide the nominal debt projections for the Financial Year 2025/2026, restricting the committee's assessment of the compliance of the Budget Framework Paper to the Certificate for Fiscal Responsibility in relation to total public debt, as a percentage of GDP in the medium-term.

The committee recommends that the budget for the short- and medium-term fully complies with CFR requirements and any deviation must be guided by Section 7 of the Public Finance Management Act.

2.6 Consistency of the National Development Plan IV

Mr Speaker, this was the major point of contention in the discussion. Section 9(3) requires that the Budget Framework Paper be consistent with the National Development Plan.

The committee assessed the consistency of the BFP for the Financial Year 2025/2026 to the National Development Plan IV and made the following observations:

- i) The strategic direction and priorities of the Budget Framework Paper are consistent with the NDP IV - that is the conclusion. The programme budget allocations of the BFP are, however, significantly lower than those proposed in the NDP IV. We have given the table of those details.

This could imply that the plan interventions, as per NDP IV, may not be fully executed in the first year, hence undermining the achievements of the overall NDP IV objectives and the 10-fold growth strategy.

Mr Speaker, Shs 92 trillion is required to implement the NDP IV this coming financial year, but the Budget Framework Paper gives Shs 57 trillion. That is where the variance is;

- ii) The BFP budget prioritisation for most programmes is consistent with the NDP IV (see Table 2 for details); and
- iii) The targets set in the BFP are inconsistent with the targets in the NDP IV and this could hinder the effective monitoring the implementation of the NDP IV and the annual budgets.

The committee recommendations are as follows:

- i) Enhance revenue mobilisation efforts to effectively implement the NDP IV interventions; and
- ii) The performance targets of the BFP and NDP IV should be harmonised and calibrated in order to arrive at realistic targets.

The details of the NDP IV versus the Budget Framework Paper are in Table 2. For example, under agro-industrialisation, NDP IV had planned an estimate of Shs 2.448 trillion, which is 3.6 per cent of the overall budget of NDP IV. But in the BFP, the figure for this coming financial year is Shs 1.689 trillion, which is 2.9 per cent. That is what we are talking about. The details are in the report there.

2.7 Gender and equity compliance

In fulfilment of the requirements of Sections 9(5) to 6(a-b), the PBO noted that the Budget Framework Paper was compliant with the equity and gender requirements. The details are in Table 3.

The agro-industrialisation and sustainable urbanisation and housing performed at 40 and 20 per cent, which is below average compared to the previous years.

In some instances, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) noted that the late submission of the Budget Framework Papers by MDAs to the EOC affected the timely assessment and production of assessment reports.

The committee observations are as follows:

- i. There has been a remarkable improvement since the last financial year. However, two programmes did not satisfy the requirements;
- ii. No specific measures to equalise opportunities for men, women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups were provided alongside the gender certificate as presented to Parliament; and
- iii. Some MDAs did not possess adequate capacity to disaggregate data so that the assessment could be done.

The committee recommendations are as follows:

- a) The programme secretariats that do not submit the required programme BFP on time should be subjected to some form of sanctions, as provided for in Section 78 of the Public Finance Management (Amendment) Act, 2015;
- b) The Equal Opportunities Commission is supported more to undertake periodic national gender and equity gap-mapping surveys rather than doing it at the end of the financial year; and
- c) More capacity building should be undertaken at all MDAs, especially with regard to the gender desegregated data, data compilation, gender budgeting and assessment, and developing of gender and equity performance indicators, among others.

2.8 Climate change responsiveness of the BFP

Mr Speaker, the observations and the table are there. Generally, the observation is only six programmes on the assessment scored above 50 per cent. This includes natural resources, environment and others.

2.9 The Contingency Fund

Mr Speaker, the observations are there. However, the committee recommends that the MFPED should always adhere to the law

and replenish the Contingency Fund with the required amounts.

Parliament should follow up on this matter to the logical conclusion during appropriation because failure to adhere to this provision has been a major cause of supplementary budgets and supplementary requests that distort the approved budgets during budget implementation and execution.

3.0 Economic and Budget Performance Highlights

Economic performance

Mr Speaker, during Financial Year 2023/2024, Uganda's year-on-year real annual GDP was recorded at 6.1 per cent –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of procedure from Hon. Nsamba Oshabe?

MR OSHABE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The first part of the committee's report deals with the legalities and expectations of the law. We are at the early stages of the budgeting process with the Budget Framework Paper. If at this level we do not mind the matters of law, then we are planning to ignore the law as usual –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the procedural matter, honourable member?

MR OSHABE: Wouldn't it be procedurally right to break and deal with these matters of the law? At least, the minister answers that particular point. Why are we not respecting the law every year? Then we proceed after getting explanations at that level so we can go into the others having respected the law.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleague, we shall be derailing ourselves. Let us receive the whole report, we open up debate and the responses will be given. We shall get good guidance.

When we start breaking in between, we shall derail ourselves yet this is a big report. The good thing is that we have enough time;

the whole day, we shall debate this report thoroughly. That is why I insisted that we must give it enough time. I do not want to limit you. So, let us receive the report and then, get the responses. If we find it does not meet the threshold, we can refuse to approve it. And if we find it meets, we approve. Chairperson, please, resume.

MR ACHIA: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Economic and Budget Performance Highlights

3.1 Economic performance

Mr Speaker, during the Financial Year 2023/2024, Uganda's year-on-year real annual GDP was recorded at 6.1 per cent, up from 5.3 per cent registered in the Financial Year 2022/2023. In nominal terms, the economy expanded from Shs 144,191 billion in the Financial Year 2022/23 to Shs 153,040 billion in the Financial Year 2023/2024.

The growth was largely attributed to the services and industry sector, with the services sector growing at 6.8 per cent compared to 5.9 per cent growth in the previous financial year.

The industry sector grew to 4.9 per cent from the 4.0 per cent registered in the previous financial year largely driven by manufacturing and construction activities.

The agricultural, forestry, and fishing activities grew by 5.4 per cent in the Financial Year 2023/2024 compared to 4.5 per cent in the previous financial year.

In the current financial year, the GDP for quota one (Q1) grew by 6.7 per cent compared to the growth of 5.6 per cent registered in Q1 of the previous financial year. This is on account of 8.7 per cent growth in the agricultural sector, 5.9 per cent growth in the industry and 5.6 per cent in the service sector.

Committee observations

- i. The registered real GDP growth rate of 6.1 per cent in the Financial Year 2023/2024

was higher than the projected growth rate of 6.0 per cent. So, we achieved much better.

- ii. The structural transformation of the economy driven by industrialisation is not being fully realised as would have been expected but the contribution of the industrial sector to the total GDP has fundamentally changed, averaging 26 per cent from the Financial Year 2020/2021 to 2022/2023. This is so despite the Government's injection of funds into the Uganda Development Bank (UDB) and other financial institutions because of the COVID-19 effect.
- iii. Despite the observed improvement in GDP growth, growth is still considerably non-inclusive, as income inequality, as measured by the Gini Coefficient, has remained rather high and unchanged.

The committee recommends that, with the forecast that Uganda's GDP is to expand by Shs 27 trillion being hinged on the ten-fold economic growth areas, it is important that this realism is shaped by adequate resource allocation to match the agro-industrialisation, tourism, and manufacturing. This intention can only be achieved with more resources to the ATMs areas.

It is also important for the Government to clarify when exactly the commercial production of oil and gas is expected to commence because it is a factor in the calculation of the ten-fold growth and projections.

Inflation

The committee observed as follows:

- i) The headline and core inflation outturns of 3.2 and 3.0 per cent, respectively, are in the projected range of 3.4 and 3.0 per cent, respectively. We are comfortable there; and
- ii) Core inflation outturn of 3.0 per cent is considerably lower than the policy target of 5 per cent, which is commendable. We thank the managers of the fiscal space.

Private sector credit

Mr Speaker, the growth in the private sector credit has slowed down. The average growth in credit in the private sector was 7.7 per cent in the Financial Year 2023/2024. It came down from 9.9 per cent in the Financial Year 2022/2023. This slowdown was primarily due to a decrease in the shilling-dominated lending, which grew by 9.6 per cent, down from 12.1 per cent in the previous fiscal year.

Similarly, the average annual growth in foreign currency-denominated loans declined to 3.2 from 4.7 per cent in the previous year.

Currently, other depository corporations' Private Sector Credit (PSC) growth has softened, reflecting the impact of increased Government borrowing, probably crowding out the private sector, which constrained private sector access to credit.

Observations

The committee observed that the slowdown in the private sector credit could suggest looming economic uncertainties. It could also suggest that high lending rates, partly as a result of the Government's increased borrowing from the domestic sector has led to high costs of doing business and constrained the private sector to borrow from the same space.

In the external sector, Uganda's recorded overall balance of payments position deficit of \$1,155.4 million is a deterioration from that of \$50.4 million recorded in the Financial Year 2022/2023.

The deterioration was largely attributed to the 8.2 per cent expansion in the current account deficit to \$4,174.7 million due to the deterioration in all its sub-accounts except the merchandise trade account.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

FDI inflows in the Financial Year 2023/2024 reached a high record of \$3,034.11 million, from \$2,950.6 million, recorded in the Financial

Year 2022/2023. FDI inflows have increased steadily year after year, largely reflecting the ongoing activity in the oil and gas sector and a positive business outlook for our country.

International Reserves

As at the end of June 2024, the stock of International Reserves stood at \$3,234.03 million. The reserve cover in future months of imports (excluding oil-projected imports) was equivalent to three months. This is much lower than the 3.8 months of import cover recorded at the same time in the previous year.

Observations

The committee observed that a sustained Balance of Payment (BoP) deficit could spell economic challenges and vulnerabilities over the medium-term if access to external financing is not restrained amidst low foreign exchange reserves.

It is, therefore, paramount that effective implementation of export-promotion and import-substitution strategies is prioritised over the medium-term as a more sustainable way of building foreign reserves.

The committee recommends that export promotion is prioritised and agencies such as Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB), our diplomatic missions, and other related bodies, are financed sufficiently in this budget to promote exports in order to improve the balance of payment situation in the country and promote economic growth and employment.

This can only be achieved through strategies and interventions such as:

- i) Focusing on a few export sectors that can be coordinated effectively using the capacity and resources available to ensure successful implementation of the export strategy;
- ii) Promote and spearhead the development of entire value chains for the priority export products;

iii) Strengthen the institutions charged with quality surveillance and monitoring, including with relation to the manufacture, importation, and distribution of agricultural and industrial products;

iv) Invest in the public infrastructure necessary for quality assurance along an entire value chain for selected priority products; and

v) Encourage, through the provision of appropriate incentives, the private sector to invest in the infrastructure necessary for quality assurance along the entire value chains for the selected priority products.

Public Debt

Mr Speaker, on public debt, Uganda's public debt remains sustainable over the medium- and long-term. The ratio of public debt to GDP was 46.8 per cent in the Financial Year 2023/2024. This is below the limit of the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility of 52.4 per cent. This is great.

Observations

The committee observed that though the debt levels as a percentage of GDP has remained stable at 46.9 per cent in the Financial Year 2023/2024, up from 47.1 per cent in the Financial Year 2022/2023, the domestic debt rose to 20.1 per cent as a percentage of GDP in the Financial Year 2023/2024, up from 18.7 per cent in the Financial Year 2022/2023.

This is a growth of 17.6 per cent of domestic debt. I think that is the challenge. The sudden rapid growth in debt over the last year was a bit worrying.

We, therefore, recommend that the Government should gradually scale down on domestic borrowing because it is becoming unsustainable. It is also negatively affecting private sector credit growth in the country and increasing the number of non-performing loans indirectly.

3.8. Budget Performance Highlights

The revenue performance

During the Financial Year 2022/2023, Shs 28,820.87 billion was realised in gross revenue and grants against a target of Shs 32,751.2 billion, implying a performance of 88 per cent. This implies that the overall deficit was registered at Shs 7,197.2 billion, equivalent to 3.5 per cent of GDP.

Expenditure performance

Total expenditure and net lending performed at 95.9 per cent, and recurrent and development expenditure performed at 106.7 and 79.5 per cent, respectively.

Observations

The committee observes as follows:

- i) Effective implementation of the domestic revenue mobilisation strategy does not seem to yield its desired objectives as revenue to GDP still lingers in a 13 per cent to total GDP. This range has been persistent for the last three years so we might need to do some form of re-engineering there; and
- ii) Tax revenues, as a percentage of GDP, are still below 13 per cent, suggesting low tax collection efforts by Uganda Revenue Authority (URA). In addition, generous tax incentives and exemptions despite a low tax base might be eroding the potential tax revenue that could be used to widen the fiscal.

Aggregate expenditure performance

At an aggregate level, Shs 33,957.64 billion was released under Government and external funding during the Financial Year 2023/2024. This equates to 101 per cent of the approved budget. Aggregate absorption was, however, 93.9 per cent, which represents strong budget execution at the end of the financial year.

In regard to the Government of Uganda's budget, Shs 28,183.951 billion was released by the end of June 2024. This equates to 112.6 per cent of the approved budget. Aggregate absorption was at 99.3 per cent. So, the Government of Uganda's releases were way above the approved budget on account of Supplementary Expenditure, Schedule No.1, which amounted to Shs 3.5 trillion. Of this, Shs 1.8 trillion, was recurrent; Shs 11.5 was development.

The details are in the table.

Wage expenditure

Total wage releases performed at Shs 7,434.5 billion. We performed on wage at 102 per cent, which represents an absorption rate of 98.4 per cent.

Non-wage expenditure

The release was Shs 13,928.8 billion, which equates to 119.7 per cent of the approved budget and absorption of 100 per cent. All this is explained because of the supplementary budget, which gave this over 100 per cent performance in certain sectors.

Development expenditure

Total development releases were performed at Shs 12,377.34 billion, which is 86 per cent of the approved budget, and of this, Shs 10,457.87 billion was spent, which represents an absorption of 84 per cent.

Committee observations

We quote from some of the reports on Uganda from the World Bank. According to the World Bank, poor planning, the routine use of supplementary budgeting - even for wages/salaries - and weakness in overall public financial management have led to overspending, fiscal slippages, and a sustained accumulation of domestic arrears.

In the Financial Year 2023/2024, supplementary expenditures were financed partly by internal

[Mr Achia]

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budget cuts, which hindered the budget and made it difficult to achieve fiscal objectives.

Supplementary spending continues to undermine the credibility of annual planning and budgeting, especially considering that activities for which these expenditures are made are foreseeable. In addition, supplementary budgeting heightens macroeconomic risks.

The committee recommends that the Government should limit supplementary spending to only unavoidable expenditures as the rest of these other expenditures tend to distort the budget and have continued to distort the budget.

Mr Speaker, that is a very strong point and it is shown in most of the figures.

Financial performance at the programme level

Mr Speaker, I will let honourable members read the financial performance by activities shown there on Table 6. Let us go to the Budget Strategy that we are going to implement on page 27.

Budget Strategy for Financial Year 2025/2026

Mr Speaker, the Financial Year 2025/2026 National Budget Framework Paper is the first in the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP IV).

The goal of NDP IV is higher household incomes, full monetisation of the economy, and employment for sustainable socio-economic transformation. The goal will be pursued under the theme: “Sustainable Industrialisation for Inclusive Growth, Employment, and Wealth Creation.”

To concretise the gains so far achieved during the fourth National Development Plan III in NDP IV and to propel the economy of Uganda to higher levels of socio-economic transformation towards double digits, the theme for this coming financial assistance budget will be maintained as, “Full Monetisation of Uganda’s Economy through Commercial

Agriculture, Industrialisation, Expanding and Broadening Services, Digital Transformation, and Market Access.” That is our theme for this coming financial year.

The overall objective of the Financial Year 2025/2026 budget strategy is to strengthen economic growth drivers that underpin the restoration of the economy back to the medium-term growth path and directly contribute to the expansion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ten-fold from the current \$53 billion to \$500 billion by 2040 and double it to \$1000 billion by Financial Year 2029/2030.

The budget strategy for the next financial year is, therefore, based on the principles of a ten-fold growth strategy. The gains, lessons learned, and opportunities from NDP III as well as NDP IV’s new strategic direction: This demonstrates the continuity of the social-economic agenda. This strategy underscores employment creation, wealth creation, and high household income by prioritising the key enablers for accelerated growth.

Mr Speaker, these are the priority areas for the budget strategy.

This year’s budget strategy outlines four major key areas:

- i) Agro-industrialisation. With a focus on fully commercialising and formalising farming as well as undertaking strategic value addition for export;
- ii) Tourism development. With a focus on increasing tourism arrivals by five-fold under the current spend per tourist and length of stay strategy;
- iii) Mineral-based industrial development, including oil and gas. With a focus on undertaking quantification of mapped mineral deposits and their governance regime and delivering fast oil in this financial year; and
- iv) Science, technology and innovation. With a focus on fast-tracking the commercialisation of ongoing innovations in pathogen control and management for vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics.

The committee observed that the proposed Budget Framework Paper allocations for the Financial Year 2025/2026 to the above strategy Agro-Industrialisation, Tourism Development, Mineral Development, and Science and Technology (ATMS), anchor sectors are inconsistent with the above highlighted strategy.

The allocations to all four ATMS anchor sectors or their equivalents are projected to decline compared to the previous budget.

In line with the above strategy, the allocation to this anchor programme should have instead increased but here they are declining. Therefore, Government should re-purpose the resources in the National Budget Framework Paper and improve allocative efficiency to refocus the resources on the above prioritised sectors of the economy.

In addition, Government should strengthen the implementation mechanisms of the Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Strategy and diversify public finance options by implementing the Public Investment Financing Strategy (PIFS), including concessional and commercial loans, Islamic finance, climate finance, and others.

The resource envelope

Mr Speaker, the preliminary resource envelope proposed by the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, for the Financial Year 2025/2026 is projected at Shs 57.4 trillion. This reflects a reduction of 20 per cent from Shs 72 trillion this financial year.

The decline in total resources will be on account of reductions in:

- i) Petroleum fund;
- ii) Budget support;
- iii) Net domestic borrowing;
- iv) Bank of Uganda repayment; and
- v) Domestic refinancing rollover.

This is where the reductions have happened. It is a positive thing. Very good.

Committee observations

The details are on the table there. If you look at domestic revenues, this financial year we expect to collect about Shs 32 trillion. Next financial year, we expect to collect about Shs 34 trillion. The rest of the details you can see there. On the Bank of Uganda repayment, we paid Shs 9.1 trillion this year. We do not have any other debt with the Bank of Uganda in the coming financial year.

Interest payments

We have paid Shs 9.6 trillion this year and we will continue to pay another Shs 9.2 trillion, less by Shs 361 billion. Those are the - you can read the rest from the table.

Committee observations

Next financial year, the projected allocation for domestic arrears is only Shs 200 billion. This falls short of the verified domestic areas by the Auditor-General, which according to the Auditor-General's report, were over Shs 14.606 trillion in 2024, of which Uganda Shs 8.312 trillion are a reimbursement to Bank of Uganda, leaving Shs 5.748 trillion for unpaid invoices, pension and gratuity.

The committee was informed that Bank of Uganda arrears have been fully cleared in the current Financial Year 2024/25.

The committee observed that some of these arrears are generated as a result of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development's failure to release resources for contractual obligations that are partially paid and then certificates remain pending, leading to the accumulation of arrears. So, the accounting officers are not entirely to blame.

The existence of arrears is an indication that the financial system has gaps, which allow commitments or obligations to be made without having sufficient funds set aside to honour those payments. This negatively impacts on the credibility of the budget.

Mr Speaker, if a Chief Administration Officer (CAO) commits and is given the first payment and in the second quarter he is not given the money, that is how arrears come. He has already signed to get the goods.

Good fiscal management and budget planning should prevent arrears from being created. Therefore, the Government should allocate additional resources to clear arrears in the budget for the Financial Year 2025/26. This trend in domestic arrears ought to be managed strategically to reduce the risk of increased Government debt and crowding out the private sector.

The committee recommends that the Government provides Shs 1.15 trillion during the Financial Year 2025/26 and in the subsequent years until 2029/30. This will clear the outstanding bill of domestic arrears of Shs 5.748 trillion in five years if we paid Shs 1.1 trillion. If we can pay back Shs 8.9 trillion, then let us also pay the Shs 1.15 trillion per year.

The committee recommends that to avoid further accumulation of arrears, unpaid certificates should take the first call on budget releases by vote.

The indicative programme allocations for the Financial Year 2025/26

In order to reduce the “silo” approach to the implementation of Government programmes - and Mr Speaker, as you guided us, we have put all the Votes in programmes.

The financial priority has been given to the Human Capital Development Programme in NDP IV, Governance and Security, and the Integrated Transport Infrastructure and Service Programme, which will be taking a significant amount of the national budget, as shown in Table 8. Honourable colleagues, in Table 8, you can see programme allocations. Development planning implementation will take the biggest amount, which is 38.5 per cent, and that is where we have payment to debt.

The next one is human capital development, which is health and education. This will take the biggest chunk of 17.4 per cent. The next one is governance security at 13.1 per cent. The fourth is integrated transport infrastructure at 11.1 per cent and the rest follow in that order. You can see agro-industrialisation is going to take 2.9 per cent but we are saying this is our key growth sector and we need more money there.

Committee observations

According to Section 9(3) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, the Budget Framework Paper shall be consistent with the NDP IV. The table above provides comparisons of NDP IV budget allocations by programme against proposed allocations per the Budget Framework Paper for Financial Year 25/26.

Out of the planned total public costing of Shs 67.7 trillion for programme interventions under NDP IV, only 85 per cent or Shs 57.41 trillion will be availed for implementation of Government priorities next financial year according to the Budget Framework Paper (BFP) for Financial Year 2025/26.

This indicates a shortfall of about Shs 10.3 trillion compared to the NDP IV projections.

In addition, variations are evident in the programme allocations as provided in the table above. With the exception of digital transformation, sustainable urbanisation and housing; regional balance development, and integrated transport infrastructure and services programmes, all the other programme allocations are way below those projections suggested by NDP IV and we think this must also be examined by the ministry and Government.

We, therefore, recommend that the second budget circular and the subsequent completion of the budget estimates should take into consideration the ATMIS or the Priority Spending areas identified and approved by Parliament in the National Development Plan IV so that we can move together as a country.

Priorities and the indicative budget performance for Financial Year 2025/26

The fundamentals of the economy are there. I would like to briefly go - Agro-industrialisation is key. Tourism development is key. The proposals are there. Mineral-based industrial development, including oil and gas, is there; they are outlined.

The oil and gas details are there. Science and technology - those are the activities that the Government intends to do in those areas that will inform the allocation of resources; the ATMIS.

Committee observations

The committee recommends that the following priorities should be included as part of the Budget Framework Paper:

- i) On agro-industrialisation, Mr Speaker, it is important to increase access to appropriate agricultural mechanisation and farm power tools. Because to grow and increase production, there must be mechanisation;
- ii) We must look at the exchange system in the country, especially specialised training to equip people and facilitate exchange workers;
- iii) Establish and operationalise appropriate post-harvest handling;
- iv) Increase market access by establishing and maintaining appropriate market infrastructure like developing and integrating the National Coffee Traceability Modules, the Geospatial Coffee Registry, and especially funding to the Uganda National Bureau of Standards; it is the one that verifies our standards and does the testing and certification.

If we do not fund and improve the standards of products in this country, our agro-industrialisation is going to be constrained. Someone could even say it is going to be a challenge.

Tourism

The outline is there with recommendations of the committee.

Tax Policy

The committee observes that over the years, the domestic revenue mobilisation efforts have been hindered by the lack of a national tax policy that would form the basis for tax legislation and administration. The committee was informed that the Cabinet Memorandum on a Draft National Tax Policy was submitted to the Cabinet for consideration.

We recommend that the National Tax Policy is expedited in order to inform the tax bills and proposals for the coming Financial Year 2025/2026.

Mr Speaker, on part two, I think at this point I need to lay the minutes and discussions. All the discussions, minutes, documents, attachments, revisions and budget reports from all the 15 sector committees are here. The official, signed report is also here. This time around, unlike previously, in the annexes and at this policy stage level, we decided not to restrict or to start crossing the propositions and suggestions from the committees.

We, therefore, decided to lift the recommendations of different committees in their entirety and make them an annex; the proposal of the committees, to the Government. So, it is up to the Government so that we do not constrain and stop the committee from making suggestions to the Government at this point. Therefore, we have lifted all the recommendations of the different committees and attached them as an annex, so it is up to the Government to consider them.

However, in the discussion –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson, can you formally lay those documents because you are just saying they are here? Just lay by reading the title of the documents you are laying. *(Laughter)*

MR ACHIA: Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the minutes and the reports of the different committees in the processing of the National Budget Framework of 2025/2026. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR ACHIA: Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the different sectoral committee observations and recommendations by programme as Annex 1 to this National Budget Framework Paper. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR ACHIA: Further, I beg to lay the National Budget Framework Paper, which was laid here anyway. Thank you, Mr Speaker. Now, in discussing - I have a few minutes to go through this.

Committee key observations

I will read these according to how the committees came to the Committee on Budget.

During the deliberations with the sectoral committees, the Committee on Budget made the following key observations:

Observations of the Committee on East African Community Affairs

The key concern there was that the budget did not cater for statutory obligations as reported for the East African Community (EAC) contribution of Shs 22 billion. We are likely to be locked out of the EAC from talking and speaking because we do not have money for this coming financial year to give to the East African Community.

B) Committee on Education and Sports

i) The committee highlighted the following priority areas and suggestions to the Government:

a) The issue of the New Secondary School Curriculum and A-level curriculum was a big concern and the committee

recommends that resources be put in for the development of the new curriculum for our children;

b) The staffing for universities. Our universities are performing at below 23 per cent in terms of manpower. The Government should look into the staffing for universities;

c) On the infrastructure gaps at most of the young universities, where some universities are constrained despite the growing numbers and lack of infrastructure. The Government should focus on the staffing and infrastructure of universities;

d) The biggest discussion and concern for the country and members of the different committees was the need for resources to grant-aid and rehabilitate many more primary schools across the country, especially where they are not and the old schools;

e) On education, colleagues, the enrollment and retention rate in our country stood at 70 per cent. Because of that stagnation and the high school drop-out, many children who drop out get married early, which increases teenage pregnancy rates, and neonatal mortality, and affects the health sector generally. Therefore, the solution to the problems in health is actually in education.

The committee recommends that free and compulsory universal primary education be provided by the Government and the committee recommends an amount of Shs 390 billion. The details are in the report.

ii) The committee was also concerned about the low investment in education and research, yet every country's development is hinged on the capital of its human resources.

iii) The committee observed that the development funds for universities are not commensurate with the Non-Tax Revenue they collect. This impacts the services

offered to the students who are the source of the Non-Tax Revenue.

- iv) The committee observed that there were no funds in the budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026 to cater for the National Curriculum Development Centre to implement the Lower Secondary School Curriculum as well as a transition to the A-level curriculum. More so, given the fact that the first cohort of students under the New Lower Secondary School Curriculum are due to join A-Level in February 2025. The funding gap in this area was reported by the committee education as being Shs 12 billion.

The committee was further concerned that the proposed abridged curriculum for A-Level that is being developed in a hurry is bound to be inadequate because of a lack of resources.

- v) The committee was concerned that the budget did not cater for the conversion of the Primary Teachers' Colleges that were closed and earmarked for conversion to other institutions.
- vi) There was also concern about the fate of Busoga and Bunyoro universities. They were informed that the two universities do not have Votes but are under Vote 13, which is for the Ministry of Education and Sports.

The committee undertook to convene a meeting with the Members of Parliament from Bunyoro and Busoga, as well as the Committee on Education and Sports, to discuss challenges highlighted by the Government, especially regarding Bunyoro University, which reportedly does not have land.

Committee on Foreign Affairs

- i) The biggest concern was that the Government has not prioritised subscriptions to international organisations. As a result, and on many occasions, Uganda has accumulated a lot of arrears

to these organisations, to the extent that Uganda's delegations to meetings often risk the embarrassment of being denied the opportunity to participate or talk at these meetings. We know the recent incidents in this respect;

- ii) The members are also concerned about the criteria for determining the Missions to receive funding for commercial diplomacy and the benefits that accrue from the Missions in economic terms; and
- iii) The Government of Uganda should also pursue the issues of concern for our embassies. Our embassy in Nairobi was burnt –(*Interjections*) - whether it was adequate – not the embassy but a house in Nairobi. There were discussions, we were told, about compensation. We now have another problem.

Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry

- i) The committee was concerned about what is happening to Uganda's shareholdings in all the projects that are funded under the Uganda Development Corporation (UDC). What is the size of our equities and why are we not getting dividends from these companies?

It was also observed that apart from the Housing Finance Bank, which paid Shs 14.5 billion this year, all the state-owned enterprises and other entities where the Government has a stake have never paid us any dividends or declared them to us.

- ii) It was observed that if this entity, the UDC, was supported, it could bring a positive change to our economy. There was concern about the chronic underfunding of the Uganda National Bureau of Standards, and yet if supported, it is projected to generate over Shs 100 billion in a year.
- iii) We recommend that the Government should prioritise the re-establishment of the Cooperative Bank.

Committee on Public Service and Local Government

Major highlights:

The criterion for allocating the Parish Development Model (PDM) funds does not take into consideration the poor regions, populations, and other factors. There is a need to re-examine these criteria in order to increase allocation to poor regions in the spirit of equity.

We recommend that all districts affected by the creation of new cities should be given Shs 1 billion to build new headquarters.

Committee on Presidential Affairs

The major issues:

- i) The committee was concerned about the criteria for selecting presidential pledges for implementation and requested for the list of pledges that will be fulfilled in this financial year. We are still waiting for that list to guide us in discussing the next budget.
- ii) The committee noted that the Government programmes on skilling youth by His Excellency the President is a very good programme. However, most of the beneficiaries are too poor to afford the necessary tools to practice the acquired skills after training.

They recommended that the Government needs to develop a mechanism for providing beneficiaries of the programme with the tools to help them utilise the skills acquired.

- iii) The committee requested for the return on investment on projects under the Science, Technology and Innovation Secretariat. For example, what has happened to our vaccines where we invested a lot of money? And what is happening to the whole sector?

iv) The committee was concerned about the lack of funds for Kitezi landfill under KCCA.

v) The committee observed that it is important for Government to revive the NUSAF project as well as DRDIP for northern Uganda.

F) Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development

There were major concerns here and that is where the focus of the country should be.

i. The committee observed that it is important to have labour attachés to Uganda's Foreign Missions. The committee was, however, informed that some Uganda Missions abroad have labour attachés but they are not facilitated.

ii. It was also observed that in the last budget, the President gave Shs 34 billion to cultural leaders and they were paid Shs 60 million per month, but in the current budget, their emoluments have been reduced to Shs 5 million per month. The committee is concerned about this move.

The committee recommends that this anomaly be rectified so that our cultural leaders get what they had already started getting.

iii. The committee was concerned that the funds proposed to be allocated to the ministry for gender for election of special interest groups could be duplicated in funds allocated to the Electoral Commission.

Mr Speaker, the Government needs to look at the resources that are going to go into the coming elections. The ministry for gender wants them, Uganda Police Force wants the same – everybody wants the resources. They need to come up with a strategy on who should really get the money, how much it should be and how that resource must be managed.

iv. There was also a concern on the exodus of Ugandan girls to work abroad, and

- this should really be looked at and the ramifications therein.
- G) Committee on Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- i) The committee noted with concern that *New Vision*, although operating as a business, was not paying dividends.
 - ii) The committee reiterated its previous recommendation that NITA-U should be charged with the digitisation of all Government institutions instead of spreading expensive digital units in different Government institutions. Last year, we recommended that there must be synergies in the Government e-services and that NITA-U should be the overall institution to handle this sector.
- The committee was informed that other Government institutions were resistant to the centralisation of digital services. The Committee on Budget asked the committee to submit a list of entities that are resistant to centralisation and working under NITA-U because this will create efficiency and avoid duplication. You saw the story of the fight between Uganda Bureau of Statistics and the Electoral Commission on the tablets.
- iii) The committee was informed that NITA-U licence does not allow for provision of services to the private sector. We have rolled out the National Backbone Infrastructure and it is very good, but NITA-U does not have the licence to give those services so that the private sector can pay for those services. We need to open up this case and generate revenue.
 - iv) The committee was concerned about Posta Uganda – that it did not meet statutory obligations such as payment of NSSF and PAYE, yet it was paying wages.
- H) Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development
- i) The committee was concerned that Government-owned business entities have not been declaring dividends – this was a running issue.
 - ii) The committee asked for the Government’s commitment on the dates when Uganda would start benefitting from oil revenue.
 - iii) The committee observed that different Government bodies have different unit costs for procuring the similar items. The committee called upon the PPDA to come up with a national price list for common items. We were told that for the last five years, it has not come up with a national price list. You find that Parliament budgets for a bottle of mineral water at Shs 2,000; another ministry has Shs 6,000; another one has it at Shs 10,000; yet another has it at Shs 12,000. So, we are pricing the same items differently. (*Interjections*) I was just saying, “Thank you.”
- We are actually pricing corruption. If we do not have a national price list, we will be pricing corruption. This is not new in Uganda. You remember the story of Bank of Uganda buying pens at Shs 385,000 each. This national price list should come.
- iv) The committee was concerned that the Government continues to pay commitment fees on loans that are not being utilised. The Auditor-General’s report says that last year, we paid about Shs 73 billion on commitment fees alone when we need that money to do other things.
- I) Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs
- i. The committee was concerned that whereas the Judiciary is currently conducting court sessions in different regions, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) is not facilitated to be present in all these court sessions. The committee called for joint planning by the two entities because none of them can work without the other. Facilitating only one is not value for money.

- ii. The committee also noted that the Judiciary and the DPP run different digital E-Systems, yet their products are linked. The committee proposes that digitalisation of the two entities should be centralised to save money.
- iii. The committee was concerned about the high failure rate at the Law Development Centre.
- iv. The committee noted that the Uganda Human Rights Commission was advocating for a salary enhancement, yet it is due for merging with the Equal Opportunities Commission, where their salary will be enhanced based on the salary of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The committee recommends that the Uganda Human Rights Commission should await the implementation of the merger.

J) Committee on Physical Infrastructure

- i. The committee was concerned that the Government was planning to compensate individuals who knowingly encroached on land belonging to Uganda Railways Corporation. There is a request of Shs 550 billion to compensate the people on the Tororo-Gulu railway line. We were concerned that this is an old railway – I am told the Government has a different opinion.
- ii. The committee was concerned that there is selective granting of contracts to former employees of UNRA. They say some are working and others are not working.
- iii. The committee noted that the Government was looking at Uganda Airlines purely as an infrastructure development, yet we also need to maximise the economic benefits therefrom. For example, we need to deliberately find market for Ugandan cargo at the destinations where Uganda Airlines flies. Our airlines go to different places but they do not carry cargo because we have not negotiated with the different countries

to which we carry the different cargo. The standards are still an issue.

- iv. The committee raised concern about foreigners operating Uganda Airlines flights. That was answered.
- v. The committee was concerned that there is paralysis on road projects that were being worked on by UNRA and called upon the Government to expedite the process of settling the sector once and for all.

K) Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries

- i. The committee called for the establishment of a clear seed production strategy for Uganda. We have not come out clearly. Who is in charge of certification of seeds – whether it is coffee, maize or beans – for the country?

- ii. The committee noted that all areas of the country should be encouraged to grow perennial crops because they are better at creating wealth than the short-term crops.
- iii. The committee was concerned about the fact that there is an increase in fish catches, but a decline in fish exports. The Government should look into that matter.
- iv. The committee was concerned that there are many unqualified people posing as extension workers.
- v. The committee noted inconsistencies between the Certificate of Financial Implication on the rationalisation of entities and the budget under consideration. What is said under RAPEX, as savings – I think this matter will come in detail in the RAPEX paper. We have problems there.

L) Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs

- i. The committee was concerned that the army was asking for funds to monitor elections, yet it is the mandate of the Uganda Police Force (UPF). The committee recommends that this situation should be harmonised.

- ii. The committee was also concerned that the Ministry of Internal Affairs is still asking for funds to print passport booklets abroad, yet there had been a promise to construct and print the passports under NEC, in Uganda.
- iii) The committee was also concerned that Uzima increased production but continues to make losses.
- iv) The committee was also concerned that our own Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) Engineering Brigade is charging very high commercial rates for its infrastructure. Isn't there a way we can work as brothers and sisters and charge the normal rate?
- v) The committee observed that Uganda Air Cargo has seemingly collapsed, and it should transfer its assets to Uganda Airlines.

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

The committee observed that Uganda is rich in iron, yet steel manufacturers do not use it as a primary raw material.

The committee noted that the defunct Rural Electrification Agency (REA) had left certain programmes unfulfilled. REA, using the one per cent levy from the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), used to get this money and support the rural areas by providing electricity and ICT services to our schools and communities. However, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has not delivered that money to UCC. There is infrastructure that was left in some of the schools, either by UCC or REA. They are facing a similar charge of the one per cent levy. The Government should look into that.

The committee was concerned that water for production is budgeted for in the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry Fisheries, and also in the Ministry of Water and

Environment. The question is: At what point will the Government wake up to harmonise this situation? Duplication – it is clearly the same words in the agriculture ministry and in the ministry for water. Billions here and there. The Government seems to be paralysed. When will the Government wake up to streamline this?

The committee observed that the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) is underfunded and understaffed, yet it is a sector that cannot be ignored. It is key in the well-being of Ugandans, and some resources should be given to it.

The committee observed that the Government's effort to generate electricity does not match investments in transmission. Therefore, adequate resources should be put into the value chain of generation and distribution, in that order.

Committee on Health

I must say, Mr Speaker, that members of the Committee on Health produced a very good report. *(Applause)* People should read that report on its own. It is well analysed and the committee had a lot of proposals which will help this country.

Number one, they suggested, among other things in that report, that we must complete incomplete health centres IV and health centres III. We put money into the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers Programme (UgIFT). *(Applause)* They are there around the country, they need to be completed, and they need equipment and staff. Let us do one thing at a time before we go to the next step.

Number two, recruit health workers. The level of staffing for health workers across the country is worrying. We need to look at it, especially at the lower level, at the health centres III and IV.

The full procurement of medicines and medical supplies. It was reassuring when the Minister of State for Finance, Planning and Economic Development (General Duties), Hon. Henry Musasizi, came to our committee. There was a

budget cut of Shs 100 billion for the National Medical Stores (NMS) but he said, he put back the money. We are happy to have heard from Hon. Henry Musasizi that he has put back the money; the Shs 100 billion for NMS, which was not in the Budget Framework Paper.

The committee was also concerned that last financial year, the Ministry of Health bought ambulances for certain constituencies and dispatched them. However, in this current budget, there is no proposal to buy the rest of the ambulances for the remaining constituencies. Why? The recommendation is that the Government should provide the resources to buy the ambulances for the remaining constituencies.

The committee was concerned about the increase in the number of drug expiries at the National Medical Stores, as reported by the Auditor-General. The committee was informed that a number of expiries arose from the frequent changes of the HIV antiretroviral regimens. The Government should look into that, because they need a lot of money to just destroy expired drugs, instead of using it to buy new drugs.

The committee was also concerned that the Auditor-General found out that only 15, out of the 27 beds in the Intensive Care Unit of Mulago National Referral Hospital, are fully functional.

The committee was also concerned about the absenteeism of staff in health centres IV across the country. The average is very low.

The committee noted that the different health service providing entities are requesting for training funds. The committee recommends that the training function should be centralised to the Ministry of Health to ensure proper coordination.

There was also a concern from colleagues from the Bukedi Subregion. They asked; why is their region without a regional referral hospital? They pray that Tororo Hospital be upgraded into a regional referral hospital.

The committee was also concerned that funds for the maintenance of existing ambulances were not provided for in the budget. There was a budget to that effect.

The committee noted that Uganda is faced with an increase in mental health problems among the population. The committee was informed that the regional referral hospitals are lacking in terms of mental health units and they have a shortage of staffing.

The committee was concerned about the irresponsible reporting of disease outbreaks in a manner that scares away tourists. Our media tends to scare and report irresponsibly. They say that the mpox disease has affected the whole country, and that scares away tourists.

The committee was also concerned about the congestion at the Uganda Cancer Institute and the need to address that.

Mr Speaker, those are the highlights of the Budget Framework Paper. We submit these details through this House and adopt them to the Government.

Mr Speaker, the summary of additional key funding requirements, as per the sectoral committee recommendations, are in the table from pages 48 to 102. Please, Members, take a chance to print this. This is now the “bible” where the lawyers say “the devil is in the details.” I do not know why they say that. You could actually help yourself and find the details. For example, under the agriculture ministry, there is what is provided for under the Budget Framework Paper, what is missing, and what is noted under different ministries. You look at agriculture, which is our key sector –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable members are going to read through. Can you conclude, honourable member?

MR ACHIA: The devil is in the details or the details are in the devil. Whichever, I do not know which one you will choose. *(Laughter)*

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, in accordance with Section 9(8) of the Public Finance Management (Amendment) Act, 2015, and Rule 140 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, the committee recommends that the proposed National Budget Framework Paper for the Financial Year 2025/2026, be approved by Parliament with amendments as per the committee recommendations, detailed in Annex 1, Annex 2 and Annex 3. I beg to report, Mr Speaker. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Chairperson, from the information I have, you disagreed with one of your committee members. I want to confirm that.

MR ACHIA: Mr Speaker, in processing this, we agreed with 99 per cent of the report. My colleague, Hon. Ibrahim Ssemujju, does not disagree largely but he has his concerns, and I must report to the House that there is a minority report to address those concerns. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Ssemujju, kindly present the minority report.

11.48

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. As earlier communicated by the committee chairperson, we all examined the patient and came to the conclusion that he was dead. We only differ on what happens; do you set up a burial committee? The majority are saying, “No, buy medicine,” but the person is dead!

Mr Speaker, I want to go by your guidance at the beginning of this process – that actually, if there was non-compliance; there is even the option to reject the report.

Mr Speaker, consideration of the Budget Framework Paper is the first and the most important stage in the appropriation process. It is at this stage that you interact with a set of priorities for the next financial year.

Articles 154 and 155 of the Constitution assign the Parliament and the Executive specific roles in preparation of the country’s annual budget. Under Article 154, no monies can be withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund except with your authority – and here I mean Parliament – which you exercise through enactment of the Appropriation Act. When you fail to appropriate in time, the President is allowed by the same Article to access monies to run public affairs – but only for four months. I want to emphasise that the taxpayers’ money can only be withdrawn with your permission. If you surrender this responsibility, please, blame nobody except yourself.

Article 155 instructs the President to prepare and submit to you the annual budget for approval. It also gives you the authority to determine the format the President must follow in preparation. The format you set out in the Public Finance Management Act states, “*The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development shall, for each financial year, prepare a Budget Framework Paper approved by the Cabinet and presented to Parliament.*”

The Budget Framework Paper, therefore, is the first draft. This is the stage where the aspirations of your people come face-to-face with the Government priorities, and the chairperson has listed those aspirations.

Mr Speaker, allow me to begin with the format. Section 9 of the Public Finance Management Act and Schedule 3 outline the format the Budget Framework Paper must follow. Your first task this morning is to examine whether the Budget Framework Paper before you, followed the format. Among others, the Budget Framework Paper must be consistent with the National Development Plan and with the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility. I want to emphasise that the committee chairperson has actually said that it was not consistent, but in the conclusion, the majority are saying “Approve.”

Schedule 3 of the Public Finance Management Act outlines eight other parameters that the Budget Framework Paper must meet, including

projections of Government expenditure with respect to each Vote for the financial year and the next financial year, split into current expenditure and investment plan. This was listed as number seven in the schedule.

Let us examine the consistency of the Budget Framework Paper with the set parameters. Part of the examination that we agreed upon was that it was inconsistent. The draft budget – you may call it the Budget Framework Paper – is supposed to finance the country's National Development Plan. The National Development Plan is developed by the National Planning Authority under the National Planning Authority Act. The domain plan is supposed to be approved by Parliament.

On 19 December 2024, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development presented to Parliament the Budget Framework Paper together with the draft National Development Plan, which is NDP IV. The following day, Hon. Henry Musasizi was on his Twitter account celebrating this mess – that both documents came on the same day. In actual sense, one must precede the other because you begin drafting the budget according to the plan but they came together; I do not know what they were following!

What a sane Government – something I cannot accuse the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government of – should have done is to present a draft plan for approval by Parliament first and then a draft budget prepared in accordance with the plan.

The National Development Plan was approved by Parliament on 9 January 2025, 20 days after the presentation of the budget. It is not surprising that the two documents do not speak to each other. The National Development Plan proposes a Shs 92 trillion budget for the first year of implementation, which is the next Financial Year 2024/2025, but the budget, as rightly captured by the majority report, proposes Shs 57.44 trillion. Either the National Development Plan or the Budget Framework Paper was guesswork or both.

The National Development Plan projects Shs 67.7 trillion in revenue collection in the first year, but the Budget Framework Paper puts it at Shs 33.681 trillion.

Spending on luxury

The National Development Plan and Budget Framework Paper list agro-industrialisation; tourism, minerals including oil and gas and; science and technology, including ICT and creative arts, which were summarised as top priorities. But real money is allocated to the usual useless things such as donations, workshops, travel, special meals, vehicles, furniture, etcetera.

In this year's budget, the Government did not give the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), let alone the Shs 12 billion, but they wanted Shs 7 billion as a stopgap measure because you have children who are reporting next month. Shs 7 billion was not put in the budget to prepare a curriculum for senior five but allocated to our visionary leader, Gen. Yoweri Museveni Tibuhabwe, Shs 80 billion for donations. You have no money for the curriculum but the President gets money for donations. To the NRM Government, popularising an 80-year-old man who has been in power for 39 years was more important than preparing a curriculum for our children. Then they speak of a development plan!

Look at the money this visionary leader is spending visiting sugarcane plantations in Busoga and posing for photos as if he is an extension worker. (*Laughter*) A serious leader should be launching tractors and irrigation equipment but not visiting recipients of Shs 1 million PDM. What is troubling our people is the broken road network, neglected and decaying health facilities, mismanaged and underfunded education sector.

The committee has reported about Mulago Intensive Care Unit beds. In fact, the beds are not 27. There are beds in other units that come to a total of 40 Intensive Care Unit beds. Only 15 are in use because of lack of staff. Please,

have the appetite to bring this nonsense to an end.

Mr Speaker, you need to look at the allocations because usually details, as the committee chairperson said, hide in many words as if they are in a workshop yet the actual locations speak about something else. Look, you have bedding, clothing, footwear and related services as aggregated, given Shs 132.2 billion, but you have no money for the curriculum, nor for intensive care.

- i. Donations in this budget that we started processing, is Shs 159 billion.
- ii. You have money for fuel, Shs 355 billion.
- iii. Special meals and drinks, Shs 298 billion.
- iv. Welfare and entertainment, Shs 139 billion. This money is allocated; it is not that it is unfunded. The chairperson presented here, unfunded. This is already funded and is a priority according to the National Resistance Movement Government, the unfunded is not a priority.
- v. Travel abroad, Shs 53 billion.
- vi. Travel inland, Shs 783 billion. Mind you, in some of the travels, you all see Government vehicles; people just touring their farms, and they are spending Shs 783 billion.
- vii. Workshops, meetings and seminars, Shs 237 billion.
- viii. Staff training, Shs 418 billion.
- ix. Books, periodicals and newspapers, Shs 65 billion.
- x. Buying of new vehicles, Shs 86 billion.
- xi. Maintaining transport equipment, which is repairing these vehicles of the good people running the Government, Shs 131 billion.
- xii. Printing, stationery, photocopying and binding, Shs 110 billion.
- xiii. Furniture and fittings, Shs 39 billion.
- xiv. Consultancy, Shs 572 billion.

You have a total of just these selected items coming to Shs 3.5 trillion and then they have given you the unfunded priority, but they are asking you to approve.

This information, you can find – they are supposed to put it in the Budget Framework Paper, but they did not because they are hiding it. Please, go to the ministry for finance website, www.budget.finance.go.ug and you will get this information. Just click on “Excel,” download and then continue as I have indicated in this report, because they want you to read these things without giving you the details, yet the law says they must.

Unrealistic Shs 57.441 Trillion Total Budget

Parliament should take note that although the Government plan proposes Shs 92 trillion, even the Shs 57.441 trillion in the Budget Framework Paper is unrealistic, going by the recent budget performance.

For the Financial Year 2023/2024, Parliament approved a budget of Shs 52.7 trillion and revised it to Shs 61.6 trillion through supplementary requests, but only 50 was warranted, by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development according to the Auditor-General. The finance ministry never released a total of Shs 11.4 trillion and the release itself was hot air because only Shs 48.6 trillion was the actual money available.

In 2022, total budget approved was Shs 52.5 trillion, Shs 49 trillion was released but the actual money available for spending was Shs 43 trillion. The actual money mobilised for spending is still under Shs 50 trillion. A realistic budget should, therefore, not exceed Shs 50 trillion or at worst Shs 52 trillion because of our economic situation. If more resources become available, then you return to Parliament with a supplementary but you do not bring here a budget of Shs 72 trillion, yet you know you can only mobilise Shs 48 trillion.

Making a total budget look bigger, like this financial year’s Shs 72 trillion, I think, is for self-gratification; it is for showing off how NRM’s economic miracle has transformed the country. It is also for making bigger the 3 per cent of the total budget that the Government can spend as supplementary without prior Parliament approval.

Public Debt

The Accountant-General, in a statement which is attached to the audit report, states that public debt has increased from Shs 97.5 trillion in June 2023 to Shs 109 trillion in June 2024. Honourable members, our country has been mortgaged.

This debt represents 53 per cent of our declared GDP of Shs 202 trillion (which is \$53.3 billion). Debt to GDP ratio is a comparison of what you are producing as a country and the money you owe other people.

This huge debt is inconsistent with the stated objective outlined in the Charter of Fiscal Responsibility. The objective is to keep the debt below 50 per cent of GDP.

The debt comprises money borrowed to finance the budget, domestic arrears, pensions, and gratuities.

What should worry you more is that the Government wants to finance the Shs 52 trillion – next financial year's budget – by borrowing another Shs 24 trillion, because it projects to raise revenue only of Shs 33 trillion.

By approving the Budget Framework Paper, you are giving the Government a green light to borrow. They will be coming here and you should expect Hon. Musasizi to continue trafficking loan requests to Parliament during the course of the next financial year and he will be reminding you, "You are the one who approved the budget; now I am bringing money to finance it."

The figure of the total public debt is also contested. In calculating public debt, Finance does not include domestic arrears. They have even forced the Auditor-General to do the same thing. Finance claims that public debt is at Shs 94 trillion, rising from Shs 86 trillion they declared last financial year.

One of the tactics finance is using these days is to exclude un-disbursed loans, yet we pay commitment fees on them. Therefore, they are

trying to exclude many things, making the debt look smaller.

Still on debt, I am looking at the Vote, which is meant to be servicing debt; treasury operations.

The total budget that we are approving in the Budget Framework Paper – I want to repeat – is Shs 57 trillion, but nearly half of it (Shs 20 trillion) – which is 35 per cent as usual – is for debt servicing. The table below shows the breakdown of this total debt servicing. I hope the table can be flushed there. It has details here of what we will be paying.

Of interest here, Mr Speaker, you have Roko, you have the DRC; if you look at claims payment, we are still paying money to the DRC because – the Attorney-General is here; we lost a case before the International Court of Justice. This NRM Government was accused of many crimes in Congo, including rape. If you want, you can go to the ICJ website, including rape, plundering gold and timber, and many other things. As a result, we were told to pay \$325 million, which comes to over Shs 1.2 trillion.

For you to appreciate that figure, we have just borrowed money to do roads in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area, which is just about the same figure, but at least, every metropolitan, including my constituents, have some roads done. These people who went and plundered Congo and stole gold, they should even stop them from coming here because this money should be- the report is explained – (*Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka rose*) – If you followed the format of the chair, I see you are restless. (*Laughter*)

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, I am trying to follow the submission of my colleague, but I do not know what page we are at, because there are some things he was saying but I did not see Congo, rape, plunder, ICJ. I am just requesting; are we proceeding well? Because if we want to follow the report, just keep us at the report, then we can debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us listen to each other, honourable colleagues. I already

had my concerns, which I wanted to share at the end because I heard, for example, some of the words used; they are un-parliamentary. A very good example is the word “nonsense”. You can hold an opinion but there are words in Parliament – on the official record of Parliament – but now, I had wanted the chairperson of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline to help us because Rule 84 on parliamentary language limits us on the debate. What about reports? And if on reports, it is really a blank cheque.

I think this is one of the rules we should look at because a report will be used by researchers; it is a very important record that we will have. Chairperson of Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline.

12.08

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND DISCIPLINE (Mr Abdu Katuntu): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The rules talk about the parliamentary debate, and the question that arises is whether the report is part of the parliamentary debate. In my opinion, it is.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: My concern was, after the presentation of the report, I have to open a debate. Now, how does it become part of the debate before I open the debate? I was concerned about that but chairperson, look at it and you will guide whether we will need to expand it and have more clarity. Words like “nonsense” –

Then, number two, honourable colleagues – and I saw also with the chairperson of the Committee on Budget; when you are reading a report, read it. Then you have a chance of responses where you can explain much more. Otherwise, all that detail you wanted should be in a report.

A report should be read verbatim so that your submission is consistent with the report when one is reading the *Hansard*. So, Hon. Ssemujju, are you about to conclude? The explanations can come in the form of clarifications during the debate.

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, tables do not speak. At least in my training, tables are explained. Because if you want me to translate this table into pages, this report will be 100 pages. So, I just do a simple explanation, presenting a table – and I know the Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka knows this; that when you are presenting a table, you explain. Even in court you do; I see you do not just throw documents at the table.

Therefore, I wanted Parliament to appreciate that part of what we are paying on that table is money to the Democratic Republic of Congo. How did it arise? Because we were accused of looting, killing, damage –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have gone back to the same.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Order, please. The Speaker has ruled. As a senior colleague whom we look at to guide us – who are just starting out – when the Speaker has ruled, the only courteous thing is that we follow the ruling of the Speaker and proceed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, we will have a chance to speak unlimited, okay? Let us stick to the report. And also a table can have explanatory notes if you want to give all those more details. For example, I can say, on Contingency Fund, you preferred to just write Contingency Fund but on court awards, you put in brackets DRC and mandamus. You see, it was your option; you could have put in more details. So, let us just conclude, so that we do not delay the debate.

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, I will now leave the table because it is causing some people to be restless.

This information, Mr Speaker, if you go below the table – actually, I am presenting information as supplied to us by the Minister of Finance; I am not the source.

The Shs 20.7 trillion amount for debt servicing in the Budget Framework Paper is different from what is captured on the Ministry of

Finance website. Here, the total budget for debt servicing in the Budget Framework Paper on their website is Shs 21.612 trillion which is a difference of Shs 886.2 billion.

The table below – all these tables are not my tables; I did not draw them. This one is by Finance in the Budget Framework Paper. Then, they have another one on their website that has this information. For the National Resistance Movement, this is expected.

I am inviting you, Parliament, to take a keen interest in Vote 130 to stop wasting taxpayers' money. For instance, the Auditor-General's report for 2023 noted that Vote 130 had an approved budget of Shs 16.8 trillion, but lacked a vote strategic plan. That is on page 518.

In the same year, the Vote received a supplementary budget of Shs 46 billion to cater for commitment fees. In the same year, payments through this Vote totalled Shs 286 billion, which was paid to Lubowa Specialised Hospital based on unsupported – this is not linked to the other. Just for you to note, this Vote is used for many things, including paying Pinetti. In the report of the Auditor-General, we paid Pinetti Shs 286 billion, based on an unsupported completion certificate; that is page 518.

In the latest report, which was presented to Parliament, the Auditor-General says Shs 2 trillion requested to service debt through supplementary was never released and last year, it is this Vote that the Government raided – the word is not “raised” – to pay Magoola Shs 500 billion.

Therefore, this Vote is a cash cow for Finance. They come here screaming on the top of their voice that they want money to service public debt when it is not the case. Before you approve this Budget Framework Paper, you must order a forensic audit on this Vote – because it has money there; so if they want to pay Magoola, they just go there and pick and pay. If they want to pay Roko Construction Company, they go there. That is what you did last year.

Mr Speaker, I will go to domestic arrears. There is a tendency to pay more attention to money directly borrowed from banks at the expense of goods and services supplied to the Government by our people. You know this Government borrows from everybody; it borrows stationery from Nkrumah Road, furniture from small shops, food from restaurants, and rents ordinary people's buildings. *(Laughter)*

Doing this is not bad but refusing to pay is bad manners. *(Applause)* The money which the Government owes ordinary people – commonly known as domestic arrears – hit Shs 14 trillion last financial year. It increased by 30 per cent, from Shs 10 trillion, in 2023. And guess what? They have allocated a total of Shs 200 billion in the budget to cater for domestic arrears. These arrears include Shs 260 billion in gratuity and pension.

You have seen old people shed tears on television because of their unpaid pension and gratuities. Some people of Mr Museveni's age die before receiving their pension. Finance claims that the biggest component of the domestic area is the Shs 9.1 trillion owed to the Bank of Uganda, which they have cleared. If it is true, - because even this one we must find out, - it means domestic arrears now totals over Shs 5 trillion. Payment of domestic arrears must be a top priority of next year's budget. *(Applause)*

People who supplied, borrowed money from banks with attendant interests. Does it make sense to capitalise Uganda Development Bank to lend to small enterprises and you refuse to pay them when they supply you? I think the intention is to kill the businesses of indigenous people at the expense of the Chinese and Indians. How come Enrica Pinetti is paid on time, even for no work done?

With this information, I invite Parliament to reject the whole of this Budget Framework Paper because it does not comply with the Public Finance Management Act and the National Development Plan. The Minister of Finance should be instructed to submit another Budget Framework Paper that complies with

the law and addresses the many concerns of this House, as outlined in the main report.

Mr Speaker and honourable members, I thank you very much for listening to me. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Ssemujju. Before I open the debate, honourable Attorney-General, there is a commitment you made here. We said we would like to realign our committees with the budgeting process. I found out that KCCA was appearing in four meetings at the same time: The Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, another Director; all at once. Reason being, they are scattered all over. We have failed to align our Programme-Based Budgeting to the structures.

The Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline, led by Mr Abdu Katuntu, presented here a report, which we conceded to, that we need to amend Section 13(4) of the PFMA and also the definitions of “sector”, “budget” and all that, so that we amend our rules and we make programme committees. We should stop having sectoral committees, where people are scattered all over. *(Applause)*

I need, before anything else, the Attorney-General to commit to us the Budget for next year – because this one is already there. These are direct amendments with no financial implications; just realign.

12.19

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We have actually communicated the instruction of Parliament – which we entirely agree with – to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. We support the finance ministry or whichever entity is the custodian of the law. What we can do is to follow up ourselves, draft the Bill and forward it to them and say, “This is our proposal of the Bill”, then they can proceed with it. We undertake to do that before the end of next month.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Attorney-General. We are now going to

open the debate – *(Hon. Oshabe rose_)* I mean, he has made a commitment. What clarification do you need? He is not on the Floor. For clarification, someone must be on the Floor. There is no one on the Floor - *(Hon. Oshabe rose_)* No, it cannot be important when it does not align with the rules.

Honourable minister for finance, is there any critical clarification you want to make that can guide the debate or should I open the debate and you respond later?

12.21

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I propose that the debate be opened. We shall respond at once, at the end.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, at the beginning of this session, those of us who were here made our resolution that we shall take first priority in terms of submitting, to the extent that we registered our names with the presiding officer. I will, therefore, first pick from the Members who kept time and registered their interest.

Two, it is an opportunity for the name of Parliament to be cleared on some of these things. Let me give you a very good example. In last year’s Budget Speech, the President requested Parliament to support him on the issue of Universal Primary and Secondary Education. The President said, “Parliament, support me because you appropriate.” If we do not tackle that issue, then he will say, “No, the President assigned you; you never addressed that issue.”

I think it is a very big opportunity for us to play our role, like the President requested us. Even in the tours he is having, he has emphasised it a lot. The finance and education ministries must tell us what is needed.

Secondly, honourable minister, when you finance, for example, the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), you cannot do so without

financing the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS). URA clears people's goods but they remain stuck because UNBS does not have staff and the capacity to clear them.

I have very many people coming to me saying, "We pay taxes but we remain stuck with UNBS"; it cannot move, reason being, UNBS is not facilitated to do that" yet it is collecting the money.

Then, Uganda Communications Commission (UCC); honourable colleagues are always in my office saying, "Help us get masts." I had to call the Executive Director of UCC and he said, "But there is a fund, which we use that you get from telecoms." I found out that 50 per cent of that fund is taken to the Consolidated Fund.

It is not helping us to digitise and give affirmative action for the rural areas. If it is a fund meant for that, why don't we give that money to UCC, and it helps those of us who come from rural areas? (*Applause*) I am tired of MPs coming to my office, and I have to lobby and call here and there when there is a fund created for that purpose.

On the issue of publicity, honourable colleagues, you remember when we were discussing digital transformation, we talked of Signet, but as I speak, Signet's free-to-air service is only in Kampala. Your voters who cannot afford to pay monthly dues do not watch you on TV, yet we programmed very well that we must be watched by local people who cannot afford monthly payments. Why don't we conclude these issues?

Finally, I received a call from someone who said, "Rt Hon. Deputy Speaker, I want to understand this: How come you are destroying drugs when we do not have them in our health centres?" Someone hears that you destroyed drugs worth over Shs 300 billion, according to the Auditor-General, but they are looking for Panadol in our health centres. They are stuck. Someone will ask, "Did you focus more on those drugs which expire so that you make money and leave out those which are essential

for us?"

Finally, the Committee on Natural Resources has talked about the issue of iron ore and mining. Hon. Kamuntu's area is good for that. The licences are not given to the factories. We are telling factories to stop importing steel and raw materials, and instead use iron ore from our area, but we say it without giving them the licences.

You find that someone has around 20 licences in this country – be it gold or others – and they are vending them. One manufacturer told me that a holder of a licence who is not using it for anything asked him for \$8 million. As a manufacturer, he cannot get it, but a holder is vending it at \$8 million. "Give it to me and I become rich; I do not care about the rest."

I just wanted to record these observations, as I also get feedback from the public. We now open the debate; I will start with Dr Byakatonda, followed by Prof. Mushemeza.

For those who were not here when we were starting, I will not allow procedure. I will first pick the people who came here by 10.00 a.m. (*Applause*) I will give you a chance to submit, and your procedure will be covered from there. It is just a debate.

Dr Byakatonda, Prof. Mushemeza, Hon. Solomon Chelangat, Hon. Sarah Opendi, Hon. William Museveni, Hon. Kenneth Kiiza, Hon. Ruyonga and Hon. Donald Katalihwa.

12.27

DR ABDULHU BYAKATONDA (Independent, Workers Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the chairperson for the report presented that will culminate into a debate and harmonise a number of things. I note that there is a commitment to reduce the debt by 50 per cent. I think that is very important. What disturbs my soul, is normally, when we have a motion to borrow. We want to know the strategy and the clear indicators that will demonstrate this commitment to reducing our debt burden by 50 per cent.

Secondly, what we must take seriously is where we are failing to have harmonisation between the NDP IV and the Budget Framework Paper – where the other one talks of Shs 90 trillion and the other talks about Shs 57 trillion. That is important because, ideally, in this process, we need to harmonise the two documents. I want to know the commitment and how we should go about it.

When we remain at the current budget figure in the Budget Framework Paper – the other is talking of Shs 92 trillion – how do we harmonise and get to one common figure and ensure that we move in tandem?

Thirdly, Mr Speaker, when you were presiding over one session last year, tree nursery operators came here. These are people who borrow loans and put up nurseries, but there is a public outcry: they have never been paid. So, under climate finance, can we focus on this and see how we can help to handle this matter?

On human resources development, I am happy that during the last sitting, you mentioned that you went to Mbale Industrial Park, and it has caused some results. However, as workers' representatives, we normally have challenges where quite often, machines are cutting workers in those areas. There are no remittances or collective bargaining agreements, yet Uganda is one of the constituencies of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). How I wish we could see how we could move and ensure that we have this.

Still, on that aspect, how do we consider the primary school teachers and other lower cadres? Are they catered for under this human resource development fund appropriation? This is very important. These are very core issues because we find that there are already gaps between Science and Arts teachers and other workers. So, under the human resource development fund, is there an indication that the primary school teachers will be catered for?

Otherwise, going forward, I think we can move and ensure that we get better.

The other disturbing aspect is when NDP is talking of Shs 2.4 trillion for agro-industrialisation – and of course, when we talk about import substitution, we can only reduce imports by actually producing and exporting through value addition. That is very important.

By so doing, the committee has assured us that they are looking at aspects of research, as important. However, we find that institutions such as the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) are underfunded. Even in terms of staffing, they are at below 40 per cent, yet when you talk of the PDM, these people require quality planting materials, but they pick anything and plant, under PDM, and then the returns on their investment are jeopardised.

Lastly – Mr Speaker, it is good you mentioned it. Under UNBS, the solution was given. Institutions such as NDA and Uganda Wildlife Authority are using non-tax revenue to supplement their budgets. The same applies to Management Training and Advisory Centre. Why don't we ensure that we close this gap and ensure UNBS is facilitated through such an arrangement? I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Prof. Mushemeza?

12.30

PROF. ELIJAH MUSHEMEZA (Independent, Sheema County South, Sheema): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the chairperson of the Committee on Budget and Hon. Ssemujju Nganda. Their presentations will shape the debate.

At the beginning, I seconded the motion, but I have concerns. I had wanted these concerns to be responded to by the chairperson of the Committee on Budget and the minister for finance. However, after listening to the explanations by the chairperson of the Committee on Budget and Hon. Ssemujju Nganda, I now redirect my friendly fire to the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Last year, we had a detailed presentation from the public accounts committee (PAC) (Central Government), and it was clear from the evidence that in a number of financial years, the Government had not realised the projected income. Most times, we concentrate on the expenditure side and we rarely focus on the income side.

During that presentation, it was also provided that in one of the financial years, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Planning had warranted around Shs 43 trillion and even that Shs 43 trillion was never realised. In this financial year, where we had a budget of Shs 71 trillion, we are still struggling. The implication is that our people outside there, after reading the budget, become very expectant in terms of service delivery, yet we cannot raise the money. Now, we are talking of Shs 57 trillion, and we have never realised Shs 57 trillion in the last five financial years.

So, minister for finance, what assurances can you give us that this time around you will realise Shs 57 trillion? Actually, I am happy that Parliament directed that National Planning Authority should revise the National Development Plan because it is unrealistic. We are not going to collect Shs 67 trillion in the first financial year. It is not possible – and you are here; you will not collect it.

It is good that we directed that we revise it. So, I want assurance, as a seconder of this motion, from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. What magic bullet are you going to fire to realise at least Shs 48 trillion so that service delivery can be realised?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motion?

12.34

MS AISHA KABANDA (NUP, Woman Representative, Butambala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise under Rule 59(1)(b) – that is a motion for an adjournment for purposes of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance. We have started the budget process, and this is an activity we have gone through annually, regularly, like we are supposed to do.

Last year, we passed a budget and when we sent the budget to the President, he returned it with a very hostile communication.

In the communication, the President condemned Members of Parliament as being corrupt, and he said we are criminals and that we “ate up” roads. He enumerated several roads, in his opinion, that we could have “eaten up” if we had passed the budget the way we had made it.

Mr Speaker, because of the urgency of the matter at that time, we were unable to discuss that letter because we were time-barred. We passed the budget as the President desired, but we never discussed the President’s communication, which did not augur well with Members of Parliament and gave a bad reputation to Parliament.

I am here to move, Mr Speaker, that that letter be discussed by us, first, so that we determine our role, as Members of Parliament, in the budget process so that we do not face what we faced last time and so that we are not blamed for “eating up” roads like the President said.

I submit that we debate that letter, first, to be able to facilitate the budget process appropriately. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded? (*Members rose*) It is seconded by Hon. Kabuusu, Hon. Mwijukye, Hon. Ssemujju, Hon. Aol and Hon. Nsamba. I am going to put the question.

Honourable colleagues, these are direct things. The letter was with you. Another thing you should remember is that we should have the BFP approved by the 1st of February.

I want to be as lenient as possible. This is your time and you are the ones who determine how to use it. Okay? However, this is a direct matter – whether to discuss the letter of the President or not; I do not need it to say much about it.

Honourable colleagues, let me put the question directly and then we can move – (*Hon. Aisha Kabanda rose*) It is not a must that you speak

to the motion. “You may.” If it is very direct, I put the question. Point of procedure?

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, we are going to take a vote on a motion. For example, I sit on the Committee on Budget. The committee chairperson who has presented the report was even hesitant that we should include the unfunded priorities until some of us argued that we must put them. You can see hesitancy even from the Committee on Budget do the right work.

The procedural issue I am raising is whether you should not allow the mover and those of us who seconded the motion to explain why this is important before we process a Budget, to clearly assign ourselves what we want and are expected to do.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First of all, this is a settled matter. How is it settled? The letter of the President was one returning a Bill, which was referred to the committee. The committee made a report. You came here and debated it. I remember you expressed a lot of discontent on what the President had said in the letter and all that. All that explanation, frustrations and justifications of Members were even on record.

The President did not write a letter to Parliament. It was a letter returning the Bill and it was referred to the committee. My memory is very clear. This issue was clearly settled at that time. Therefore, when you say you want to justify, it is a very straight matter. So, I am going to put the question.

MS AISHA KABANDA: Can I remind you, Mr Speaker?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, remind me, the mover of the motion.

MS AISHA KABANDA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Owing to the time constraint, the Bill was not returned to the committee. After the Speaker read the letter here, we constituted ourselves into a Committee of Supply, immediately discussed the Budget items and passed the Budget. There was no time to refer

the Bill back to the committee. That did not take place.

Also, what was so prominent in that letter was that Members of Parliament doubted their role. Actually, there was a question: “What is our role, if we cannot change anything in the Budget?” We were not guided. I think this is the right time to speak about those issues so we get to know our role. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson of the Committee on Budget, you are the one who brought it here on the Floor. (*Hon. Oshabe rose*) Let me first handle one; I cannot handle it all at once.

MR ACHIA: Mr Speaker, the matter of the letter of the President is a normal procedure where the President may return a Bill to this House. That Bill was returned, we processed, voted and passed it. I am not aware of any other new letter that we must consider.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I want to be as lenient as possible. Hon. Nsamba, you had a procedural matter; let us hear it.

MR OSHABE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Over time, we have hurriedly processed the Budget business here. It is a very critical matter to this House but we always give excuses of timelines and rush things in the interest of meeting deadlines.

Mr Speaker, the President will unusually – it was an unusual process that happened last year. If you do not accord it time, we shall go through the same things and pass the Budget. The President now has powers to do it even after reading the Budget because the Bill is always returned before the Budget is read. This one that we are talking about, came when the Budget was even read to the public. We looked very shabby, as Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I raised an issue over matters of compliance to the law. You ruled that if we reached this stage, we could deal with it. However, you do not want to look there at this stage. You want us to debate as though the main

report has not highlighted matters to do with compliance to the law. The minority report also highlighted matters of compliance to the law.

Mr Speaker, you are rushing the process; you want to end these things as though this is the way we must operate. I am begging you. This country is in your hands – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, it is an insult to me who was here by 10.00 a.m. to start a session when you were not here, yet you are accusing me of rushing things. It is an insult. You do not keep time but immediately you enter, you want to grab the microphone. It is an insult. I think we should respect each other when we come here. The Leader of the Opposition was here. I have a list of Members who were here. That is point number one.

Number two, honourable colleagues, when we come here to deal with matters and you are not satisfied, you can come and move a motion to reconsider a decision of the House. It is provided for in the rules. You came and discussed – I remember that. In fact, the whole of that session, I was seated in the VIP Lounge. That was where I watched from. I remember the committee chairperson, Hon. Isiagi here presenting and everything ended.

This is the Budget Framework Paper (BFP). What you should also understand is that the BFP is not final in its own nature. In fact, Hon. Ssemujju used good language when he said the BFP is like a first draft of the Budget. When you do a draft and it has problems, you go and improve it. That is why you make recommendations. Here you are not supplying money.

Hon. Nsamba, whether the reports raise critical issues or not, they are not final documents. That is why you must vote on them. I am saying that we should use the time we have to debate these reports, submit on the issues raised, and we get a response. Since I allowed a motion –

12.45

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Mr Speaker, I do understand the need to debate. I am looking forward – let me wait until I have the Speaker’s attention since I would like to request his guidance.

Mr Speaker, matters of law are very critical. The Legislature here passes laws so we must be able to follow laws. We are looking forward to debating the Budget Framework Paper; I am looking forward to raising my concerns too. However, I thought I would get guidance from you, Mr Speaker and the Attorney-General on a critical matter of law.

Section 9(3) of the Public Finance Management (Amendment) Act, 2015, provides that the Budget Framework Paper shall be consistent with the National Development Plan and the Charter of Fiscal Responsibility. *(Applause)* That is a law that Parliament passed. It is a law of 2015. Many of us were not here but it is a law that is still in our law books.

The majority and the minority reports have both adumbrated the fact that this Budget Framework Paper that we are going to debate is inconsistent with the National Development Plan and the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility. So, while we are eager to debate, I would like us to be guided legally because we want to beat the deadline of 1st February – which is within the law. I do not think it is prudent that we break one law to keep another law.

Therefore, I would like that we are guided legally, so that we are not looking forward to fulfilling one law, while breaking another – and it is not a minor law. Otherwise, let us amend that law, and get it out of our law books, so that the National Development Plan (NDP), the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility is irrelevant as far as the Budget Framework Paper is concerned. But as of now, Section 9(3) of the Public Finance Management Act is very clear. Can we follow the law?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Before I disturb the Attorney-General, we have an issue, which we must first settle because

now, I am going to mix many issues. I want to be as lenient as possible. Hon. Aisha, you should have moved under Rule 222 of our Rules of Procedure, which is about reconsidering the decision of the House, so that you give us a notice.

The President did not write a letter to Parliament. I want this one first to be clarified; the President returned a Bill with a justification for returning it. The President exercised his power under the Constitution to return a Bill and with a justification because it is required under the law that once he returns, he must explain why.

Therefore, the returned Bill was processed and a decision was made by this House. If I start segregating now – but since I had allowed a Motion, I am going to put the question on the Motion that the debate is adjourned so that the President’s letter is first debated.

(Question put and negatived.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is settled. Attorney-General, respond to the Leader of the Opposition.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your wise guidance. One, the Leader of the Opposition is correct that Section 9(3) of the Public Finance Management Act requires the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to prepare a Budget Framework Paper which shall be consistent with the National Development Plan and the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility.

The choice of words in that section is quite telling because Parliament did not write a law that said that the National Development Plan and the budget will be the same. So, page 282 of the Fourth National Development Plan, clearly states the overall cost of the plan for the function in the different years, and I can see here a figure of Shs 67 billion.

What Hon. Ssemujju was referring to, is a figure that relates to page 280 which relates to the overall cost plan including private

sector investment – *(Interjections)* – Yes, I am reading it here. Page 280 has Shs 92 trillion, which is a figure that includes private sector investment. Page 282, has a figure of Shs 67 trillion, which does not include private sector investment. This plan is what the Government aspires to achieve.

The resource envelope has shown us that we have only Shs 57 trillion we can bring. But when they say “consistency with the National Development Plan,” it is not talking about consistency with numbers; it talks about consistency with the plan, aspirations, and expectations.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, what we need to be doing here now, as Parliament, is to look at the National Development Plan; look at the priorities set out therein, compare it with the Budget Framework Paper, and, therefore, guide Government that when we look at the National Development Plan, we may need to lower our expectations in this year, but also plan for the next year. Therefore, I do not see any inconsistency. I beg to submit. Thank you.

MR SSENKYONYI: Senior Counsel – *(Interjections)* – Yes, he is senior to me; he qualified as a lawyer way before I did. Please, clarify this, because – let me read to you the law verbatim: Section 9(3), “*The minister shall, for each financial year, prepare a Budget Framework Paper, which shall be consistent with the National Development Plan and with the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility.*” The law is saying “shall”. It is not suggestory.

Two, when you say it does not mean consistency with the figures, I thought the National Development Plan and the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility have got figures for a reason; they are not irrelevant. And so, you should be operating in that regard. That is why there is a concern that the National Development Plan ought to be passed way before you bring the National Budget Framework Paper, so that we are following.

What you seem to say is that the figures do not matter – and all the other elaborative

issues in the NDP and the Charter for Fiscal Responsibility. So, what is the law saying? Because the law is commanding and saying, “shall”.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: First of all, thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I did not say the figures are not relevant. The figures in the plan are relevant. However, a plan is an aspiration. You set the plan and say, “I would like to do this in the following five years.” However, if the law anticipated that once you make the plan, you must stick to it, then it would not require us to make another document for that period. We could as well just implement the National Development Plan, but we implement it using the budget.

The budget requires you to look at your circumstances at the time you are preparing the budget. At the time when you are preparing the plan, you have aspirations. But the realities of today are that we only have Shs 57 trillion. If it is the wisdom of Parliament that since the figure of Shs 57 trillion that we have in the budget is not consistent with what we have in the National Development Plan, therefore, we cannot move, I do not think that is what the framers of the law were saying.

However, when they say “consistency with a plan,” it is what you look to do. In this plan, we look to do agro-processing, minerals, tourism, and science. So what we should be examining now is that with our resource envelope reduced from Shs 67 trillion to Shs 57 trillion, how do we meet those? So, it is the same; the law is not irrelevant. What we are saying is that the reality that we have today is Shs 57 trillion; the plan is Shs 67 trillion, and the question before Parliament is: What do we do then? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, let us move on because once we go into those strict interpretations, we shall find ourselves not moving. But also, I read one or two judgments where they were talking about “shall”; where “shall” is mandatory, there is a sanction. Where there is no sanction, you have room; it is a directory.

Let us move on with the debate, and we had started moving. We had gone to Hon. Solomon Chelangat. – No, do not switch on the microphone, honourable member; that is – Hon. Nandala?

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. Before I raise the procedural issue, a budget is the expected income and expenditure. Therefore, it is just expected and sometimes you can overestimate or underestimate. However, I would also like to refer to Section 9 of the Public Finance Management Act, so that I can assist either the Attorney-General or the minister for finance.

Section 9(1) says; “*Each accounting officer shall, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, prepare a Budget Framework Paper for the vote, taking into consideration balance development, gender and equity responsiveness and shall submit the Budget Framework Paper to the minister.*”

Mr Speaker, each accounting officer must do that and when it has been done, it will cause many issues. Now, in the wisdom – even in the same Act, if you look at the definition of a budget – which I want to use so that I can make or seek a few clarifications. It defines a budget. “*‘Budget’ means the process by which the Government sets levels to efficiently collect revenue and allocate the spending of the resources among all sectors to meet national objectives.*”

Therefore, Mr Speaker, the Government said the planning was Shs 67 trillion, but in its wisdom, they said the revenue will be Shs 57 trillion – and that is already a variance.

The minister will probably explain that what we are expecting, we will not be able to get because it is a variance. However, if it was more, I think that is when we would have raised a very big issue now. You set a budget for Shs 67 trillion but now you are above it, and you are not explaining what the difference is in this context.

Therefore, why I am raising this is that we, as Parliament, should query the issues. Did every accounting officer prepare the Budget Framework Paper according to the law? That is the query we should raise. The rest should be answered in the Treasury Memorandum. Again, under Section 15 something – let me get it clearly so that I put it – that when you are sending this budget, you should attach the Treasury Memorandum on how you have answered the issues of the office which the Auditor-General raised. (*Hon. Nsamba rose*) – Mr Speaker, just give me a minute,

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, that is enough. Just continue with the procedural matter. Please, honourable member, he is not on record.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Thank you, Mr Speaker, the issue I was trying to put across is that – (*Interjection*) But procedure is a –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is why I am allowing you to continue, but he is attracting you; I do not know what is so attractive – (*Laughter*) - that it is distracting you.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: You will raise the order to me when we are out in the corridor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, not granted. Continue on procedure.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: I think I would like you to take such senior Members for training again. Because the procedure is a –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now senior Member, see where you have also gone. (*Laughter*)

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Mr Speaker, the procedural issue I was raising is that: Is it procedurally right for us to debate that the amount of the money which is in the National Development Plan – which is Shs 67 trillion – should be the same amount in the Budget Framework Paper, yet the person responsible for the budget has clearly stated that the maximum he can raise is Shs 57 trillion (but if he has room, he can adjust or reduce it)?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, you see, in our submissions, we are accusing the ministry of not complying with the NDP IV by not raising a budget that meets the figure.

However, in our recommendation, both the minority and majority reports were saying; “You have been bringing budget estimates whose financing you cannot raise.” Do you see the contradiction? We are accusing them of bringing a budget whose resource envelope we cannot raise and then we are saying they are not complying with NDP IV.

I think what is important is for us to make our recommendations clear. In the end, we shall go with our recommendations. It will be up to you to vote based on your recommendations.

So, let us allow people to debate because we are going to rotate around these issues and we will not finish.

Hon. Chelangat? – I have received enough procedural matters; now let us debate.

1.02

MR SOLOMON CHELANGAT (NRM, Too County, Bukwo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the chairperson of the committee for the report. However, my attention was drawn to the details of the report by the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. We all know that agriculture is the backbone of this country’s economy and it is my opinion that we need to focus on agriculture because, if we improve the agricultural sector in this country, all the people will get the money they need.

For example, in Uganda, much of the land that has reliable rainfall is densely populated. Elgon Subregion is a classic example where there is a lot of rain; you can hardly get a person with five acres of land and that means a person has to farm for only domestic use. If he works only for domestic use, he will not get what the Government would like him to.

I, therefore, suggest that in our lower belts, for example, in the lower belt of Sebei Subregion, there is a very big chunk of land, which is very

good for cultivation, and it can allow us to have a lot of production for food although the only problem is that they do not have reliable rainfall.

We need to have an enabler – which is water for production. When I checked up on what they were saying, they said that we need to have water for production. I would, therefore, propose that in the agricultural sector, we put something to do with water for production so that we can increase the production capacity of our food in this country. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Sarah Opendi and then Hon. Museveni William.

1.05

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee for its report. However, it is disturbing. I know we have already discussed the issue of the Shs 10.3 trillion shortfall in the budget compared to the NDP IV.

When you look at this budget, and specifically the minority report – allow me to thank Hon. Ssemujju for his minority report – there are areas that we can do away with and focus on areas that affect the population.

There was a slogan, “*Kisanja hakuna mchezo*”. I still want to implore the Government to get back to that and stop the issue of “*mchezo*” because at the end of the day, the people who sustain us – the ordinary people who pay taxes – do not benefit.

When you look at the funding to the health sector, Mr Speaker, there are funding gaps in medicines and in upgrading of health facilities from health centres II to health centres III. We still have subcounties without health centres III and subcounties without health centres IV.

As I was seated there, a mother passed on and will be buried today because of a lack of timely access to services. There are subcounties where people have to move long distances

when a mother is referred to a higher facility with a doctor and a theatre and there are no ambulances.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I want to request the Executive that this is within their power. Let us do away with some of these wasteful expenditures. I am paid by a taxpayer. I am smartly dressed. Does the taxpayer have to again spend on me to dress me? I believe that the budget for dressing - whoever is benefitting from that budget - let us limit it to the President and all the other beneficiaries. The Shs 132 billion shillings can be spent on other areas, Mr Speaker.

When you look at the funding gap in the education sector: On the issue of the new curriculum, we are going to have a challenge. We are going to have exam results released soon and you will be shocked at the performance of many children, specifically in the upcountry schools. There is a funding gap of Shs 12 billion. Can we prioritise that and ensure that we have the children learn and understand this curriculum so that they can also benefit and move on with their education and not drop out of school?

Mr Speaker, we are aware that we have a challenge with the vocational training in this country. It still remains expensive and the majority who are in the rural schools, dropping out at Senior Four, would actually go to vocational schools or technical schools. However, they cannot do this because it is expensive.

I would like to request - moving away from that, when you look at the infrastructure sector, we have a funding gap for the metre-gauge railway. We have grappled with this. SOGEA was actually working on this metre-gauge railway line from Tororo all the way to northern Uganda. SOGEA pulled out because the Government failed to fulfil its part. We had to procure a new contractor and now, in procuring a new contractor, there is still a funding gap of Shs 44 billion.

We rely so much on road transport and it is becoming costly because when you look at the trucks that move from Malaba to northern Uganda via Tororo, there are so many on the road and yet we do not even have enough funds to maintain the roads. We have talked of expanding the road to at least four lanes.

On the eastern route, if you move now, from here, there is traffic jam all the way to Iganga. It is after Iganga that you are a bit free and you can move. Mr Speaker, over-reliance on the road sector is a challenge. Can we prioritise and ensure that the goods that come to this country move via rail? Shs 44 billion - If I look at some other wasteful expenditures like the ones I have seen, we can ensure that these funds are availed so that that metre-gauge railway line can be worked on.

Mr Speaker, I want to move on to the issue of rationalisation. We sat here and we asked whether we could stagger. It was rejected and we were told it must be immediate. We had said agencies like UNRA, you know, I do not know which other one should be given at least a year or two, and then we rationalise. We said, "No" here and the agencies were rationalised.

Now, seeing a gap of Shs 169 billion to pay UNRA workers, Uganda Road Fund - and I am sure others - there is that gap and that is their package. People are now confused. They are not working. If you go to most of our UNRA stations upcountry, there is only one staff and people are seated. Can we pay these people their money because we are the ones who took the decision - and this was a Government position?

Therefore, honourable Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, I want to request that the Executive prioritises that because we heard you loud and clear and we had to act based on what you told us.

Mr Speaker, the other one - can I complete on the issue of domestic arrears? It pains me that people supply or do work for this Government and at the end of the day, three years or four years down the road, people are not paid.

Businesses have collapsed. Can we ensure that we prioritise that in this budget? You cannot put a mere Shs 200 billion; that may be paying just one supplier or one contractor, yet what is outstanding is about Shs 5 point-something billion. The other money went to the Bank of Uganda, which according to the committee report has already been catered for. The Auditor-General has annually raised this as an issue. Can we prioritise the issue of domestic arrears so that people can continue their businesses? Let us be kind to Ugandans.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Museveni?

1.12

MR WILLIAM MUSEVENI (Independent, Buwekula South County, Mubende): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am also concerned with the domestic arrears. Many Ugandans get contracts and do Government work. Most of them get loans but they are not paid in time. They end up losing property to commercial banks. Most of them have gone out of business and they bother us, especially at the local governments. You will find people who have completed work and others who have done work partially being pressurised to complete it. Someone who is now servicing a bank loan and is doing that work will end up doing shoddy work. We urge the ministry to see how they can assist these Ugandans. These are Ugandans. Most of them are purely Ugandans who are also supposed to be elevated and successful, but they end up losing each and everything.

You have just reminded us about the appeal from the President on universal education - both primary and secondary. How can we do it? Most of the subcounties do not have secondary schools. Some parishes do not have primary schools. Can these subcounties also be prioritised so that we move to the President and appeal to him to assist us in seeing that every subcounty has a secondary school and every parish has a primary school? Where I come from, three subcounties do not have secondary schools - Kalonga, Kayebe and Kitenga. Members, I also appeal to you. Let us stick on that since it is his prayer and appeal. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Bujenje?

1.14

MR KENNETH KIIZA (Independent, Bujenje County, Masindi): Thank you, Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, you do not need to stand up. I am reading from the list.

MR KENNETH KIIZA: At the heart of our theme this year for the budget is the digital transformation of the country, but when you look at the funding gap that is supposed to assist the ICT sector, it is wanting. It is at that moment when you look at the 0.5 per cent allocated to ICT - I would implore the Government to invest heavily in ICT so that we are in a position to have a foundation from primary schools by giving computers and computer support to students through the learning curve.

Secondly, it is a bit disheartening if we tell people that we have a lot of power and we have built the capacity to generate electricity in this country when we have not done adequate planning and investment in the transmission and distribution of the power. The money we are spending on dimmed energy would have done us great in terms of building capacity and infrastructure to move electricity to all parts of this country.

Finally, Mr Speaker, the report of the Committee on Budget spoke of a meeting of the Committee on Education and Sports and Members of Parliament from Bunyoro and Busoga about getting a Vote. I thought this was the role of the Minister of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development – to give Votes to these universities. We have talked about Bunyoro and Busoga Universities for quite a long time. It is at this moment that we implore Government to at least put some money for these universities to kick off. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Dr Ruyonga?

1.16

DR JOSEPH RUYONGA (NRM, Hoima West Division, Hoima City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would also like to appreciate the budget committee for presenting a very good report. When he was starting, he said that the Committee on Health made the best report – and that is under my control. You have to clap for me. (*Applause*)

Health is wealth. The objective of the human capital development is to improve population health, safety, management, access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene. If we are to meet that objective, then the health budget should not be cut. In fact, it should be increased.

Since I became the chairperson of the health committee, all Members come to me. They either want drugs, health centres IV, and ambulances. I always give a very big answer, “I will give you.” That is if resources are available (*Laughter*). The chairman was presenting a report and he talked of the three priorities, but there are more than three priorities. The first one was completing health centres IV, which are incomplete. That was not my submission. We talked of completing uncompleted structures. We have health centres IV, staff houses, dilapidated buildings – they are many. It was completing the uncompleted structures before we can embark on constructing new ones.

That was for the structures, which are incomplete, but there are some structures which they have not started on and a budget had been allocated. An example is Hoima Regional Referral Hospital. They made a budget of constructing a maternal and child health (MCH) complex worth Shs 33.6 billion in the financial year 2023/2024. What was released was Shs 1.15 billion, which could not start even a foundation.

What happened is, the contractor had to demolish the existing wards – the paediatric

ward, maternity ward and the kangaroo ward – and the patients, the mothers, were taken to an eye clinic, where they are congested. Let us take this as a priority. What we did in this budget; we had put around Shs 13.6 billion, so that we can be able to construct at least the ground, second and third floors. The building has six floors.

Mr Speaker, they had talked about the drugs – it is good they have extended the Shs 100 billion, but there is a cut on Uganda Blood Transfusion Services (UBTS). Members are complaining that there is no blood in the hospitals. What we were collecting was not enough, but we have gone ahead to cut the budget. Now blood is going to be more scarce in the coming financial year. You know this is the time for campaigns and all that.

Those are key, among others. If you look at the unfunded priorities in our sector, they are too many. You have the report and you can read it.

They talked about also – let me talk about utility bills. When you construct a hospital – when you bring in new equipment – you are constructing oxygen plants, they consume a lot of electricity. If you go to all the facilities, all the regional hospitals, they have very big electricity bills spanning Shs 700,000; 600,000; or 500,000. When we are putting this infrastructure and equipment, let us also put a budget for utilities. Otherwise, if we do not do that, we will construct a facility and it will remain there without being used.

There are very many things but in the interest of time, I would like to stop there.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Donald Katalihwa, Hon. Emmanuel Ongiertho -

1.21

MR DONALD KATALIHWA (NRM, Mwenje County South, Kyenjojo): Mr Speaker, I have to declare that I am a member of the Committee on Budget and I am conflicted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. I requested those who wanted to submit and I do not know why you registered. Hon. Emmanuel Ongiertho. I am still on my lists. People who were here at 10.00 a.m. registered themselves and they are the ones I must start with. If you are not on my list – if you did not register, kindly sit down. Do not lobby me by looking at me, by trying to be good. *(Laughter)*

1.21

MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach): Mr Speaker, I know that the first issue I am starting with was touched indirectly, but I want to talk about specifically the financial year coming.

It came out clearly from the report that the next financial year we have a theme. After the theme, we have strategies. From the strategies, then we have allocations. It came out very clearly that some of the allocation is not consistent with the strategies. I am wondering, now, what is going to happen? What are you allocating funds to if they are not consistent with the strategies, which have come out? That is one.

Two, is the area of supplementary budgets. One aspect, which is disturbing for me is that even when they have brought the supplementary budget here and it is approved, a number of times, the amounts are not released to the entities. You have brought the supplementary budget yourself as Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and then you are not releasing it. What does that mean?

One other aspect of the supplementary budget; one time, I asked the Minister of Finance, “If you study the trend of the supplementaries over the years, where are the monies? Where are the monies being cut?” The minister told me openly, “I am not going to answer.” That tells you something.

Then, in the budget, which we have proposed, when we were having a statement from the minister about the celebration of NRM Day, one thing, which came out clearly was that we are very happy because now, we have connected

border to border with tarmac. However, we have two border points within Greater Nebbi which are very essential to us. That is Goli and Padea. They are not connected. I am bringing this point specifically for Goli, because recently, when the President was in Nebbi, he promised that at least the section from Nebbi town to Goli would be looked at. We have been talking about this road from Nebbi to Goli, to Paidha, to Zombo, up to Vurra, but for this one section, which is from Nebbi town to Goli, at least the President talked about it and I would have expected that in this budget, it would be there; it is not there.

Finally, speaking about the free primary and secondary education, we have been battling with the issue of capitation grants for these schools. In primary, it is about Shs 6,000 per child per term. You can imagine, we are now talking about the free primary – What are we talking about? If we are not going to be providing or increasing capitation grants to schools per child, what does it mean? We have also started talking about feeding.

Members, we are also already hearing cycles about feeding in schools. What do we mean? If we are not going to be providing budgets for this, we should not be talking about this. At one point, I even told the minister that this issue of free primary and secondary education, do not cross Pakwach with it because parents have started getting used to making a little bit of contribution and for us we are seeing the results.

If now we are saying it has to be free and you are not increasing capitation grant, please, we need to be serious about what we are talking about. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Naluyima?

1.26

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

Mr Speaker, as we continue to discuss the Budget Framework Paper, it clearly indicates several gaps. Could we know why? When we were considering this very Budget Framework Paper in the Committee on Public Service and Local Government, we asked the Minister of Public Service why we were planning for the rationalisation of government agencies and public expenditure (RAPEX) and destabilising other people, yet we had not provided for them.

The committee brought it up well, again, that the Shs 74 billion planned for earlier, was not fully covered, and up to this day, we still have Shs 44 billion pending. Matters were made worse when the Solicitor-General highlighted that it was much more – at Shs 196 billion.

Let us consider those people who have lost their jobs, and have no livelihood. Can we prioritise those Ugandans? Can we also have the finance minister committing that by the time we consider the budget, these people will have half of their compensation, so that their way of life can continue?

Mr Speaker, some time back when we had the calamity of the Kiteezi landfill, we emphasised that compensation should be for those people who were displaced. However, it is very unfortunate that to this hour, compensation is part of what will not be prioritised. When people were removed from the tents, they were told that in a few months' time, there would be compensation. Can we get an explanation on how they will be catered for?

Finally, there is the matter of health. We have Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital that is next to an international airport. It is at 16 per cent staffing level. Not once, not twice, the Minister of Health has come here – it shows us the general burden of these referral hospitals, as far as staffing is concerned. It is a total of Shs 28.8 billion. Can we be fair and use our appropriation role and strength to see that when it comes to the budget, as far as health is concerned, we ensure that Shs 28.8 billion is got from those wasted resources? That is so that at least one Ugandan can say, “Yes, Parliament stood for us.” I thank you.

1.29

MS CHRISTINE KAAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My first observation is on the issuance of the Certificate of Climate Change Compliance. They have emphasised Section 30(b) of the National Climate Change Act, 2021, and part “(6a)”, but not part “(6b)”, which emphasises the need to assess and evaluate the different programmes.

Mr Speaker, we do not have regulations, and we wonder what rationale the minister for planning used to measure. Actually, the measurement is just on funding – this programme provided for this money. It is just on the amount of funding. There is nothing on actions. In other words, the allocation of marks is baseless. Therefore, I will not take it that that is the right certificate.

Mr Speaker, the effect of climate change on Ugandans is increasing. According to the assessment, we scored 53. It is a serious decline from 60 of the last financial year. The assessment is looking at the few – only six programmes – that scored above 50, and the 12 remaining programmes scored below 50. I wonder: Isn't this the same assessment that is applied to people who are very rich and they determine that Ugandans are in the middle income when we are poor? Why don't we look at the average performance of the programmes? If, for example, we have more than 50 of the programmes scoring 50 and above, the certificate would be relevant. Otherwise, the six sharing the marks with the rest of the 18 is really very low.

Mr Speaker, Section 29 of the National Climate Change Act requires integration of climate change in the education curriculum. You will find that this ministry is scoring less than 50. We wonder. We request that we take part in the development of the curriculum such that the efforts are embedded in all the ministries.

My other issue is with the Contingencies Fund, Mr Speaker. It is already stated in the Public Finance Management Act, that 0.05 per cent of the previous financial budget will go to contingency funding. However, he already

raised it, that the two documents are not in line. The current Budget Framework Paper's contingency funding is less than 0.05 per cent of the previous budget, meaning that the proposed budget is not in line, and should be revised.

Mr Speaker, the issue of compliance with gender equity is a serious one. You can imagine that we would like agro-industrialisation to bring miracles to Uganda, but its performance in terms of gender equity and responsiveness is very low. That is why we move two steps forward and five steps back.

Mr Speaker, this is very important for most of our people to benefit – because this is where you are putting money. The emphasis on marketing is missing. Marketing is what ensures that we have money in our pockets. Our people are very poor, with nothing in their pockets. This business of value addition, production – then, afterwards, somebody is asking what to sell so that they end up with something in the pocket.

Mr Speaker, marketing efforts are missing in our Budget Framework Paper and I call on us to review and incorporate strategies for improving our marketing.

Mr Speaker, budget priorities are in line with the NDP IV, but the targets are not in line. It was noted by him. We measure targets. We do not measure processes and procedures. Therefore, if we are going by the targets and the implication of the budget on our people, we should have targets in our National Development Plan complying with the targets in the Budget Framework Paper – *(Member timed out.)*

1.35

ENG. RONALD BALIMWEZO (NUP, Nakawa Division East, Kampala): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

On human capital development, the Government's policy is to establish at least one primary school per parish, and one secondary school for every subcounty. Mr Speaker, we, in the urban districts, are suffering a lot. You will find one school in a division, for instance.

I will give you a typical example of Nakawa Division. With over 600,000 people, it has only one secondary school – Luzira Secondary School – whose capacity is a mere 3,200. You will find that the majority of the students dropped out because of shortages of infrastructure at the schools.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Education and Sports some time back told us that 1.88 million pupils started primary one. Seven years down the road, only 740 sat for PLE. This means that over 1.1 million dropped out before completing Primary Seven. We are seated on a time bomb.

There is also information that we have ghost students and that the Government loses a lot of money through ghost students. It is my prayer that before we even address our Budget, we investigate the ghost students we have.

Mr Speaker, I want to appreciate Hon. Ssemujju for the good minority report. The domestic arrears, accrued interests are quite big. Recently, the Minister of Works and Transport told us that we lose over Shs 280 million, every day, as a result of interest accrued from supplies given to Uganda National Road Authority (UNRA). Shs 280 million every day is quite big and a big loss to the Government. I pray that we do away with the arrears. Let us pay the arrears and move on well.

Mr Speaker, there has also been resistance from Government officials to shift from the programme-based budgeting. Many Government officials do not understand the programme-based budgeting and we are losing a lot of resources and time. Our budget performance is not good because people do not understand the programme-based budgeting process.

The other point is about the Kitezi decommission. It is unfortunate that we lost a number of lives in the Kitezi human-induced saga. Yet, the Government has not included it as a priority in this financial year's budget. We lost lives. It will be very bad for us to have such an occurrence again. It will be blamed on us.

Therefore, I pray that we deal with Kitezi decommissioning and get a better way of solid waste management in the city. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Atkins?

1.39

MR ATKINS KATUSABE (FDC, Bukonzo West County, Kasese): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I will make a submission that is clustered under two categories.

Category number one will look at the Kasese community where I come from. Mr Speaker, every financial year, this Government has got a song. The song is about Kasese Airstrip being elevated to an international airport.

Another song, during our budgetary time, is reviving the railway line from Kasese up to the end. Then having a university, clean, safe drinking water and also water for production, reviving Kilembe Mines – that is, for copper, and cobalt in Kasese Town, chalk in Mohokya, and salt in Katwe, then the land disputes and the electric wire.

Mr Speaker, we got what we call a masterplan. Gen. Saleh was kind enough to listen to the President's assignment. He went to Kasese and spent six long months there. The leaders interacted with him. Every time we remind the President, he begins singling out each and every one of us. He reminds us that we are Members of Parliament who are in charge of appropriation.

Mr Speaker, this is a budgetary season. I ask colleagues in this House; my honourable brothers and sisters that we, Kasese leaders, are going to bring this masterplan that has been endorsed by both the leadership of this House and the President to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to source for funding. This is why the people of Kasese sent me here.

Mr Speaker, if I can pick one item; the issues of water are not restricted to Kasese people. It

pains me to see our fellow citizens drinking water from collecting points on the tarmac roads; the potholes have become collecting points for drinking water. Yet, in the same country, we have communities that have clean and safe drinking water for grazing animals. Mr Speaker, Parliament should find money to provide clean and safe drinking water for animals and fellow citizens.

Mr Speaker, I think this is not too much. As our leader, I am very sure you are paying too, that every time – can we provide clean and safe drinking water to all Ugandans in this particular budget?

Mr Speaker, as I said, I do not want to be accused as somebody who preaches water and drinks wine. When we come to the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and say, “Where do we get the money?” can we begin with ourselves?

Mr Speaker, this is what I want to propose: According to the Auditor-General, every month, we pay Shs 900 million for Kingdom Kampala premises. I want to begin from there. You allocated me an office which is as big as a conference room or a boardroom. If we can find money to support our teachers and doctors by paying them well and then we say, “Can we vacate Kingdom Kampala?” Mr Speaker, I would be ready to have my office partitioned to accommodate that so that as Parliament, we save Shs 900 million to finance reallocation to support our fellow citizens. This is where I want to begin. Mr Speaker, I am ready. You can make it an open office and I am ready to share with any of the Members. Otherwise, we have to lead the way. We cannot continue to blame wasteful expenditures on the present. Let us begin just right here in the House – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Isingoma?

1.45

DR PATRICK ISINGOMA (Independent, Hoima East County, Hoima): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before Hon. Isingoma submits, I need to clarify to honourable colleagues that the offices which we rent for you are not wasteful expenditures. It is how you use that office because you meet your constituents. In fact, in other countries, MPs even have researchers. They do not have only one office; they even rent for them an office in their constituencies. Here, we are looking for researchers to facilitate you more but trying to cure that by having our offices across here so that we stop renting and the President is supporting us in that move. Hon. Isingoma?

DR ISINGOMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, once again. I also join honourable colleagues to thank the chairperson and Hon. Ssemujju Nganda for the very good reports they have presented to us in this House. I had two issues, but one has been ably handled by Hon. Sarah Opendi; so I will go straight to the second one.

Mr Speaker, my second issue is the matter to do with the Positron Emission Tomography machine, abbreviated as PET or PET machine. The consistent and persistent failure of our Government to purchase this machine, which is indicated here among the funding gaps, is so painful and unfortunate. This PET machine is part of the nuclear medicine, which is very critical in the diagnosis and treatment of various cancers. We do not have it in this country and since we joined this 11th Parliament, we have consistently sung about this machine. In East Africa, this machine is only in Nairobi, where a round costs \$1,500. The cheapest country in this region is South Africa, but most people go to India, where it is even much cheaper.

The main reason why we have failed to buy this machine is because the crème de la crème of this country do not depend on it. When affected, most of them are flown to hospitals in USA, Germany, Italy, and those who are lower in the pecking order find their way maybe to India and so on and so forth. It is very sad that we continue to sing about this machine, yet everybody knows that it is so vital for the treatment and management of cancer patients, who are very many in this country.

Mr Speaker, I could go on and on talking about this machine but let me just stop here. I hope the message has been taken. I am seeing two ministers for finance here looking at me. I hope they have captured this because they are the problem, but let me spare them for another day. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. If my memory serves me right, we released money for that machine. Hon. Ayume, help me. The last time I heard, the issue was on the building where to put it, but money was appropriated and even released. Former chairperson, Committee on Health?

1.49

DR CHARLES AYUME (NRM, Koboko Municipality, Koboko): Thank you, Mr Speaker. For starters, we call it a PET project, not a PET machine because a project means you have the housing, the infrastructure, and then the machine. At Uganda Cancer Institute, what they are first constructing is the housing and that costs a lot of money. The size of the wall has to be two metres thick before you are granted permission by the Atomic Energy Council to install the machine. So, it is work in progress, but total cost is about Shs 200 billion. Every financial year we have been requesting for between Shs 40 billion to Shs 60 billion. For the last two financial years, no money was released; so work has stalled. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it on the building or on the machine? Didn't we pay for the machine?

DR AYUME: On the building.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Didn't we order for the machine?

DR AYUME: Mr Speaker, we can only order for a machine when the building has reached a certain level of completion. Then you place an order to Siemens; they come, inspect and design the machine to fit into the building. It is a PET project, for clarity. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let the Minister of Health, as we are debating, come and update

us, because I remember there is a time we released money for the machine itself. We want to know whether the gap is on the building alone and the one of the machine is safe. Hon. Mwijukye -

1.50

MR FRANCIS MWIJUKYE (FDC, Buhweju County, Buhweju): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I have closely and patiently listened to the chairperson and Hon. Ssemujju, and you realise the paradox that the priorities are not funded, and that is why they are called "unfunded priorities" and the less-priority activities are funded. For me that is a paradox.

However, I would want clarification on money to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) because it was not well explained; so, I would like the Attorney-General or Hon. Ssemujju to explain exactly why we are paying money to DRC, because it did not come out clearly.

Secondly, Hon. Ssemujju talked about arrears. Mr Speaker, you recall the issue of tea seedlings; we have arrears for tea seedlings and the honourable minister came here and asked suppliers to supply and be paid later and had given them one year but it is now four years – the tea-seedling suppliers are suffering specifically in Greater Bushenyi. Mr Speaker, I am sure you know this very well because when the minister came here, you were in the Chair.

I am also concerned about the Bwizibwera-Buhweju-Kabwohe road. I can see the MPs from Mbarara, Sheema and Buhweju but this has been a priority road in all the national development plans. That road was pledged in 1989 and it is now 2025. The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development knows about this road; it has been a priority in the National Development Plan (NDP) III. I really want to understand – from NDP I to IV – I want to understand what the problem is, as we continue to plan for this country.

Mr Speaker, the issue of a draft budget; I do not want to go back to what has been dealt with but when we were dealing with the budget that was returned, the Minister for ICT said that Parliament cannot change anything in our

budget but can only show displeasure. I want to get commitment from the Government that our recommendations are going to be considered. We are not only showing displeasure, because the minister was here. He said, “No, you MPs can only show your displeasure, but we do not have to take your recommendations.”

As we recommend – the Prime Minister is here – I want to know; are we just speaking for purposes of speaking, or shall our recommendations be considered?

Finally, Mr Speaker, the issue of clothes that was talked about; shoes, slippers, sponges; where is this money going? Who are we buying these clothes for? Because it was alluded to by Hon. Ssemujju that there is a budget for that. In this budget, who is consuming this money? Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. It is very important because, like last time, I saw people saying that my beautiful suit, you buy it for me. In fact, I had to call my Executive Secretary to ask, “But man, I am being attacked right, left and centre that there is a budget to buy me good shoes and I am suffering borrowing from the SACCO to buy a suit – where is this coming from?” I have never received a coin to buy me anything apart from this gown and this wig, which is always itching me – that they bought for me, but the rest, I have never – until they clarified that this is money that goes to security and protocol – because your protocol people have to be looking good before others. I am told it is a norm in other parliaments that there are people who must be looked after – to look presentable, beyond what we can provide. If anyone knows that there is any money to buy for me a suit, a shirt, a what, any clothes as the Speaker – and it is attributed to us personally – I authorise it to be removed.

I am not getting anything. At least, I have enough to make me survive. If I fail, I will borrow from Hon. Anthony Akol. He can help me with his suit. I hope I can fit in it. Hon. Joel is my size.

Honourable colleagues, I am on the list; another list. I wanted to call Hon. Busingye, but as I

call her, because she is also on the list, she is a committee member; I wanted her to submit. But as I call her, you will allow me to suspend debate for just a few minutes. We receive a statement, which you can comment on; maybe also when we are continuing with the debate.

Yesterday, we asked the minister for finance to come and explain the issue of ex-gratia for local leaders; our councillors and all that. It is a very short statement; so he can present it, and then we continue with the debate. Next item.

STATEMENT ON THE SOURCE OF PAYMENT OF EX-GRATIA AND HONORARIA TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILLORS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister for finance.

1.57

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (PLANNING) (Mr Amos Lugoloobi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. During the sitting of yesterday, Wednesday, 29 January 2025, I was requested to provide a statement today, on the payment of ex-gratia and honoraria to Local Government Councillors.

For the Financial Year 2024/2025, the budget allocation for ex-gratia and honoraria is Shs 34.2 billion and Shs 10.6 billion, respectively. This is detailed in Annex 1. This budget was based on submissions from the Ministry of Local Government then.

Mr Speaker, the funds for ex-gratia are released on a quarterly basis, along with other Local Government grants. To date, Shs 25.6 billion for ex-gratia and Shs 8 billion for honoraria have been released, and this is shown in Annex 1. We shall go there later.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the respective accounting officers to ensure timely payment to the beneficiary councillors. The above notwithstanding, my ministry has received several requests for additional funding to cover arrears for ex-gratia and honoraria.

These arrears have arisen due to the following:

1. The conduct of elections in new administrative units that had not yet been operationalised.
2. The amendments to the Local Government Act, which increased the number of direct councillors per subcounty to include positions for women councillors.

Mr Speaker, to address this, the Ministry of Local Government was advised to consolidate all arrears related to ex-gratia and honoraria. As a result, a schedule amounting to Shs 15.4 billion – as shown in Annex 2 – was submitted for consideration. This earlier schedule is currently under audit by the Internal Auditor-General to guide the arrears budget for the respective Local Governments in Financial Year 2025/2026.

Before I submit, Mr Speaker, Annex 1 contains the budgets and releases for ex-gratia and honoraria for the Financial Year 2024/2025. According to that budget, the releases do not appear to vary significantly from what was budgeted. The list is there for all the respective Votes. It is available on screen and I do not think that time would allow me to go through each and everything. Therefore, it is already uploaded.

Mr Speaker, allow me to submit. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Hon. Rusoke, you can make your submission in case you want to make any comments on this.

2.01

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Ms Victoria Busingye): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is not true that all local government administrative units have – I can give an example of Fort Portal Tourism City. They demand a lot of money and if there is proof that they have been paid up to-date, it can be provided.

I wanted to comment and help ourselves because I had something burning that the Local Governments are not completing the works, especially the construction of schools and health centres.

Mr Speaker, the programmes dictated to us, for example, the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers (UgIFT), dictate that the tenders or procurements are done by the mother ministries at the headquarters. Therefore, the schools that benefit from UgIFT for the construction of seed schools, their procurements are done by the Ministry of Education and Sports. Likewise, the health centres are done by the Ministry of Health.

We have complained and we think the ministries are in the process of discussing with the donors to adjust these conditions because, there is hybrid procurement where someone is allocated to six schools – like the one that is building in Ntoroko is the one building in Bundibugyo, building in Kiyombya in Bunyangabu, building in Kabarole, in Kasenda. Therefore, he has five schools and he does not have the capacity. If you are not forceful, you will not complete it. *(Interjection)* I was, and mine is completed, but I have forwarded him for blacklisting. So, it is not our fault.

Mr Speaker, we have, as Ministry of Local Government, our self-inflicted wounds, but the amendments we are making in the Act, we have proposed that all the headquarters be the same design and the same amount. I give an example of Butaleja; when we advanced them Shs 200 million, they made the foundation as big as this parliamentary building. And after two days, they were crying that the money was not enough. So, understand us; we are fighting tooth and nail to make sure that there is flexibility in the conditions from the donors. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Colleagues, we are going to break for lunch – for a 30 minutes' lunch. So we will return here at exactly 2.35 p.m.

The House is suspended for 30 minutes.

(The House was suspended at 2.05 p.m.)

(On resumption at 2.34 p.m., the Deputy Speaker presiding_)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, welcome back. We are going to continue with the debate. I am trying to avoid calling the names of colleagues who have registered here but are nowhere to be seen. Let me scan through; I think you can also register quickly. Give them another paper, so that they also register and I give them a priority. You can register behind this sheet. For those who are already registered, I am going to read your names; I will give you priority.

I see Hon. Godfrey Onzima and Hon. Patience Nkunda - I do not want to read a Member's name when they are not here. I saw Hon. Isaac Etuka; oh, he is here! Hon. Tom Alero Aza, Hon. Okeyoh and Hon. Siraje, I have seen you. I was waiting for Hon. Okori-Moe because she is number one on the list.

Hon. Janet Okori-Moe, Hon. Siraje Ezama, Hon. Godfrey Onzima, Hon. Patience Nkunda and Hon. Agnes Abwooli. *(Hon. Paparu rose_)* - if you registered – Hon. Paparu, you are here. There were different papers, so I started with one of them. I have another paper, which has Hon. Isaac Etuka, Hon. Tom Alero, Hon. Okeyoh, Hon. Melsa Avako, Hon. Bataringaya, Hon. Sowedi Kitanywa, Hon. Lillian Paparu and Hon. Moses Aleper. I am starting with Hon. Okori-Moe.

2.37

MS JANET OKORI-MOE (NRM, Woman Representative, Abim): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I also thank the chairperson and members of the Committee on Budget, and the Shadow Minister for the report. I have a few comments.

The first is on the priority areas of the budget strategy. When you look at the priority areas of the budget strategy and compare them with the budget allocation per programme, it looks like the word “priority” is losing meaning.

When you look at the priorities, you realise that agro-industrialisation is number one, but the allocation to the programme is just 2.9 per cent of the budget yet this programme is supposed to implement many other activities and programmes, including mechanisation, irrigation, fighting pests and diseases, and extension services, which is, of course, the fulcrum of agriculture. So, I feel this programme should be given more money.

I also agree with the committee on the issue of encouraging all areas in the country to produce perennial crops. These perennial crops can be more economically rewarding and good for improving soil health, which is already eroded.

In its submission, the committee also alluded to allocating money to two different ministries; the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Water and Environment - that is water for production. This is the time for us to make a pronouncement on this because this has even sometimes caused conflict. You find that these two ministries even conflict on sites.

A case in point is Nakonyen Dam in Moroto District, where the Ministry of Agriculture went for it; the Ministry of Water also went for it. So, the best we can do is put that money for water for production in a pool.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of infrastructure development for universities, I thank the committee. We need money for those universities. I am also happy that the Government has taken a step that every subregion gets a university to support the education of our children.

However, it is unfortunate that in some areas, land has become a problem. Whereas this is so, the Government has goodwill for such universities. However, in the case of Karamoja where we have 773 acres of land for constructing a constituent college of agriculture under Gulu University, we do not have money for that. I was there when the Vice Chancellor was requesting just Shs 10 billion; the land is

there - other universities that have the goodwill do not have land.

The other, Mr Speaker, is about compulsory free primary education, which the country is envisaging. The best we can do now is to prepare for that kind of programme. I take cognisance of the fact that many of our community schools are struggling. Some of them have been struggling for the last 16 years. They have not been coded. In my district, I think I have 20. Some of them have been in operation for 16 years without coding. This is now the right time for us to prepare to receive the baby called “free compulsory primary education” – *(Member timed out.)*

2.41

MR THEMBO MUJUNGU (NRM, Busongora County South, Kasese): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. On the Budget Framework Paper, I have three issues. One is on the theme, “Full Monetisation of the Economy through Commercial Agriculture, Industrialisation...”

Mr Speaker, we know that this country has a section of the population, which is under subsistence economy – 39 per cent as given by some research. I find it a bit difficult for this House to say our theme is “full monetisation of the economy...” when we know very well that this section of the population is yet to migrate. Much as it is an aspiration, I think it needs to be re-evaluated because these people are still outside that segment and will remain there for a reasonable time.

The second is on the issue of agriculture. I know some of my colleagues have referred to it, but you can see in the BFP, that the allocation to agriculture is 2.9 per cent, yet agriculture employs 62 per cent of the economy. It contributes 24 per cent to the GDP. Do we need to add, Mr Speaker, that it is agriculture that feeds this country 100 per cent? By allocating it so little, are we fair?

On the same subject, funding for agriculture is skewed to external sources; over 60 per cent is externally sourced, leaving about 35 per cent to be raised by the Government of Uganda.

Mr Speaker, you will be told that the Government of Uganda struggles to provide counter-funding, and this impedes implementation of most of the projects.

I think we need to speak to the ordinary folks and provide more money from the Government of Uganda to fund the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) or the agriculture sector compared to relying on external sources.

Lastly, on the gaps, it is a pity that the Budget Framework Paper (BFP) has not found money to fund the National Curriculum Development Centre - just Shs 12 billion, yet we are told that we spend Shs 65 billion on stationery and periodicals. Why don't we cut Shs 12 billion from periodicals and have enough money to fund the curriculum development centre? I submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Siraji Ezama.

2.45

MR SIRAJI EZAMA (NRM, Aringa County, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for the comprehensive report that they have submitted on the Floor of Parliament. My concern is about our revenue. We are losing a lot of revenue to nearby countries.

On the 27th of last month, I was at the border post of Oraba. I happened to interact with the officers from the Uganda Revenue Authority. You will find that the issue of transferring number plates to the Ministry of Works and Transport has cost us a lot of money.

In the districts that border neighbouring countries, there is the possibility of individuals in those districts acquiring motorcycles and cars from across the borders, and at the point of issuing them with Ugandan number plates, the delays by the Ministry of Works and Transport give them opportunity to take the advantage and get number plates cheaply from the neighbouring countries and use them at our expense. We need to expedite the issuance of number plates to these people so that we can

be able to get the revenue we are losing from them.

Secondly, we have elevated some health facilities from grade III to IV and from grade IV to district hospitals, from district hospitals to regional referral hospitals. However, these lack many basic facilities necessary for the provision of essential services in those hospitals. I want to take the example of Yumbe Hospital. When you go to Yumbe Referral Hospital, you will know that we do not have an Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) clinic, nursing school and many other things that are supposed to be there.

Equally in the health centre IV facilities, the basic things that are supposed to be there are missing, and the staffing levels are inadequate, making it hard for the community to access services from those health facilities.

Thirdly, Mr Speaker, I want to talk about the shoddy work that we are losing money to, especially in the area of road infrastructure.

You will find a road that was designed to last 30 to 50 years getting destroyed within a year. This forces us to allocate more funds for rehabilitation while also maintaining those roads that we are supposed to have used for more than 30 years.

Considering that you will find that there is no value for money as far as those infrastructure projects are concerned. We need to do something to ensure that money is not wasted to do work that has already been done; it is very appalling. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Onzima?

2.50

MR GODFREY ONZIMA (NRM, Aringa North County, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to submit on four areas - agriculture, health, staffing levels, and the issue of programme-based budgeting. As a country, we have taken four areas to concentrate on to boost our productivity levels.

Area number one is agriculture, followed by industrialisation, particularly industrial production, ICT, then services.

The issue of increasing agricultural productivity goes hand in hand with agricultural mechanisation. When you analyse the National Resistance Movement (NRM) manifestos - if you start with the manifesto of 2016 and the current one of 2021, you will get to know that the Government promised to give tractors to every subcounty in this country. Since then, our district has received only one tractor. That one tractor was provided without the disks. This has remained the case since February.

On the allocation to the agriculture sector - much as we look at agriculture as our priority, the allocation to this sector does not speak to the energy we put in, in terms of talking about agriculture.

I think we need to revisit this and allocate more money to the agricultural sector, and also fulfil the manifesto's objective that every subcounty must have a tractor -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, if for each sector you are going to speak to it for that long, when will others speak?

MR ONZIMA: Let me summarise. In the health sector, I have two areas. Area number one is the chairperson's observation that out of 27 beds, which are supposed to be in the intensive care unit at Mulago, we only have 15 yet Mulago is the national referral hospital where other critical sicknesses are referred. I request that we look into this by increasing the funding.

The congestion at the cancer institute; to reduce this congestion, we should consider decentralising cancer treatment in the long run, instead of concentrating it only at Mulago. We may not go to every regional referral hospital, but we can identify one hospital per region, equip it, and train the staff to help reduce the congestion at Mulago.

[Mr Onzima]

On the issue of staffing, the Government banned recruitment but when you go to some of these districts - I was speaking to my District Health Officer and he gave me the statistics. If you could allow, I would read, but there is no time. I think let us try to revisit this and look at the issue of staffing again.

Finally, on programme-based budgeting, much as we talk about this when you look at the allocation of this funding, you notice that it appears that the programme-based budgeting is not well understood by these ministries. People come here and say they have unfunded priorities, but under the programme-based budgeting system, their expectation is that money is given to the programmes, which sit and allocate this money to themselves. There is no extra money that is supposed to be demanded from Parliament, but these ministers come and say they have unfunded priority.

Above all, we are operating on a cash budget. Here, we are saying we have Shs 57 trillion. That means that the Government must sit down and identify the priorities it is supposed to accomplish within the Shs 57 billion. There is supposed to be nothing like unfunded priorities. I beg that the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development goes back and reorganises this.

Finally, on programme groupings, there are many entities that feel they have been – *(Member timed out.)*

2.55

MS PATIENCE KINSHABA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kanungu): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the committee chairperson and Hon. Ssemujju for their report. My issue is on the energy.

When you read our National Development Plan IV (NDP IV), you realise that it is about achieving household income, and sustainability through production and value addition. We all know that energy has a direct effect on poverty reduction. However, there is still limited access to sustainable energy in this country. We all know that in the communities that have access

to energy, poverty has been reduced to 10.2 per cent.

I want to speak about Kanungu. Today, in Kanungu, we have a problem of electricity. It is on and off. Even if it threatens to rain, the electricity will still go off. How do you expect people, who do not have access to energy, to be able to do value addition? I request the minister for finance to increase the funding for electricity and the last mile connection so that we can have many institutions in Uganda connected.

Mr Speaker, there is no way we can achieve what we want without enough budget. I request the ministry for finance to look into this.

Looking at hospitals in Kanungu, we have some subcounties that do not even have health centres III or II. For example, Nyakinoni Subcounty does not have any health facilities at all. I request the Ministry of Health to look into this one so that they can upgrade Health Centres II to Health Centres III.

I would like to thank the Government for the money they have been giving us for Kambuga renovation. Although it is at a slow pace, we have received Shs 300.7 million – *(Interjections)* – not a billion – *(Member timed out.)*

2.57

MS AGNES KUNIHIRA (NRM, Workers' Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the committee. They have made an observation that there has been a failure to comply with the law, more especially Schedule 3 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015. Specifically, they have not given rates for unemployment and employment. That is a key area for which Parliament should demand the ministry to provide details.

Mr Speaker, there are a number of industries coming up for which we thank the Government. However, if you try to follow up and find out where those workers are, you will not find any record giving us the number of workers in those industries. The reason is that a majority

of the workers in those industries are casual workers – whether they are skilled or unskilled – so, they cannot be traced. In that way, the Government loses money. They would be able to collect Pay-As-You-Earn, but they cannot.

My second issue is that, again, I have observed that we submitted a number of key priorities, but they have not been captured in the report. The entire report just has a small paragraph on the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. I think this is an omission. The committee chairperson will respond. Yet, we have serious issues, one of them being child labour. It has become an international issue. In the last conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), it was reported that there is an issue of child labour in Uganda. Of recent, there is another report that is even threatening to boycott our products that are produced using child labour. Among these are fish, coffee and others.

Therefore, I am wondering why our report, which we submitted to the committee, has not been captured. And so, I want to appeal to the committee chairperson that the key priority areas be captured in the report before it is adopted. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Ssenyonyi, you want to make comments before we continue? Committee chairperson, you will respond at once. You cannot go issue by issue.

2.59

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Mr Speaker, maybe for the comfort of colleagues, you did not even call me as “Leader of the Opposition” (LOP). Normally, when you call me, people think you are going to close the debate. However, you promised us that you are going to avail adequate time –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is why I called you as “Hon. Ssenyonyi”. At the end, it is the “LOP”.

MR SSENYONYI: There you are. The debate is still on, as you promised. Mr Speaker, there

are a couple of issues that are concerned with the budget process that we are handling and, with specificity, the Budget Framework Paper.

Domestic arrears have been alluded to by honourable colleagues. Right now, the amount is Shs 14.6 trillion - this is money that the Government owes to the people of Uganda - suppliers, those that have done work for the Government, contractors, pensioners, and so forth.

The Government, many times, does not want to add this figure to our total debt burden. I remember last time we had some pettifoggery here with the ministry for finance. They are so convinced that this figure should not be part of our debt burden. However, Government, when somebody does work for you or provides a service, you have agreed on a particular amount of money and you have not paid them, you owe them; that is a debt.

I would like the Government to begin to take it that seriously. Maybe that is why they do not even factor it in a great deal. This year they are providing about Shs 200 billion, but we are talking about a backlog of Shs 14.6 trillion. Maybe when you begin to consider it as a debt, is when you will begin to attend to this money –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ssenyonyi, for the record, which they corrected earlier, the one of the Bank of Uganda has been cleared. They are now remaining with Shs 5 trillion.

MR SSENYONYI: Mr Speaker, we are waiting for clarity because, again, it was raised to say they have told us they have cleared this, but there has been no ascertainment. The Government will need to ascertain that to us. Truthfully, many times they tell us: “We have done this.” The Government tells us “We have sent money for capitation grant” and then Members, across, say the money has not reached.

Anyhow, the critical point is that this money should begin to be considered as part of our public debt. Let us pay these ordinary people. You are so quick in paying these foreign

[Mr Ssenyonyi]

investors and so on. These are our ordinary people who are buttressing our economy. Can we pay these people?

Mr Speaker, I am also concerned that we have not allocated money for the Kiteezi Landfill victims. I do not know why the Government does not care about its people. Attorney-General, let us not wait for these people to go to court, because they suffered this catastrophe as a result of negligence by Government officials. That is why some have been taken to court. In fact, do not even look at it as paying – well, it is, but can we care about our people? They lost their loved ones.

Some of these people have not had the bodies of their loved ones recovered because the Government reached a particular cap and said: “We cannot trace any more bodies.” I remember there is one man who lost his wife and child. I saw him making an appeal on television, saying: “Can the Government allow us to carry out a funeral service here?” That is so that they can have closure because they have not, up to now, recovered the remains of their loved ones.

Let us care about our people. This was an emergency. It should have been considered very critically, especially because it was as a result of the negligence of the Government. These people had their homes neighbouring this landfill but the Government did not take care of it and the catastrophe happened. Let us pay them. Let us take care of our people.

Relatedly, over 10 years ago, there were people occupying the Naguru-Nakawa Estate. The Government came up with a grand idea after somebody approached them and said “we want to put up a satellite city here.” That area is in my constituency. People were evicted in the night, crying with their stuff, and some went back to their villages. The Government told them “Do not worry. In a few months, there are going to be apartments built here. You are going to be the first beneficiary”. Some of them waited and many have since died. Until tomorrow, that did not happen.

The Government promised that they were going to shoulder the burden. The amount that was agreed upon about seven or eight years ago was Shs 17.9 million for each of those households. However, up to now, these people have not gotten that little money.

Finance minister, the value of Shs 17.9 million eight years ago is not the same today. The longer you take to clear this money, the less it becomes because of inflation and many other factors. I do not know why we do not capture these things and take care of our people. When you pledge, fulfil it. The Government said, “We have inconvenienced you, we are sorry. The apartments we promised you have not come. Let us pay you”. But those people are always crying. They have not gotten their money. Why? Yet, it is not much money.

Mr Speaker, we have talked severally about health care. I am glad that even the majority report is capturing these issues because some of these matters are not even partisan. Each of us wants good health care in our constituencies because as you know, any of us- you could be deep in your constituency and you get a medical emergency. While you have resources that can take you to whichever good health facility in this country and abroad, at that time, you will need emergency attention and the nearest will be that health centre III or IV in that place. As we did see it happen to one of our honourable colleague in Kanungu, he had to be taken to that health centre. Can we attend to them?

Therefore, when we talk about these issues, it is not political. It is for the good of all of us. Our hope is that we will pay attention.

Mulago is our national referral hospital. First of all, even the 27 or more Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds, as we were told, are not adequate for a national referral. Only 15 of those, are functional. These matters should concern us. Mr Speaker, I think this is a national tragedy that our national referral has 15 functional ICU beds. I thought COVID-19 taught us that a medical emergency can happen; it should find us ready.

Mr Speaker, I had a constituent who passed on at the Uganda Cancer Institute. A few times, I would frequent it and I would find people sleeping outside the Uganda Cancer Institute, including patients, in the cold. Surely, Government, let us care about our people. I do not know how we can overemphasise this matter. Each time I would go to visit, people would tell me, "Please help us". People would be outside in the cold, including patients. This should concern us.

Mr Speaker, we have got a challenge that I have raised here severally about Government tax exemptions. I think the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development needs to put an end to these uncontrolled tax exemptions. They are problematic. They happen so wantonly and they are abused. Does that mean that any serious jurisdiction cannot have that as a policy? Of course, not. However, we have refused to do this in an orderly manner.

Mr Speaker, as I mentioned, the Minister of State for Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (General Duties) Hon. Henry Musasizi, promised us, when I raised this matter last year, that by the end of last year, they would come to Parliament with a comprehensive taxation policy. We are in 2025, where is that taxation policy?

The Taxation policy is not limited to the new taxes you are introducing because it includes things like how you get to exempt who warrants an exemption. I do not know why that taxation policy has not come yet you committed to bring it. I know the excuse you will give is that this year, "we are not introducing new taxes." No, we are planning for the future. Also, because these tax exemptions are abused severely. Can we have a clear policy that applies across the board and not for people who are friends with the minister who will get an exemption? Let it be clear.

Relatedly, Mr Speaker, the question of bailouts has also been abused. Together with honourable colleagues, we visited Atiak Sugar Factory that has been given Shs 553 billion, Dei BioPharma

Ltd, which has been given Shs 723 billion. We also went to ROKO which has been given about Shs 265 billion, and others, as bailouts.

We said, look, a bailout is something the Government can do but let it be properly organised. Let there be a policy so that Ugandan businesses that are struggling know this is how I can apply to be considered. But now nobody knows. It is a few people who obviously should be connected that get to have taxpayers' money. Why? Otherwise, people will keep accusing you, Hon. Musasizi by saying that those who are getting bailouts are either a shareholder in those companies, as ministers. Why do you not have a clear policy so that people know anyone who is hard up, employing many Ugandans can access it so that it is fair? I hope that that can come. Together with the taxation policy, this bailout policy needs to come.

Second to last, Mr Speaker, as a country, we need to become a lot more aggressive in the fight against corruption. We need to become a lot more aggressive than we are. We lose Shs 10 trillion per year, according to a report by the Inspectorate General of Government (IGG). Shs 10 trillion! That is a third of what the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) collects.

Think about it. The Uganda Revenue Authority collects taxpayer money but a third of it is stolen. This is grotesque, to say the least. I hope that we can become a lot more aggressive.

Mr Speaker, whenever we say, can we deploy more money here or there, the Government says, we have limited resources. If we dealt with some of these bad manners of ours like corruption, the money would be available. Imagine Shs 10 trillion! How many health centres can that build? How many seed secondary schools can that construct? How many roads can be worked on? We need to become a lot more aggressive. We need to make corruption risky.

Mr Speaker, in countries where corruption is not as prevalent as it is here, it is not because they are morally upright or they are very good people. No, their systems have made it risky

[Mr Ssenyonyi]

for people to steal. We need to do that here. Otherwise, we will keep singing the same songs again and again.

Finally - and this is for record purposes - when the BFP is being handled by the sectoral committees, different entities interface with them and discuss their budgets. The Parliamentary Commission met the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs on 13 January 2025 regarding the Budget of the commission. I am a member of the commission but I was not invited to this meeting as has been the case with many other meetings.

Mr Speaker, one of the members of the committee asked - because it was in the Speaker's boardroom - she was present with two or three commissioners. When one of the members of the committee asked whether I had been informed, one of the commissioners said, "Yes", I had been informed. I kept wondering how.

Mr Speaker, commission meetings are not handled through hearsay in the corridors. An invitation is written so that I know but I did not know about this. That commissioner said I had been invited. I do not know how.

I thought this should be on the record because it is important we must be transparent about how we operate. It is problematic that some members of the commission will be locked out when critical issues like our budgets are being discussed. Mr Speaker, we do not get to be members of the commission on anyone's invitation. It is by law. So, I thought that would be clarified because I know that our budget is part of what we are discussing.

Some of us were not party to this. Maybe, you, as the Deputy Speaker, got an invitation but sent apologies. I do not know because in my case, there was no such situation and I do not know why we keep doing the same thing because it shows that there are certain things we are hiding and yet, there should be nothing to hide. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Just

to make a clarification on that point - I did not receive an invitation nor did I attend the meeting and I do not think it was necessary because the budget of the Commission is presented by the Clerk to Parliament.

What we did, as a Commission, was to meet much earlier, we approved it and then handed it over to the Accounting Officer to go and interact with the committee.

Now, if some people went and attended, I do not know but I was not interested because I had done my job at the Commission level. For the earlier meeting - I do not know, I would need to cross-check. But I was not interested in appearing before the committee because that is the work of the Clerk to Parliament and not me. Hon. Etuka Isaac, then Hon. Alero Tom.

3.15

MR ISAAC ETUKA (NRM, Upper Madi County, Madi-Okollo): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I would like to thank the chairperson of the committee and Hon. Ssemujju for the reports that they have laid before us.

I am going to address three issues. The first is about the presidential pledges. Recall that presidential pledges have been issues discussed here over time and by the time the President makes a pledge, we expect that the ministries, departments, and agencies are represented in such engagements. But over the years, you will find that these presidential pledges are not made priorities.

When we were meeting the universities, apart from, I think Mbarara University of Science and Technology - one or two universities - all the other universities have big presidential pledges that the Ministry of Education and Sports has never captured. I think on page 178 of the report, which was presented by the Chairperson, the Committee on Budget, there are two private universities selected to benefit from the presidential pledges.

Somebody questioned the criteria for selecting such institutions for benefiting from such yet, all the Government universities that have pledges of Shs 14 billion to Shs 15 billion have

never been catered for.

Looking at the priorities of this budget, we are talking about agro-industrialisation, tourism, mineral-based industrialisation, and science and technology. It is very ironic that even when we are talking about research - the minister and chairperson are here - you will find out that apart from Makerere University, other universities have in fact been denied funding for research where even the committee recommended only a mere Shs 1 billion.

Research is one of the cardinal roles of a university. And now, if we deny the universities money for research, yet we are talking about research, science, and technology, innovation, and what have you, it is really ironic. I, therefore, think the minister for finance has to look into that.

Mr Speaker, another issue, which has also affected us so much is the budget cuts. The Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs) have been reduced across ministries, departments, and agencies at a very critical time.

The minister said that in the Financial Year 2023/2024, Anyiribu Health Centre III was allocated Shs 920 million - honourable minister, I wish you would capture that properly because you reduced all the money. The sub-county went ahead to rent a small house in a trading centre, but even the local government could not afford to pay that rent. Now the few drugs have been transferred to the office of the LC3 chairperson in the Anyiribu Subcounty and this is because of a budget cut. When we look at IPFs, it is by the ministry for finance and I think it is very unfair.

This takes me to the issue of the unbalanced developments across this country. One honourable colleague said in some places, people are advocating for water for animals, but for us, even where we are asking for one borehole or a water tank, the ministry cannot give it yet in some places people are asking for dams; multi-billion projects. That is how unfair the ministry for finance is because when we look at whatever is happening, it is very

appalling.

In the report, the Chairperson of the Budget Committee pointed out the issues of concern in the education sector but one of the big issues was the issue of discriminatory salary enhancement for arts and science teachers. This has put a lot of burden on the parents because as members of the Committee on Education and Sports, when we visited schools like Nabisunsa and the like, parents decided that they could not afford to have such a discriminatory salary enhancement. What they did was just to increase fees so that all the science and arts teachers are paid uniformly because these are people who sit in the same staff room. But now, the majority of the schools that could not afford that kind of arrangement, their teachers are in a bad situation.

Schools are - practically if you go to many Government schools, there is no teaching and learning. And I would like to hope that this issue of the discriminatory salary is properly catered for in this budget.

Mr Speaker - (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Alero Tom and then Hon. Okeyoh. Honourable colleagues, the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) has a special status, so considering the time I gave him, you will need to work hard to reach his status. That said, do not say I gave LOP so much time than you – but that does not mean you cross over to become a LOP. Yes, Hon. Alero?

MR TOM ALERO (NRM, West Moyo County, Moyo): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the chance. I would like to thank the chairperson of the committee. In the same vein, I would also like to thank Hon. Ssemujju Nganda, for presenting his minority report.

The theme for the budget is related to agro-industrialisation and commercialisation of agriculture. However, agro-industrialisation and agriculture commercialisation can only be possible if we can tackle issues related to climate change like changes in the weather

[Mr Alero]

patterns in most parts of the country. We have dry spells with strong, intense heat and at times the destruction of crops by hailstorms and so forth, which has led to crop failure.

It is therefore, imperative that if we are to really follow the theme of this year's budget, we should consider issues like irrigation, tractors as well as mechanisation of agriculture; if we are to succeed in achieving our theme of the Budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

Similarly, I hope the Government can fast-track the construction of the bridge across the River Nile in Laropi, in Moyo District for the transportation of perishable goods. This is because more often than not, you find perishable goods like tomatoes, cabbages, onions, fresh fish and so on, getting spoiled because of the delays at the ferry point.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Government for kick-starting the construction of the Koboko-Yumbe-Moyo Road. As I talk, the work is in progress. Thank you, Government, and I hope the work will not stall but will progress.

Mr Speaker, we are also waiting for the fast-tracking of the construction of the Laropi-Moyo-Afoji Road, because as I talk, the procurement process is on. We will be happy if that can also be fast-tracked for the transportation of perishable goods.

Under education, Muni University had expressed interest in repurposing Erepí PTC into Muni Technoscience University, but up to now, that has not come to fruition. We are waiting for the results, and I hope all will be okay.

Lastly, electricity is the vehicle for agro-processing and agro-industrialisation. In Moyo District, electricity is unstable and unreliable; it is always off and on. We will be very grateful if the power in Moyo is stabilised to encourage agro-processing as well as agro-industrialisation. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon.

Okeyoh - Colleagues, we are using a maximum of three minutes.

3.24

MR PETER OKEYOH (NRM, Bukooli Island County, Namayingo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My colleagues and I who represent the fishing community have always come to this House with only lamentations. But why? If the Fisheries Subsector was funded, then our problems and the problems of our communities would be solved.

Mr Speaker, the report indicates clearly that the Fisheries Subsector exported only 5 per cent after producing 5.6 per cent. This is a sleeping giant. The Fisheries Subsector, if properly funded, can turn around the economy of this country.

If our people were facilitated with fishing inputs, then the economy of this country would change because of the Fisheries Subsector. Many fishing areas were provided with facilities to better the fish we produce, but all these are now white elephants. This should be addressed.

Mr Speaker, when it comes to the question of Busoga University, year in, year out, the people from Busoga and Bunyoro have been calling on the Government to establish a university in these regions.

The President, during his tours, through the Minister of Education and Sports clearly stated that Busoga University was on track and funding had been provided. Today, we are getting to know that even no Vote is awarded to Busoga University. Busoga and Bunyoro are calling for the actualisation of these universities.

Mr Speaker, I come from a hard-to-reach area, and like my other colleagues, these are the areas that would be given priority. As my colleague has stated, whereas other areas have two or three Seed Secondary Schools, some of us from the islands and other hard-to-reach areas find that subcounties like Lolwe Subcounty have no secondary school, Bukana

Subcounty has no secondary school, Jagusi in Mayuge District, where the Rt Hon. Deputy Prime Minister comes from, has no secondary school, Bumba has no secondary school and others in Buvuma. In this budget, we should address these hard-to-reach areas.

Finally, I have not heard about money for elections. I sit on the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs and the budget for elections was about to recruit 5,000 policemen and then also to recruit 5,000 polling constables. It is an unfunded priority, so it is an area that we need to look at because we need peaceful elections.

Instead, the committee only says that the army requested money, which is a preserve of the Uganda Police Force. It has not come – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us now hear from Hon. Melsa Avako and Hon. Basil Bataringaya.

3.28

MS MELSA AVAKO (NRM, Woman Representative, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Chairperson of the Budget Committee and Hon. Ssemujju for the reports presented. For the few years I have been here in Parliament, I want to applaud the Ministry of Education and Sports for their good system of communication.

As Members of Parliament, we write to these ministries. I have confirmed that the Ministry of Education and Sports always responds to or gives feedback on our letters. We raise issues by writing requisitions to the ministry. They always respond by saying, “If the resource envelope permits, they shall consider your concerns.” *(Laughter)* However, this resource envelope never materialises meaning this ministry is underfunded.

I have also confirmed from the Budget Committee that there is low investment in the Education Sector. As Members of Parliament, we are the custodians of budget allocation - I am suggesting that this time round, we support our Ministry of Education and Sports because

it is through good education that we can be placed wherever we want to be.

If you come from a rural place like myself, you will find out that people are struggling with education. While we have Government schools, Members, I want to tell you that parents are struggling. Education has become very expensive. Why? It is because we have abandoned our own Government schools and shifted to private schools because of performance.

How can we perform best? We can perform best when there is a good and conducive environment for education, teachers are well paid, and there is enough money for inspections, assessments, and many other factors that contribute to good performance. That is my concern, Mr Speaker.

We also emphasised agriculture and we are saying that we should eradicate poverty in rural areas, not only in urban areas but in rural areas, as well through agriculture. We can only assist subsistence farmers to upgrade to commercial farmers when the Government invests enough by recruiting enough agricultural extension workers. This is because some of those subsistence farmers do not even know what to do with production, like the commercial mechanisation we are talking about today, and so on. All this needs extension workers to act – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Bataringaya and Hon. Sowedi Kitanywa?

3.31

MR BASIL BATARINGAYA (NRM, Kashari North County, Mbarara): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. For the record, I was the first in the House, although I am speaking much later. I was here with the honourable minister and Hon. Ssemujju –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not know about that. I am going by how you registered. So, you are the first but in the middle in terms of registration.

MR BASIL BATARINGAYA: Thank you,

[The Deputy Speaker]

Mr Speaker. I will start with the GDP, which has been said to have increased from Shs 144 trillion to Shs 154 trillion, but the tax revenue is not growing in response to that. I believe these tax holidays should be checked.

Secondly, I go to education. My district submitted a request for four Seed Schools in 2021. However, *The New Vision* published the list and my district was left out. So, I wonder what happened in the budgeting process.

On Capitation Grant, Shs 6,000 per child per term translates to Shs 75 per day on an average of 80 days in a term. Surely Shs 75 is too little to support a child.

On health, the Government of USA has recently suspended aid to many countries including Uganda, and I think we should refocus our budget to make sure that people who are on ARVs are taken care of, and also to ensure Health Centre IIs are upgraded to Health Centre IIIs, and Health Centre IVs are completed.

We created town councils way back in 2016/2017 but these town councils are not being funded completely. In my town councils, people do not have any services – no roads, no nothing.

Last time, emoluments LC-I to LC-V had appeared in the budget, and the President had indicated that it was – but it evaporated from the budget last time. I beg that this time it is considered so that the emoluments of LC-I leaders are increased.

Electricity - we have naked poles across the country, especially in Kashari North since 2021. How shall we promote value addition without electricity?

Second to last, let me say something about the Bwizibwera-Buhweju-Kabwohe-Mitooma Road. In NDP IV, now it has been listed as pre-feasibility yet it has been featuring in NDP I up to NDP III. What happened?

Lastly, domestic arrears. I saw a figure from

Hon. Ssemujju of Shs 14 trillion. If we allocate Shs 200 billion per year, it will take us 70 years to pay off these domestic arrears if we stop accumulating any new ones. I beg to submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kitanywa, Hon. Paparu and Hon. Moses Aleper.

3.35

MR SOWEDI KITANYWA (NRM, Busongora County North, Kasese): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I begin by thanking the committee for the good report. I also thank Hon. Ssemujju, for the good minority report. I will comment on three issues.

One, on page 7 of the main report, the committee observes that the National Budget Framework Paper complies with the PFMA 2015, but runs short of three major issues. One of the issues has to do with the rate of employment and unemployment. We recently had our population census. In my opinion, the population census should have provided these figures.

The committee observes that this is not the first time but that on several occasions, the rates for unemployment and employment have not been provided. I just want the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development to tell us why it has become very difficult for it to provide this essential indicator, yet it is very important in terms of planning.

There is a pending strike by Arts teachers. They have warned that if their salaries are not enhanced, they are soon going on strike. As Parliament, we should be seen trying to answer their cry.

My suggestion is that since the Government does not have enough money, we could enhance their salary by at least by some percentages, so that in this Budget Framework Paper, we put about 5 per cent, the next should be 10 per cent so that they see that their work is being appreciated.

On page 47 of the report, the committee observed something about the Mulago Cancer Institute. I add my voice to the voices of the other colleagues who have talked about this cancer institute.

A few weeks ago, I also visited this cancer institute. The patients welcome you right away from the first door of the institute. I would beg that in this budget, we should get some substantial amount of money to complete the structures, but also work towards ensuring that we also establish regional cancer institutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Lillian Paparu.

3.38

MS LILLIAN PAPARU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The committee reported that we continue to pay commitment fees on loans that we borrow. From the time we joined this Parliament, especially us the first-timers, this has been reported, and the question that has been asked is: “Why do we borrow when we are not ready to utilise the money?” Instead, we are continuing to spend on some monies that we have borrowed. I think the Minister will explain to us why this is happening and why it is continuing to happen.

I am from one of the remnant districts, that is Arua District. Until now, my headquarters staff are sitting at the city centre. Last year, the Government allocated a small amount of money to the remnant districts. We started putting some foundation and latrines to see that we could move.

However, this financial year – the logic was that they are giving some small money and they will continue adding some money every financial year but this time around, there is no allocation for the remnant districts. The people of Arua District cannot continue to move far to the city to access services. Therefore, let the ministry take priority on this so that money is allocated for the remnant districts to help them move to their location.

I think there is a correlation between the fact that the commercial banks are not giving enough money to the private sector; and the private sector is affected by the domestic arrears. I think there is a correlation there. That means internally, we are killing our private sector.

It is reported here that the amounts that the commercial banks give to our business people are reducing. It is because our local business persons are affected by the domestic arrears that they are not getting. If we cannot balance that, then we are going to kill the local businesses that we have in this country.

I urge the ministry to have coordinated budgeting. We have stalled projects. These universities – let me give an example of universities – have projects that started 10 years ago, probably they are on the first floor or second floor, but we go ahead to allocate new structures to other institutions without finishing or completing the ongoing ones as if we do not have a record of where we started and where we are going. If we cannot fast-track and have coordinated planning, we are just deceiving ourselves. For 10 years, a structure is there and you are allocating money to start new structures?

Also roads, Mr Speaker, we have been crying here as West-Nilers on our road. The road between Pakwach and Nebbi was supposed to be constructed within two years. It is almost four years. Now Nebbi-Arua; we are here crying over it when that stretch is not yet even completed yet we are jumping to allocate for other roads when these are not completed.

Let us have coordinated planning and, I think that way, we shall have quality delivery and have the trust of the people in us who are appropriating. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Moses Aleper. Hon. Nandala-Mafabi, Hon. Brenda Nabukenya and Hon. Kayemba.

Colleagues, you do not need to stand up. You see, I have learned a reward system. In the morning – it is a reward but indirect sanctioning also - when I came, the ones who were in, I said whoever wants to submit, register yourself. I have now finished the list.

Then, we agreed we would be here at 2.35 p.m. So, I said to the ones who were in that if they want to submit, please register. They have also registered. I have moved to those ones, okay? Once I finish, I will pick those who came in at leisure.

Honourable colleagues, you do not need to stand because I have my lists. Before I conclude them, I cannot pick you even if you stand many times. Okay, let us hear from Hon. Brenda Nabukenya, Hon. Kayemba-Ssolo, and Hon. Godfrey Saazi.

3.34

MR NATHAN NANDALA-MAFABI (FDC, Budadiri County East, Sironko): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, this goes directly to the Attorney-General and the minister for finance. As you are aware, under Section 25(3) of the Public Finance Management Act, a minister has powers to appropriate 10 per cent of the budget without coming to Parliament. This 10 per cent arises from Section 26 of the same Act, pertaining to the Contingency Fund, which is 3.5 per cent of the total budget.

I want you to confirm to us that you do these budgets intentionally so that you can have the 10 per cent without a recourse to Parliament. If not, why don't we amend the law to say that, "Instead of the approved budget, what was spent the previous financial year should be applicable."

Two, Mr Speaker, they talked about ghost schools, and how education is very important. I have seen a school in Mbale, called Mbale Secondary School. It is under the schools called faith-based or government-aided. Mbale Secondary School is 100 per cent a government-aided school. How do you leave

schools, that are meant to benefit, and you put Mbale Secondary School? This is on page 386, number 162. I want the committee to explain to us how they brought in a ghost school, which is already a government-aided school. In fact, we would propose that that money be applied to start Mbale University, which all of us are clamouring for.

Mr Speaker, I have noticed in these budgets every year that, if you look through the lists of those projects that are going to be implemented, you notice that they have been brought here year in, year out, like the schools, health units, and whatever. Why do you recycle?

We need a commitment from the Government that if anything stays - because these are millions – by the way, these are the schools that always appear, and we do not know how they get onto the list.

I had my brother saying that they proposed four seed schools in their area, and none appeared. They must tell us the criteria for choosing these schools and health centres. This is becoming very interesting. Is it because you are Members of the budget committee, that you include on the list what belongs to you? This must be explained to us. This may be the reason the President returned the last budget saying, "You are making mistakes." For the first time, we must deal with how these lists got to the budget committee.

Three, Mr Speaker, I have here, a school in Kampala. I can say it is in Mukono. They are charging Shs 3,865,000. It is a private school but is headed by one person on the Front Bench – (*Interjections*) – per term, about Shs 4 million. That is a school MPs can afford – (*Interjections*)-*exactly*. That is a very expensive school. That means the recourse for other poor Ugandans is public schools - if a public school is not in an area with good teachers, we are in trouble.

I want to make a proposal - the Government right now has created many subcounties. Those that used to be villages are now subcounties. Those that used to be subcounties are now

districts. The policy you made at that time, for subcounties and districts, was when they were big. I recall they were initially 39. I do not know the number now. Why don't you go back and review? This is because you can easily put up a secondary school here, yet in the next village there is a secondary school. Where will you get the children and the teachers? We should go back to the drawing board and review the policy urgently. Where villages have become subcounties or parishes, we can look at the distance and the population, and every area will be served.

I was in a government school in those years. It is called the Busoga College Miri. We would travel long distances to schools. When you do this, you create zero grazing. You are bringing people who do not know the world. I moved from another district and tribe – (Interjections) - Mr Speaker, can I take the information, because it looks like a very interesting topic – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, your time is up. Hon. Brenda Nabukenya, as a senior, I had given you an extra minute, but I saw you donating it.

3.48

MS BRENDA NABUKENYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Luweero): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank Hon. Ssemujju for the minority report and I will also highlight a few issues in the major report.

Mr Speaker, in the major report at 4.1, noted or informed us that research and innovation is one of the budget strategies. On page 40.1, under education, the committee report highlights; it informed us that research is underfunded.

Mr Speaker, research and innovation funds, if they are invested, that is for the public good. We cannot move our country to develop or realise effective and sustainable development if we do not invest in research.

Mr Speaker, I was the shadow minister for education in the first half of the term, and we used to have universities come to our committee. Initially, Makerere University

used to get Shs 30 billion for research, and all these other universities had to collaborate with Makerere to do research.

I understand that the Government introduced new universities that are doing science independently with different programmes. They were collaborating with other foreign universities, but they were not being given research money. It was not until we pushed that the Government awarded these universities at least Shs 2 billion because their work had stalled.

You would find that they are doing different research. For example, Busitema University was working on fish feeds. They had started a project, and they were collaborating with a foreign university. However, their work had stalled because they did not have funds. You can imagine this yet we are promoting fish farming.

I was in Japan and I saw our tilapia on one of the stalls in the supermarket; it was very expensive. When it becomes extinct, we tell people to take up fish farming.

If a university is now getting into a project that is going to enable farmers to acquire feeds - but these universities are not given enough research funds. There is no money for innovation. A university is promised Shs 2 billion, which comes in the last quarter, and is even reduced - the country will not progress if you do not invest in research and innovation

Mr Speaker, if we are to translate research and innovation into economic development, we must deliberately invest in it but I do not see any will to invest in this. We have so many projects in place, but when it comes to investing in them, we do not.

I urge this House to recommend, Mr Speaker, that we have enough money for these universities and scientists, because we will see better agriculture and medical research, and we can become a hub for medical and agricultural research if we invest in it.

Mr Speaker – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Kayemba-Ssolo, Hon. Saazi and Hon. Connie Galiwango. Honourable members, I am giving you three minutes. Be patient.

3.55

MR GEOFFREY KAYEMBA-SSOLO (NUP, Bukomansimbi South County, Bukomansimbi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for both the main report and the minority report from my comrade, the shadow minister, Hon. Ssemujju Nganda.

Mr Speaker, the latest report of the Auditor-General for Financial Year 2023/2024 indicates that out of the 355 subcounties in the country, only two 211 have a health centre IV. One hundred forty-four have no health centres IV. In Butenga Subcounty, where I come from, we have no single health centre, be it a health centre II or what.

In Hon. Ssemujju's report, he showed a detailed wasteful expenditure of this Government such as the Shs 132 billion for bedding and clothing, Shs 159 billion for donations and Shs 298 billion for special meals.

Mr Speaker, I think it would be good for this country to reallocate this money to build health centres in those subcounties that have no single health centre and others that have health centres II instead of health centres IV, as the NRM Government policy says.

Mr Speaker, another issue that I want to tackle is about the loans that we continue to pay interest on. For example, in 2022, we borrowed a loan that was going to help the country, especially in those areas that did not have electricity. Bukomansimbi was one of the beneficiaries. Last year the minister for information, Hon. Dr Chris Baryomunsi, said that "we are still finishing the bureaucratic things" so that we can start utilising that loan yet we are paying the interest.

Bukomansimbi and other districts that have

to benefit from those loans have not received anything. Why do we borrow money when we are not ready to utilise it? Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Saazi and Hon. Connie Galiwango.

3.55

MR GODFREY SAAZI (NUP, Gomba East County, Gomba): Thank you, Mr Speaker. In the same way, I want to thank the chairperson of the committee for the majority report, and Hon. Ssemujju Nganda, for the minority report. These reports are the same, only that the conclusions differ. Hon. Ssemujju was right, based on the body of the reports, but the chairperson of the committee concluded differently.

Mr Speaker, this is what I wanted to say. As Parliament, we should not surrender our responsibility. We should not eat our cake and then have it. I have had a number of submissions from several Members, lamenting about our priority areas. However, when it comes to approving or passing, we pass everything. I wonder where we are and how we define priority areas.

One, the Budget Framework Paper is the first step to the final budget because it is a draft. This means that if we get lost from the start, we shall have got lost even at the final budget. What am I saying?

Section 9 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, says that the Budget Framework Paper must be consistent with the National Development Plan. We have seen that the plan proposed Shs 92 trillion, and the budget has Shs 57 trillion. I wonder who guessed and which is which.

Another point, Mr Speaker, is that we need to be realistic. You cannot talk about priority areas and leave out electricity, roads, hospitals and education. The primary school pupils - it is clear that each child is given Shs 20,000, which means Shs 6,000 per term. I wonder what we are doing here. Honourable members,

we need to be for Ugandans. We should not be for someone else.

When it comes to the medical sector – hospitals – there is the problem of corruption. I read somewhere, where the Inspector General of Government (IGG) said that we lose Shs 10 trillion in corruption scandals. I compared this amount to – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us have Hon. Connie Galiwango, Hon. Namugga and Hon. Kabuusu.

3.57

MS CONNIE GALIWANGO (Independent, Woman Representative, Mbale City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee chairman who presented the report and Hon. Ssemujju. They presented very good reports. However, in those reports, I have a few concerns and if they are reconciled, I think, we will move forward.

Mr Speaker, as an educationist, I am going to basically zero down to education. You are very much aware that they said that there was no money for the new curriculum for A' Level.

We have a few days to start a new term. In a few weeks or days, results will come out and we will need our children to go to school. If we do not have the Shs 7 billion for the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), I do not know what the fate of our children in this country will be.

This is because if the technical team at the Ministry of Education and Sports has the children of Uganda at heart, this should have been the priority, other than putting it as a non-funded priority. It is quite crucial that our children go to A' Level, with a new curriculum.

Mr Speaker, I would also love to speak about the staffing levels in universities. We know that with inadequate staff, there can be a compromise of standards. Some universities such as Busitema University have staffing levels at as low as 10 per cent, while others are at 14 and 19 per cent. If we are really serious

as a Government, we should prioritise this. The human resource is fundamental for a university to deliver. This can only be done if we allocate resources.

Therefore, I am appealing to this House to do that as early as possible because even when they collect their NTR, it goes to the Centre. The Centre takes time to send the monies back and sometimes the students even want to strike because they pay for the identity cards (IDs) but they cannot receive them because the money has gone to the centre. Therefore, something has to be done.

Mr Speaker, alongside that, these universities have started, but with very inadequate infrastructure. If we are to deliver - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Namugga, Hon. Kabuusu and Hon. Muzaale?

4.00

MS GORRETH NAMUGGA (NUP, Mawogola County South, Ssembabule): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I continue to appreciate you for allocating us reasonable time. This is the time for the 11th Parliament to make a statement to this country that we have the capacity to shape the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and in the way they do work.

Mr Speaker, my colleagues have concentrated much on the expenditure side. We need to get back to the revenue side. We need to look into how this country earns money. The loopholes are simply too many, stemming right from exemptions. We do not have a tax register. If we have it, it is very minimal.

Mr Speaker, we need to implement our revenue mobilisation strategy. What am I trying to say is that we need to put much more emphasis on the income of this country. Let us close all the leakages. They are simply too many. Money is stolen from the field, and even that that comes to the coffers of this Government is misused. Therefore, let us look at the revenue side too.

[Ms Namugga]

Honourable colleagues, we are looking at this Budget Framework Paper, which is highly consumptive. You have 80 per cent spent on wage and non-wage and only 20 per cent on capital development. How do we sit here to only plan for 20 per cent?

Hon. Musasizi and your colleagues, go back and allocate more money on capital development. We cannot waste time here to plan for only 20 per cent. You are talking about schools and electricity but where are you going to get the money? These have already allocated the money to the State House to buy clothes. We are not going to spend money taking tea here. Go back and structure the Budget. *(Interjection)* We need more allocations on - you have 80 per cent on consumptive - you are wasting time here. We cannot continue to waste time, Mr Speaker in this House. We need more money.

Pay attention to the informal sector. You have failed to educate the informal sector. You are seriously frustrating the private sector yet you come here to convince this House that you have money to distribute. Honourable colleagues, this team has no money. So, we should create more avenues of ensuring that we get more money.

I have a strategy, Mr Speaker. Let us get back and structure this BFP. We need to reduce the 80 per cent of consumptive to 65 per cent. Create more provision of 15 per cent. Otherwise, we are just joking here.

Hon. Musasizi and colleagues, go back and concentrate. We cannot sit here to waste taxpayer's money and time. You are going to ask for the schools and hospitals but you do not have the sources of the money.

Lastly, Mr Speaker is the issue of fairness in the distribution of Government resources. We have idle investments. You put poles of electricity for campaigns. Since 2019, the poles are scattered everywhere but you cannot put wires. You are now creating more areas of - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon.

Kabuusu Moses.

4.05

MR MOSES KABUUSU (FDC, Kyamuswa County, Kalangala): Mr Speaker, thank you. I also rise to support both the majority and minority reports. However, as Hon. Okeyoh said, the budget allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries in most cases does not address the fisheries resources yet it is a sleeping giant unexplored.

I want to call upon the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to liaise with the agriculture minister because every other time they appear, they tell us they do not have the budget.

We hear of agricultural support for the animal and crop sectors but our fishing communities also require that they be addressed. A comprehensive approach that will also bring on board the fishermen; fishmongers or the ones that rear fish, can raise income to support the economy, the way the Hon. Namugga has said.

Mr Speaker, in the Budget, we must address the issue of water transport. I want to give an example of a water space between Ggaba and Bbule along Ggaba Road. This road can decongest Jinja Road if there was a vessel that joined Mukono and Ggaba. This route would be decongested and people would join the Nyenga route. Many other routes are shorter on the water bodies here, but the Government does less about developing water transport. Needless to mention are the songs we have been singing about water transport to the distant island constituencies.

The Government should, if we are not able to do it using our Budget, give incentives to investors from nearby countries. We have been to Tanzania and Kenya, where the private sector has these vessels. They should give them incentives to come and operate on our waters such that we have safe transport on our water bodies.

Mr Speaker, I want the Government to adopt an

idea - Most of our islands do not have primary and secondary schools. For how long shall our children be raised to become – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Martin Muzaale, Hon. Nekesa Victor and then Hon. Mudimi Ignatius.

4.08

MR MARTIN MUZAALE (NRM, Buzaaya County, Kamuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to begin by thanking the two colleagues who have presented their reports. I will begin with the issue of the ministries. If you go right now to the Ministry of Works and Transport, you will find that all the offices are empty, and all the workers are not there. Go to energy ministry, the same thing because they are idle. They are only waiting for a salary. There is no money for projects and activities.

Mr Speaker, what is so funny is that most of us, after reading the Budget get excited because our project has been considered in the Budget. However, as we come to the end of the year, there is nothing. This is what is happening.

On the issue of domestic arrears, we have lamented so much. With banks, when you go to borrow, they ask for a credit report on your financial status and that is the standard. The reason the Government is able to respond to external borrowings is because they know they still need money from them and without financing, they will not be able to.

Mr Speaker, our people are suffering. They are losing properties and they are crying. The Government has failed to respond to domestic arrears. The local person who has supplied has not been respected.

Mr Speaker, we are the banks here to allow the Government to borrow. Let us put a condition that for the Government to come here and ask for loans, they must come here and show that they have paid the local people who are demanding money. If we put that condition, this Government will respond. That is the only condition we should give them. Otherwise,

it is very unfortunate that a local person who has borrowed little money – is excited to have a contract from the Government, he or she executes it but in the end, he or she loses his properties as we just look on.

Government, why are you coming here all the time to borrow? Why don't you consider these local people? They cannot now access money in their banks because their credit report – (*Member timed out.*)

4.11

COL DR VICTOR NEKESA (UPDF Representative): I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to say something. I would also like to thank the committee for the good report. I am here to support the Budget Frame Paper as it is.

Mr Speaker, I am in support of what has been passed, however, I would like to bring to the attention of Members that we support what the Government is trying to do, especially in getting the economic base wider.

As we speak, the Head of State – our President – is all over Uganda mobilising mindset change; mobilising people to embrace the Parish Development Model and embrace all the Government strategies so that we can increase our productivity and production to have economics right from the household up to the mega level and harness enough economics, enough money, and build up our economies. At the end of the day, the NDP IV will be the best. Let us start slow and then build up.

I would like to thank everybody for their participation in debating the report. I also thank the Government for the vision. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

4.12

MR MUDIMI WAMAKUYU (NRM, Elgon County, Bulambuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to be guided because when you read 2.3 on page 7, we are looking at the compliance test, where the committee has recommended that the Budget Framework Paper is short of some more documents. So, they have observed,

and they said, “*The committee observed that the above information has never been provided to Parliament in all previous National Budget Framework Papers.*”

Mr Speaker, we are here to make laws and to protect them. Now, I want to be guided by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Attorney-General – how should we correct these anomalies?

We also have the issue of the Contingency Fund. It is provided for under Section 26 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) for a certain amount which is not fully provided. At what point should we correct this anomaly?

Mr Speaker, Members have raised the issue of domestic arrears. And when you look at Section 15 of PFMA – commitment of the approved budget – it talks about work plans, recruitment plans, and so on. Section 21 of the same law says the accounting officers are not supposed to commit Government where resources are not. Why are these domestic arrears coming when you read those two sections of the law? I want the Attorney-General to guide this House.

People have lost property, including some contractors. I have a contractor in my place; he got a contract for the road. Out of Shs 1.4 billion, they have paid him Shs 500 million. He said they have not added him money, and he has abandoned the project. He said he will not go back. That is what he told me, frankly, yesterday. He said, “I will not go back; I am demanding money from Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA), Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), and the Ministry of Works and Transport. Where do you want me to get money from?”

Now, whatever has been paid is wasted. Are we going to continue losing money in that form? Why does the Government budget and then midway the minister for finance – they have changed from suppressing – we used to have a terminology called “suppressing,” but now they call it “repurposing”. So, why again do you repurpose the budget midway when we have approved work plans -? (*Member timed*

out.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Edakasi, Hon. Afidra and Hon. Biraaro.

4.15

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

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me start by just focusing on financing the budget. I think when you look at the items that we plan to spend on, they are all noble items. Wouldn't it be appropriate for us, as we think about the future, to actually have a conversation on how to finance the budget away from just merely looking at tax and borrowing? I think for a long time we have concentrated on those two, but maybe the minister needs to think about other sources.

Our taxable community is exhausted, as I speak. If you move around town, you can see that many businesses have failed because we are taxing those same businesses year in, year out. I think we need to think more about how to raise revenue and I think some thoughts have come in. On my list, here are what other people have said: Review the investor tax policy – both locally and those investors coming from abroad. Some of them have outlived their usefulness. I think we need to review and see whether we need to continue exempting them.

We need to invest more in tourism and key areas in agriculture. We call ourselves an agricultural country, but what is it that we are known for, except coffee? So, we have those key crops and areas where we are excelling. We should see a lot more money going there.

We need to negotiate more space for trading in Africa. I think there are so many opportunities that we could use to trade within the African Continent.

If you look at labour remittances, there is over \$100 billion out there, that Africa is competing for, to return home. Uganda, since I think 2019, we have not gone beyond \$1.4 billion. If you compare us with Nigeria; every year Nigeria gets up to \$20 billion from foreign remittances.

If you go to Dubai and witness the influx of Ugandans working there and compare them with Nigerians, it is almost the same numbers, but we are not fetching enough from our workers abroad.

I think the proposals here of paying attention to commercial attachés and this nation's representatives, would be key. So, we should see ourselves financing those if we want to see more revenue coming in.

We need to push the corrupt out of this country. I think that has been said. We discover corruption, but we do very little about punishing the corrupt. If we were saving money from the corrupt, we would be able to finance what we today call – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Afidra, Hon. Biraaro and Hon. Acan Joyce.

4.19

MR RONALD AFIDRA (NRM, Lower Madi County, Madi-Okollo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to applaud my chairperson and Hon. Ssemujju for presenting the views from both sides. I start with Article 32 of the 1995 Constitution, as amended. I want to read it verbatim;

“The state shall provide affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of gender, age, disability, or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them.”

I want to thank my Government for addressing this specific constitutional right, to some extent. We know that in this House, we have Affirmative Action represented. The women are here, people with disabilities are here, and the age limit has been removed, but there is one critical thing that, in my view, the budget should address. These are imbalances created by history.

What is this history about? The marginalised community we have in this country. History has taught it in all the indicators we have in this country. The education indicators; when the

Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results come out, there are regions in this country well known, from history, that will be coming last. This includes Karamoja, West Nile, and in particular, my district. In the previous PLE, Obongi, Madi-Okollo, Lamwo – they are consistently coming last. In my view, these regions have been marginalised. For us, as Parliament, to improve them and bring them equity and match other regions, we need to reflect it in the Budget Framework Paper. To what extent has this budget addressed this imbalance in education performance?

I will cite more, Mr Speaker. In my district, Madi-Okollo, we have 1,700 teachers required to teach in 78 primary schools. But as we speak now, we only have 600; a ratio of one teacher to 250 pupils. How can this community continue to thrive if they are being marginalised over time? Therefore, I would like to see this being addressed across all the marginalised communities reflected in the budget.

The second issue, Mr Speaker, all of us have come here for this budget, which is the cake; it is a national cake. My district and my constituents want to see what is in this budget that shall be going back to them. And this can come if the Budget Framework Paper, to some extent, can be broken down into different regions, especially the development bit. It will be to our surprise or not to our surprise. At the end of next financial – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Biraaro, Hon. Acan and Hon. Byanyima.

4.22

MS JOYCE ACAN (NRM, PWD Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have observed the report, and I would say the report is good. However, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has not been allocated additional funding.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development is directly attached to the community at the grassroots, and this is where our people with disabilities fall.

In 2021, His Excellency promised us that all the rehabilitation centres would be revamped through the Ministry of Gender. After the revamp, they would manufacture the assistive devices so that we would stop importing them. However, I see there is no budget line for that.

The remand homes all over Uganda are in a sorry state. One example is just here at Naguru Remand Home. If you go there and see the conditions under which these children live, it is terrible.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to speak about the – I think I am done; sorry. (*Laughter*)

4.24

MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North County, Isingiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I must thank the chairperson, but most importantly, Hon. Ssemujju, because he was realistic. When we talk about this budget, as one of my colleagues has said, each Member is looking for “What I can take for my constituency.” You will never get it, not until we have practical people.

These members of the National Planning Authority have never travelled around this country to see what is happening. They are just in the office, doing “copy and paste”. They said the National Development Plan III performed at 16 per cent. If you had a student who got 16 per cent, would you promote him? [*HONOURABLE MEMBERS: “No.”*]

No, yet you are now promoting the National Development Plan to NDP IV. What type of arrangement do we have? One time, we were in this Parliament; we said, “Let us stop lamenting about money; let us look for sources of money.” We said, “Let us put more money on fuel” because people who have vehicles have the money. They must pay.

We put Shs 200 on each litre, above the normal excise duty on fuel, to which the Government is entitled. They still took the money, yet it was supposed to be for road maintenance. Currently,

even if you added Shs 300 on a litre of fuel – if I ask a Member of Parliament here how much a litre of diesel or petrol is, none of you know because you just park, they put in fuel, and you pay the money – (*Interjections*) – Nothing; you do not know, but you can pay for it.

One time, we came here and asked, “How much is a passport?” It was Shs 50,000 and you would pay money at the immigration office. But we said, “No, let us make it much higher and get some money.” How much do we now get? Immigration is now a cash cow that we milk every day at Shs 250,000. Even if you put it at Shs 300,000, people will pay for it. Let us look for revenue sources.

We used to get licence money from vehicles; each vehicle owner would pay this money. We said, “No, we do not.” Now is the time for us to tighten the belts because we have nowhere to get the money. We cannot continue saying the finance ministry should get more money for this and that. Where do they get the money?

Let us cast our nets wider and see where the sources of money can come from and most importantly, ensure that the money is – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Stella?

4.27

MS STELLA ATYANG (NRM, Woman Representative, Moroto): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I also join the rest of my colleagues to thank the committee for its comprehensive report. I also thank Hon. Ssemujju for the positive input that he made to the budget report.

I would like to comment on the budget for the Ministry of Karamoja. The ministry has been allocated Shs 3 billion, which is almost only wage, meaning that it will not have funds to run its activities. It also means that the staff employed in the ministry will be earning a salary and sitting idle in offices, yet the ministry has a lot of important activities in terms of promoting productivity by putting money in water for

production for the subregion. We are aware that Karamoja needs water for production in order to increase food production.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to comment on wasteful Government expenditures. A case in point is the oxygen and ICU plants that were purchased by the Ministry of Health, taken to Moroto Regional Referral Hospital, and dumped outside. At the end of the day, the harsh weather conditions destroyed the equipment before it was put to use.

Mr Speaker, this is a result of poor planning and the careless actions by the Government that has led to poor performance, in terms of service delivery in this country. These are some of the issues the responsible ministries should be looking at to hold accountable the officers that lead to loss of resources. The Government must ensure that it imposes harsh punishments on them by asking them to pay for the losses. This will help our officers or employees to be responsible when they are planning for this country.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Midius?

4.30

MS MIDIUS NATUKUNDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Rukungiri): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will speak about the agriculture sector, especially on the water for production component. In the report, they have provided some funds for irrigation schemes, especially in water-stressed areas, so that we can increase productivity, which I agree with.

However, in 2020 — which I thank the Government for — they gave Rukungiri District three irrigation schemes in Garuka, Kahimbi, and Nyakabungo, which are in Bwambara Subcounty. Since that year, only one of them has been able to function for just a month — Garuka. The other two have never functioned at all.

Much as I agree with the fact that we allocate funds for the irrigation schemes in water-stressed areas, why can't we also get money to repair these irrigation schemes that have

never worked at all? Let there be funds so that we relieve the people. It is embarrassing for people to always pass by those sites and see machines, but nothing is going on. So, I request the finance ministry to also get money to repair these irrigation schemes, so that they can work.

On water for production, the report says that they are going to make sure that all water-stressed areas get solar-powered boreholes, which is a good idea. I see that we are moving, in relation to new technology. However, I would like to know whether we have failed to manage the manual boreholes we have. Some cannot be repaired at all; we are bringing in solar-powered boreholes for these areas. How sure are we that they will be working and sustainable? Are we not also going to see Members of Parliament repairing these solar-powered boreholes?

I implore the finance ministry to find a solution for these manual boreholes that are not working before we implement the new technology of solar-powered boreholes. This would relieve our people, especially the women and children who walk long distances to find clean and safe water for both home and agriculture use. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Linda, Hon. Apolot Christine, Hon. Kaala Kevin and Hon. Wambede Seth.

4.32

MS IRENE LINDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Fort Portal City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My point of concern is in regards to physical infrastructure. We created 10 new cities, and as Government, we are supposed to support these cities each with a road unit. However, up to now, even in this BFP, the road units for the new cities has not been provided.

Mr Speaker, as a city, we also receive funds for rehabilitation grants. We have to wait for districts to complete work on their roads, and then we borrow their road unit. This means we have to first service the road unit. Sometimes, you find when the road units are not working

[Ms Linda]

well; we have to repair them and we find all our money for rehabilitation grants sometimes goes to servicing and repairing the road units for the neighbouring districts.

Another point is the issue of Buhinga Stadium. This is a presidential pledge – that the Government was going to construct Buhinga Stadium and Akii-Bua Stadium. Whereas they have started on Akii-Bua Stadium, the Minister of Finance has not provided funds for Buhinga Stadium.

The third one concerns our regional referral hospital. Today, its staffing rate is 23 per cent. We do not have an orthopaedic surgeon, an Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) consultant, or other key medical personnel. To date, the referral hospital has been referring patients to Kilembe Hospital, a private hospital, which is a shame.

My prayer is that the Minister of Finance should provide money for the wage bill so that the Ministry of Health can recruit crucial medical personnel. That way the referral hospitals are able to provide services.

Lastly, on retooling and supporting the youth who have been equipped with vocational skills; these youths have been left to go back to the villages. They need to be given a start-up fund so that they are able to create employment and in the end, the Government will also be able to increase its tax base.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member for Kumi and honourable member for Pallisa.

4.35

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to second the approval of the Budget Framework Paper but with these observations:

First of all, I thank the committee chairperson and the presenter of the minority report. The aspect of the Shs 1 billion to districts to establish the district headquarters should be prioritised.

Alongside that, we have subcounties in the districts without administrative units, and I want to implore the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to make this a priority. An example in my area is Tisai; it is a newly created subcounty. It is across the lake, but there is no administrative headquarters, primary school, or health facility. How I pray that at least in the Financial Year 2025/2026 something is done in that connection.

Grant-aiding schools: We have so many seed secondary schools established by the communities – and that is why I must support my brother, Hon. Mafabi Nathan – as these schools are chosen. If you look at the budget committee report, you find that where there are secondary schools, primary schools, and the rest, there are particular districts dominating.

At least if my district is not there for a secondary school, I should be captured in the primary level. If I do not get a primary or secondary school, at least I should have a health facility so that these Government resources reach all the voters of this country.

On health supplies, I do not know whether the ministry respects the orders made by the health facilities. When we look at supplies like X-rays, Mr Speaker, I have raised this on the Floor of Parliament several times; the X-ray machine for Atatur. The ministry promised to give us a new X-ray machine but up to date, it is not there. I pray that as we look into the budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026, the new X-ray machine as pledged is provided for Atatur Hospital.

The issue of duplication of services is also critical as we talked about roads; why would we talk about roads under the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Works and Transport and it is the same activity? As we are struggling with the high debt burden in the country, let us all unite and ensure that we avoid this. If we are talking about roads, let it remain there. Like when I heard that the army is also asking for money to monitor elections, and the committee is saying it is the mandate of the police. Let it be one word – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, that is why I was insisting that they must bring an amendment to the law so that we can realign. Here we have programmes and we find all of them under programmes; they are not scattered under sectoral committees and that would be the only way out. Hon. Kaala, Hon. Wambede, Hon. Kibalya and Hon. Otimgiw.

4.38

MS KEVIN OJINGA (NRM, Woman Representative, Pallisa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join the rest of the Members in thanking the chairperson of the Committee on Budget and Hon. Ssemujju for his minority report. I want to speak on the health and agriculture sectors. Unfortunately, the health sector has not been considered so much, bearing in mind that “Health is wealth”; when you have health, you have wealth. I want to bring to the attention of this House a key point: Pallisa District; as we speak, the district hospital is a post-independence hospital. The infrastructure has never been renovated and as I speak, male, female, and children are sharing wards; there is a lot of congestion in the hospital. Pallisa District neighbours several districts like Ngora, Kumi, Butebo, Kibuku, and part of Kamuli. They all come to Pallisa District. It is too congested; people are sleeping on the floor because there are no beds. I urge the Minister of Finance to consider us during this budgeting process – to at least construct new buildings.

We have a unit for sickle cells but they meet under a shade every Tuesday and yet they are very many. As I speak now, because of the accumulated water bills, the hospital cannot afford to pay the water bills. We do not have running water in the hospital – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Wambede and Hon. Kibalya.

4.41

MR SETH WAMBEDE (NRM, Northern Division, Mbale City): Mr Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to comment on the

Budget Framework Paper. Let me start with electricity, that is, under the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. We keep emphasising science and technology; I do not know how we shall reach that level. Rural electrification seems to have met its death. We borrowed money from the World Bank and two years down the road, the Government has no commitment fee to it.

This financial year, there is no money for rural electrification. What a planning by the Government! As if that is not enough, the same Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, two years down the road, took us at a supersonic speed – I belong to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources – they said, “You must pass the mining Bill.” We passed it into a law. Until today, there is nothing.

I do not know how Hon. Musasizi prioritises the mineral sector, yet that is the sector which can bring in a lot of money. It is only last year when I read about the Board. I do not know whether it has started, but two years down the road, there is nothing. How shall we raise the money?

Climate change is a real fact. Here, we have the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and Ministry of Water and Environment, which help us. However, when you look at NEMA’s budget, it was cut by three-quarters. Then you ask yourself, “How shall we manage to protect the environment?” NEMA keeps demanding for money, but they say there is no money. Even the little that they were given last year has been chopped. Ask yourself, “Where are we moving to?”

Come to wasteful expenditures. Mr Speaker, we had a Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, which operated for about two years and found itself into a secretariat under the State House. Through that – *(Member timed out.)*

4.44

MR HENRY KIBALYA (NRM, Bugabula County South, Kamuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join the colleagues who have

thanked the committee. I hope the committee will not be a scene of crime this time.

Mr Speaker, you talked about vending licences. In Busoga, there is a miller who has seven licences. You wonder how he got them and what they are going to do. As you mentioned, something must be done.

On the issue of unfunded priorities, how can an item remain unfunded for five years, appearing every time? We must, maybe, have a law somewhere that says that if an item appears three times – what is very interesting is that an item can appear among those to be funded this year, then the next or third year, it becomes unfunded, but it remains there. We must stop this joke and have something serious and tougher in that line and have a law.

In the same spirit, as the President said that we must help him about Universal Primary Education (UPE), my honourable colleagues talked about arts teachers. We are tired of seeing cartoons in newspapers where one teacher is eating chicken and rice and the other eating cassava. One is sleeping in a big house, another in a grass-thatched one. One is driving a Benz, and the other is walking. Mr Speaker, we must do something about arts teachers. It has become the song during burial services. When an arts teacher gets space to speak, he will speak about Parliament not helping or doing anything. I pray and request that as we prepare the budget for this year, let us provide some money for the arts teachers.

On Busoga University, Hon. Peter Ogwang has just left the subregion. He promised to do something about the university. In 2019, I attended a meeting where Bunyoro and Busoga universities were discussed. They told us that they were beginning with Bunyoro University and then Busoga University would come next, the following year. Five years down the road, Busoga University is just looking for a Vote. We must also do something about that.

Blood bank in Jinja. During COVID-19, when Dr Ruhakana Rugunda was still the Prime Minister, he promised that they would do something about Jinja Regional Referral

Hospital and that we would get a blood bank. I do not know where we are in terms of the position and what is happening.

Power. On the Committee on National Economy, we – *(Member timed out.)*

4.47

MR ISAAC OTIMGIW (NRM, Padyere County, Nebbi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee chairperson for the report. In the budget reading for the Financial Year 2023/2024, agro-industrialisation, tourism, and mineral development were the sectors pointed out to propel our economy to the \$500 billion dollars in the target of 2040.

However, indications are that in this Budget Framework Paper, all the sectors which are supposed to propel us to that area have been cut or underfunded. For example, mineral development to which we allocated Shs 46.1 billion in the previous financial year, has been allocated zero this time. Mindset change, which was allocated Shs 69.3 billion in the previous financial year, has been allocated zero, despite the problems we have with the Parish Development Model (PDM).

The tourism sector which is now doing very well with receipts exceeding \$1 billion, has had its budget reduced from Shs 297 billion to Shs 176 billion. If we go to the petroleum development where we are targeting to get a lot of money from oil, it was allocated Shs 835 billion in the previous financial year but zero this financial year. How are we going to achieve the target that we were moving to?

Even manufacturing to which we allocated Shs 318 billion, it has been cut to Shs 226 billion. We have industrial parks, even in West Nile to which we allocated money. They are all there as skeletons. Nothing is being put in and we are cutting budgets in manufacturing.

Mr Speaker, I would like to point out something a little on health. A number of honourable colleagues have spoken about the Uganda Cancer Institute, which is indeed

facing a dire need. The problem is that we are the only country which is adhering to the East African legislation in terms of the Community. Everybody, whether you are a non-Ugandan or not, you walk into Uganda Cancer Institute, and you will be given free medication, which is expensive. We budget for Ugandans, but they cannot deny foreigners free medication. That is why the institute is always getting packed. Therefore, as legislators, we need to guide them on that aspect.

On the issue of non-tax revenue (NTR), we have a number of sectors, which are begging the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to increase their NTR ceilings. The Mulago Specialised Women and Neonatal Hospital raises almost Shs 6 billion every financial year. They are requesting that their target be increased but the same ministry is denying them an opportunity. How can we generate income in those issues?

On the – (*Member timed out.*)

4.50

DR CHARLES AYUME (NRM, Koboko Municipality, Koboko): Thank you, Mr Speaker. As a Christian, I believe in God the Father and the Holy Spirit – (*Interjections*) – and the Son. I also believe in Mulago Hospital. Whenever I fall sick, that is where I go. We seem not to be investing a lot in that hospital. That Shs 15.5 billion has been an unfunded priority for the last three financial years. However, even with the current condition, Mulago gives us Shs 5.5 billion in non-tax revenue.

The whole of the sixth floor, which was designed to be for private wing services – I was there one time as chairperson of the Committee on Health, and they had to bring me water in a basin because there was no running water. If we fix all these, then there is no reason why Ugandans will go to private hospitals. We can even take the revenue from there to about Shs 20 billion. My colleague has mentioned about the women's specialised hospital. If we put it up to its capacity, there will be another Shs 20 billion.

I would have expected medical tourism to be in the National Development Plan (NDP IV). I raised it; Uganda is centrally positioned in a neighbourhood where we are more competitive. If we brought Mulago and the Uganda Cancer Institute to speed, we are building a new heart hospital in Naguru. Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) is about to finish their hospital, and we have Aga Khan in Nakawa. With all these, we need to tap into the sources of domestic revenue because we have seen people going to Nairobi for PET scans at \$1,000, but we should be able to keep that here.

Finally, Mr Speaker – I had forgotten; Lubowa is also progressively coming on board.

Mr Speaker, regarding the issue of tax exemption for gym and sports equipment, we are looking at these as luxury commodities, but I think we need to look at them as public health commodities so that we can curtail the exodus of people with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) to hospitals.

For these night football pitches that are mushrooming all over Kampala and upcountry, how do we ensure that the artificial turf they import is tax-free so that our youth can be kept physically fit and out of crime?

I would also like to support my honourable colleague that Atatur Hospital needs an X-ray as soon as yesterday – then Bundibugyo Hospital and, of course, Koboko Hospital. Those three should be given urgent priority. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, you have talked about those artificial turfs. I have just remembered something that I want to share with the finance minister and the Attorney-General. We have not had the money to develop most of these sports facilities, so, some are making little money from memberships. They are trying to attract membership to maintain what has been put in place.

I was at Entebbe Golf Club, and the manager shared with me that Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) now wants to tax membership fees. They want to tax membership fees from clubs

that are struggling; their budgets are very minimal, and we are not financing them, but we are even going for the membership fees. I know you are looking for money, but –

Honourable minister, I also raised this about Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), and I want to interest the chairperson of the Committee on Presidential Affairs in this. I think we are among a few cities that have 150 acres of green space in the middle of the city – that is Kampala Golf Club. But what do we do? We channel sewage and all these floods from Yusuf Lule Road into that green space.

We should protect and invest in that green space. We have guests —someone said, “You are so lucky to have over 150 acres in the middle of the city.” We should invest in and protect it. It should be one of the things that we promote for our tourism.

Tell me a city that has 150 acres, and then you just channel sewage and floods there. When members start raising some little money to maintain it, you also come for a tax!

I had interested the committee chairperson in ensuring that when you engage with KCCA, KCCA supports that golf club so that it remains very clean. That is where all our ambassadors that we want to market Uganda to, go to play. All people who contribute a lot to your taxes — the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) — go there.

However, when they are moving around, they see sewage – faecal matter. And this is an ambassador that you want to tell to come and visit Kampala. It is not a lot of money. These are things we should give priority to. Therefore, the minister for finance, when we run to you, help and protect that green space. For example, Shs 2 billion would do a great job.

I had picked Hon. Okot, Hon. Kwizera, Dr Bhoka and Hon. Grania. Honourable colleagues, if you did not write your name here, stop looking at me, trying to make signs. Hon. Batuwa, I would advise that you ask your neighbours because I saw you coming in. Ask

them about what we did before you came in. People who went for lunch, you have enjoyed yours; for us, we have not enjoyed. Let us also enjoy our time here, the same way you enjoyed lunch.

4.57

MR AMOS OKOT (NRM, Agago North County, Agago): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I make a small comment about the Budget Framework Paper and Ministerial Policy Statement, what we are considering is going to help in the budget of the Financial Year 2025/2026.

However, as one of us said, we represent constituencies. Since the start of the 11th Parliament, we have been moving and asking for support, as if we were supposed to do the lobbying. All in all, this is a service that the Government should give to the people. The people of Kalongo Town Council lack a health centre III.

We lack a health centre IV in Agago North County. In this debate, I would urge that we support the Ministry of Health so that they could consider giving us a health centre III in Kalongo Town Council and a health centre IV in Agago North County.

In the same vein, Mr Speaker, I request support from the Ministry of Local Government. Agago North County is unique; we have different challenges that cannot be compared with those of other counties in Acholi subregion. Many of our people, including our animals, are still in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps.

For a long time, we have been saying that since we have unique challenges, they should create for us a new administrative unit. This will only come if we support the ministry. I request that in this process, when we are looking into the budget, we bring this on board. If not, you can consider another administrative unit, and then you remember for Agago North County to become a district.

Mr Speaker, I was trying to see the relevance of the Budget Framework Papers and Ministerial Policy Statements. It is as if we are running with a very narrow gap, yet the Ministerial

Policy Statement helps us to examine and evaluate the performance of the Government before we look deeply into the budget. What we are considering – and when you look at those things, we got a very big challenge from CSBAG – Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group. They asked us about the relevance of this and all the committee members could not even explain it.

Personally, I think that if we could examine this closely – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Itungo, Hon. Kwizera, Dr Bhoka and Hon. Grania. Hon. Cuthbert, did you register? – You are about?! Then, you wait. *(Laughter)*

5.00

MR NATHAN TWESIGYE (Independent, Kashari South County, Mbarara): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is unfortunate that the minister for finance is not here. Honourable colleagues, Hon. Musasizi has been here as a Member of Parliament. He knows what we go through as Members of Parliament. He has been the chairperson of the finance committee. He has been in these budget processes.

All these issues we are raising, Hon. Musasizi knows. I think the problem is not Hon. Musasizi, as the finance minister. The problem is the minister for planning. Who is planning in the ministry for finance?

If you are the planner, as the minister, listen to this: You know the mass line of NRM: *Bonna basome* (Universal Primary and Secondary Education). Every child is supposed to go to school. Why do you cut budgets for education? Where do you want these children to go? Why are you limiting recruitment for teachers, yet you know the number has increased? Why don't you have schools in the budget?

So, what kind of planning is this? This is the problem. If you are the minister for planning, you need to go back to school and plan – *(Laughter)* – and Musasizi is a student of Bachelor of Commerce. He knows what we are talking about. This is his playground. He

knows. So, be clear and tell us the truth; what is the problem?

Finally, the sources of money. I sit on the Committee on Commissions, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (COSASE), where the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) was my chair. When you move around town and see all the billboards and screens, none of them pays tax. They do not collect any money from these billboards and he knows that, but they are chasing grasshopper hawkers yet the money is in the billboards and the screens. Hon. Musasizi knows.

Hon. Musasizi, the Rt Hon. Speaker cautioned you about taxing golf clubs. I would like to inform you that all the gyms around town here, pay taxes and are being closed day and night. You are worried about golf but golf has some people who can afford to pay. These gyms are for Shs 5,000, Shs 3,000, Shs 10,000. This man collects taxes from those gyms. So, what are you doing? I think Musasizi should – let me give you information – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: But you do not have time. You can only give what you have; your time was already up. – No, honourable member, the clarification I was making was simple. These clubs do not even make money. In fact, golf clubs all over the world do not make money, but they protect the area through green spaces.

Go to Fort Portal, Arua, they are the only ones – Mbarara, Kampala or Entebbe. I played golf with the Speaker of Singapore, and he said, “I really cannot believe it; I am next to a zoo, and I am in a very green area”. The oldest club in East Africa – Tororo. But in the end, if you do not support their maintenance, they will be stolen like the one of Gulu. They did not see any value; so they shared it. They built houses even in Lira. You are going to lose them. Now, they are being protected using the little money that comes from members. If you tax it, then you are taxing the land, and it will be gone. That is it. These clubs will be nowhere. In fact, you do not budget for them. They are just held in trust and protected by the public. Hon.

Kwizera, Hon. Bhoka Didi, Hon. Grania, Hon. Angura, Hon. Nangoli, Hon. Komakech, Hon. Norman Ocheru, Hon. Wandwasi and then Dr Kamara.

5.05

MR EDDIE KWIZERA (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to thank you for your stamina. It is rare for Parliament to sit the whole day; so we appreciate it.

Mr Speaker, the issue we have is that there is non-compliance with the Constitution to an extent where I have an original voice like other Members of Parliament to talk for their people so the Government can listen and implement. Otherwise, there is no way the Government can go to Bukimbiri County without passing through me or without me taking them.

The problem we have is that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development needs to be begged to carry out their constitutional obligation, which is bad. My duty as a Member of Parliament is to tell you what is happening down there, and you put it in your planning. However, when you find that the person planning is the same person supposed to mobilise resources, then there will be a conflict of interest. That is why both the National Development Plan and the Budget Framework Paper are owned by the finance ministry.

There is an inherent dictatorship by the finance ministry. They subdue the sectors because they maintain indicative unrealistic figures. That is why you find that in the Budget when they say they are going to release so much, what they release is not warranted.

Mr Speaker, when you find a country having a budget – look at the analysis of Shs 72 trillion in this running Budget and in the coming year, it is Shs 57 trillion. The ministry for finance should be able to tell us what the problem is or if the economy is shrinking. We demand an explanation as to why instead of enhanced economic performance, the economy is going down from Shs 72 trillion to Shs 57 trillion,

contrary to what is provided for in the National Development Plan.

Another issue is related to non-payment of arrears to our traders. Ordinarily, if traders have supplied the Government – they are supposed to pay tax, but they do not pay. Yet, because if you do not pay, you do not collect tax.

Has the minister presented to this Parliament how many people are demanding money – not public debt but domestic arrears? How many are demanding? Otherwise, these people promote the economy. When the minister comes here to talk about public debt and does not talk about domestic debt, it means the minister is not fair to us. The minister is serving the interests of the foreign people who have given us money, not the local Ugandans who have actually financed the running of the Government.

Mr Speaker, even in realistic budgeting – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, honourable colleagues, before Hon. Bhoka speaks, beyond the ones I read, which colleagues want to submit? Can you stand up? *(Members rose.)*

Honourable colleagues, let us make a deal of two minutes each because this is a critical day for Members where they usually say, “They were discussing the Budget; we never raised our issues,” and all that. That is why I tried to start at 10.00 a.m.

Hon. Nsamba, you can now understand why I was insisting that we go for the debate. This is a very critical day for Members. So, let each of us quickly use two minutes. I will try to see how many we can accommodate.

5.09

DR GEORGE BHOKA (NRM, Obongi County, Obongi): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me time. Let me start with two observations: Apart from looking at the NDP IV and the Public Finance Management (Amendment) Act compliance, we are in the fifth year of the manifesto of the ruling party,

which is “Securing Our Future,” as well as the Equal Opportunities Commission that raises glaring regional and local inequities that this BFP needs to speak to.

I want to start with the health sub-programme. Our 46 million Ugandans suffer from communicable and non-communicable diseases that can be addressed through community health interventions. We have a national community health strategy that requires a budget which has not been provided in this BFP – for identifying community health extension workers, skilling them, tooling them and facilitating them to be able to address the simple diseases that affect our people.

Secondly, our diagnostics, especially the laboratories, have been relying more on supplies that are provided by partners. They have withdrawn this budget. We needed money to buy screening kits, malaria test kits, HIV test kits, and so on and so forth, that have not been provided for in this Budget.

Thirdly, many of our constituencies missed getting ambulances for referrals which we thought in this Budget Framework Paper would be provided for. Unfortunately, this has not been considered.

Coming to the districts without hospitals who have a – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Grania and then Hon. Angura.

5.12

MS HOPE NAKAZIBWE (NRM, Woman Representative, Mubende): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Allow me to also thank the chairperson of the Committee on Budget and Hon. Ssemujju for the reports presented today.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency, the President, has always alluded to the fact that the agriculture sector in Uganda is the backbone of our economy. However, I want to believe, like anybody else, that a healthy body and a healthy mind can be productive in the agriculture sector.

Mr Speaker, when you look at a number of referral hospitals and the health sector at large, you see so many unfunded priorities as indicated in the gaps in that line. We have so many structures that have been started in the health sector but have not been completed. For example, we have a very big facility in Mubende Regional Referral Hospital that has just been put up and is yet to be commissioned, but it has no equipment; so it cannot serve the purpose for which the funds were secured.

In the same vein, Mr Speaker, I can also speak about subcounties that do not have health centres III in order to relieve the congestion at the regional referral hospital, yet so many districts around us use them in addition to those that are supposed to be served by the regional referral hospital.

Mr Speaker, I hope you add me a minute to speak about agriculture, as a deputy chairperson.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No.

MS NAKAZIBWE: Let me go right away to the agriculture sector.

Mr Speaker, when you look at the funding gaps indicated in the agriculture sector, we see that there were no funds secured for coffee production and the other activities accompanying that amidst the Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX) that we did. Mr Speaker, when you look at the – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Angura and then Hon. Nangoli.

5.14

MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to interest myself in agro-industrialisation and look at value addition and processing. This is a sector that, if well taken care of, can transform us and our communities because it will involve everyone, especially where value addition and processing are involved.

However, look at the gaps that are in the energy sector. For sustainable energy, this time, we have only allocated, as far as the indicative figures are concerned, Shs 21 billion. In that Shs 21 billion, there are about four sectors, four to five components in the ministry. When you look at rural electrification, it might end up with about Shs 2 billion. How are we going to transform and get this country into value addition if we cannot scale-up on that?

Even when you look at the consideration for hard-to-reach areas, which would have benefitted from projects like ORIO, which is supposed to be in Mitooma, among others, we have funding that has been secured from development partners, ground-breaking is going to take place, but we have a funding gap as far as counterpart funding is concerned. That needs about Shs 17 billion, and this is for hard-to-reach areas. When are we going to get the country balanced if we cannot provide such resources to get those areas that also need to be brought up to benefit?

Solar has, in the meantime, given us leverage, but solar also needs funding of about Shs 3.7 billion to promote the best solutions that are available so far. Therefore, we need to look at these options so that we can support our people in moving on. The Minister of Local Government has secured some funds in the form of grants and this — *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nangoli and Hon. Komakech.

5.16

MR GERALD NANGOLI (NRM, Elgon North County, Bulambuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have about two issues that I have observed. One is about revenue mobilisation strategy. How do we help the tax body to ensure that it widens its tax base? There is a very big issue, especially on the issue of investors. Investors are given tax holidays. They are given tax incentives and are not paying taxes. Most of the investors here, about 80 per cent, are not paying taxes but you find, when you go to Kenya and Rwanda, they are

investing elsewhere. They are making money here. When you go to other countries, these investors are investing seriously yet they are getting the money from here.

The second issue, Mr Speaker, is about the science-based curriculum. I happen to have moved to some of the Government-aided schools in my constituency. As we promote a science-based curriculum, if you move around to most of these schools, the situation of the laboratory equipment is alarming. Most of them do not have laboratory equipment, and yet they have science teachers who are earning Shs 48 million per year. They do not even have science equipment. They even have science teachers and ICT teachers on the payroll who do not even have a computer in the school, and they want to teach ICT. How will they teach ICT when they do not have computers?

Therefore, as we budget in this Budget Framework Paper, we should take these things into consideration because it is like we are budgeting for something that we do not understand. These science teachers have had their pay increased and that is why you see there is a very big collision between the arts teachers and science teachers. Arts teachers are doing their job; they are not refusing to teach. However, the science teachers who are being paid do not even have the equipment to use to teach the science students. Even labs do not have equipment — *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Komakech, then Hon. Noman Ochero.

5.18

MR CHRISTOPHER KOMAKECH (Independent, Aruu County, Pader): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We need to have a human face as we come up with this budget, especially for the mentally sick in our country. We have 14 million Ugandans who are mentally ill. Butabika National Referral Mental Hospital currently houses 7,000 mentally sick patients.

Mr Speaker, I want to interest you in the budget that we are presenting today. We have Shs 5 billion allocated for the construction of a perimeter wall in Butabika, well knowing

that treating a mentally ill patient is not by institutionalisation. Butabika is not a prison. A mentally ill person is better treated at home. We have Shs 5 billion catering for clothing and bedding for the mentally ill. These people have beds at home. We have only Shs 1.8 billion to cater for modern medication and specialised medication.

In Aruu, currently, I have children whose teeth are falling out. Their eyes are yellow because they are on atypical antipsychotics. These are drugs initially manufactured in 1900, and that is what our Government can provide to them. But they are atypical antipsychotics, which a child takes, gets relieved, and does not look like a zombie. Where is the human face to the children that we bore? It might not be your child today, but tomorrow, it will hurt for you to pay for a tablet of Shs 50,000 and these drugs are not readily available.

Mr Speaker, as I take my rest, I only beg that this budget is a gift to the – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, chairperson of the Committee on Health, this is an area where we should pick special interest. If we are providing money for perimeter walls and money for what yet these people can be helped with modern treatment, they remain home and are even treated in their homes; it is critical that we look into it. I request the Government and the Committee on Health to interact. You do not need to report back here. You can use it when you are making your own report or processing the Ministerial Policy Statement.

Interact with the Minister of Health, and you look at – because when a Member says the medicine we are giving is outdated – manufactured in 1900 – and it is causing problems to our people, we cannot just take it for granted. Okay? You call Hon. Komakech and he presents and we will bring in the minister. We will see how we can update the services that we are giving to our people suffering from mental health. I will follow up with you, the committee chairperson. Please

take it seriously. Hon. Noman Ocherero?

5.21

MR NOMAN OCHERO (NRM, Labwor County, Abim): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee and my brother, Hon. Ssemujju, for the wonderful work. Because of time, I need to proceed straightaway.

Mr Speaker, my biggest issue here is to question the relationship between the budget and the lives of the people that we serve. There seems to be a bigger problem of whether the planners look at what problems need to be solved and whether the budget solves them.

I want to give two examples from my constituency, which I know well. There is no big connection between the budget we pass and the lives of our people.

One, let me talk about electricity. In my district, there are poles and wires in all the subcounties across the district. Poles and wires, mark me properly. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, for the last six years, has failed to put power in these wires. My question is, does the Ministry of Energy have energy? *(Laughter)*

Secondly, even where the power has been distributed, like a big hospital, the power cannot run an X-ray. We have an X-ray machine which cannot be run by the power that goes to the hospital. Imagine, if you get a simple fracture, you are supposed to be transported for 200 kilometres up to Matany Hospital, first for an X-ray to know what has happened, and then to be worked on. The roads are so rough. Your hand might get broken all the more on the road as you move. *(Laughter)* I want to show that the budget does not have big connection with the lives of the people that we serve.

Besides that, at the hospital, the mortuary has no doors. Should you make a mistake and die in that hospital, the next morning, you would have no eyes – *(Laughter)* By the following morning, the dead man would have no eyes – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: One more minute for the Member. I do not want to make the mistake of dying in Abim. *(Laughter)*

MR OCHERO: Mr Speaker, the road that you follow to go to Matany was made 16 years and 2 days ago. They made a very good road, then the existing bridge was broken down, and they were going to put a good one. Up to now, 16 years later, they have left the bridge.

In the rainy season, when a mother is being taken to Matany Hospital, when you find the water flowing, you have to hold on. Either the mother dies waiting for the water to pass, or take the risk and die in the water. So far, we have lost 11 mothers and 11 children.

My question is – I only want to know; help me – how many children and pregnant mothers are you planning to die and then you put the bridge? I would like to know the answer to that question so that I do not disturb you. Let me know. I want the minister for planning to give me the statistics so that I do not disturb you. I will wait for them and then I will say, “Okay, all of them have now died.” *(Laughter)*

Now onto the second question; about tarmac – no, let me not talk about tarmac – *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Noman Ochero. For people who do not know Noman Ochero, former chairman LC V of Abim District – the issues he is raising are very critical. Attorney-General, I do not know how you are managing these contracts. Contracts of 2018; they started building power in 2018 all over the country. Some, they even put transformers. The transformers were ransacked. Those were the lucky ones, not commissioned. You ask yourself; how will the Government gain and how is it protected?

Hon. Okaasai, minister for energy, people of Abim are doubting whether you have energy, but you will answer later. He also said “The power has no power.” The power in Abim has no power because it cannot even run an X-ray.

Hon. Wandwasi and Dr Kamara?

5.25

MR ROBERT WANDWASI (NRM, Bungokho County South, Mbale): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I also want to appreciate the report given to us by the chairman of the Committee on Budget.

However, having read through the NDP IV, which I know has given a lot of synergies to our BFP, it also rightly emphasises the issues of programme-based budgeting. As we deliberate on this BFP, I know a number of regions in our country that still need affirmative action. Just like what is stated in the NDP IV, we have regions that need to be considered for affirmative action in order to address their peculiar issues.

Case in point, we have subregions like Bugisu that have faced a number of catastrophes – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not think those were two minutes. That must have been one.

MR WANDWASI: Floods and many others. Mr Speaker, if the chairman of the Committee on Budget had captured this, I do believe that if subregions like Bugisu were considered for special programmes, for example, a programme to be code-named “Bugisu Social Action Programme (BUSAP),” we would stand to answer the challenges that many of us have raised.

I know that quite often, the Prime Minister’s office might not have adequate interventions whenever such catastrophes arise. However, if these subregions were to be named, aligned, and enumerated in the BFP, we would give a solution to them. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I want to implore the Minister of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, through the National Planning Authority, to consider Bugisu Subregion for a special programme code-named – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kamara, Hon. Kamuntu and Hon. Nsamba?

5.28

DR NICHOLAS KAMARA (FDC, Kabale Municipality, Kabale): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank both chairmen for the good reports. My point is about the Uganda Cancer Institute and cancer services in general. I was a young medical student when we used to receive HIV patients in wards with end-stage disease. Now, when the community health services were emphasised, you can see we have fought HIV successfully. That is what is happening at the cancer institute.

At the cancer institute, 80 per cent of the patients who present at Uganda Cancer Institute are in stage three and stage four. Out of those, 80 per cent die within the first year.

My suggestion: I have seen that we are going to give Shs 2 billion only for the community health services, and the Uganda Cancer Institute is asking for Shs 100 billion more, yet it is a palliative centre where people go when they are in an end-stage disease. Therefore, we should invest more to see that the health workers are trained, the lower health centres are given capacity, treatment is at least given at all regional referral hospitals, and above all, the community health education workers are empowered to give health education, to make sure that they sensitise the people. People should be tested early and screened very early so that we do not have end-stage diseases going to Uganda Cancer Institute. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Dr Kamara. Hon. Kamuntu?

5.29

MR NICHOLAS KAMUNTU (NRM, Rubanda County West, Rubanda): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Straight to the point: I come from Rubanda where 90 per cent of Bwindi is found. We all know that Bwindi fetches a lot of money for the Government. However, I can tell you that all the roads leading to the national park are impassable. If we put more money around the Bwindi, we can make more money.

In the mining sector – I am a businessman in the mining sector: We lose more than \$150 million to smugglers, simply because we do not give enough – we do not budget for the mineral

sector. We only budget for oil, electricity, and gas. We abandon the mining sector, which can fetch for us a lot of money.

Another observation is that in my constituency, we have pygmies, and these are Ugandans. We never include them in our planning processes. They were chased from their land – Bwindi, Mgahinga and Ichuya Forests, and abandoned to live around the communities. These people even won a court case and they have never been compensated. I am planning to take them back to Bwindi. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Patrick Nsamba?

5.31

MR PATRICK OSHABE (NUP, Kassanda County North, Kassanda): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would like to begin by pleading with you that when we are doing the final stages of this budget, this Parliament is accorded enough time. We can debate a budget for a week, and it is very possible, Mr Speaker. It gives us enough time to scrutinise whatever we are passing, to avoid situations where people come to us and say that we passed an item when we were not aware. This has happened before.

Whatever Members have presented here, are issues that are dear to them. We want to be sure. The minister must commit that whatever the Members have highlighted here is at least considered in the forthcoming budget. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and we would be happy if we received that commitment.

Mr Speaker, mine are two critical issues: One, my brother here has talked about the power lines without power. That is the same story in Kassanda since 2018. You have also said that it is the same problem.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, we have dilapidated school structures of government schools. Our people are paying dearly to private schools that have good infrastructure. We can save this nation by prioritising the renovation of both primary and secondary government schools

[Mr Oshabe]

across the country. We can begin by putting aside money every year for renovation and ensuring that the schools are in a better state.

Mr Speaker, you were in that seat in 2022 when you allowed – *(Member timed out.)* – You allowed the coffee nursery operators to supply coffee. The minister for finance came, but since then –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Not me, but the minister. I never allowed the people.

MR OSHABE: You were in that seat when the minister came here and told them –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I only witnessed. *(Laughter)*

MR OSHABE: Yes, Mr Speaker, you were a witness when the minister was here authorising nursery operators, but since then, they have not been paid. It should be a priority in this budget that we are working on. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nyakato, Hon. Kabuye, Hon. Okia, Hon. Kirabo, Dr Batuwa, Hon. Noah Wanzala, and Hon. Kajwengye.

5.34

MS ASINANSI NYAKATO (FDC, Woman Representative, Hoima City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I implore the minister for finance to reconsider prioritising the funding of Bunyoro and Busoga universities. Since 1986, the NRM Government has pledged a public university to the people of Bunyoro.

There has been a big mismatch between the allocation to the agro-industrialisation sector and the National Development Plan (NDP) IV. The NDP IV emphasises allocating Shs 2.44 trillion to the agriculture sector, but what they have allocated is just 3 per cent. I implore the Government to honour its commitment to the just concluded Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme

(CAADP) 2025 Summit Declaration of Kampala, of allocating at least 10 per cent to the agriculture sector, to ensure increased production and food security.

Mr Speaker, I also implore the Government to consider securing funds to operationalise the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act, 2022. This is to stop the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) from harassing fishermen on the lakes.

Finally, Mr Speaker, last year, a number of teachers and health workers were scrapped off the payroll. These people have been in the hospitals treating our people, and the teachers have been teaching our students. The minister told us that they had reinstated them, but up to today, they have never been paid. I request the minister for finance to reconsider putting that money for their salaries in the budget. I submit, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Attorney-General, it was yesterday when I requested that you interest yourself – it had come from Hon. Sarah Opendi – in the laws that require regulations.

We have passed many laws and they have existed for years without regulations in place. For example, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act, 2022. We gave a deadline here. We have very many issues. This is a government-sponsored law. The regulations should come from the Government. Why did you bring a law if you knew you did not want to make regulations to help you in implementing it?

Attorney-General, I trust you very much on that. I request you to update us next week on the regulations for the Sports and Fisheries Acts. The Fisheries sector is giving us problems every day because of the lack of regulations. Let us come through and see which ones do not have the regulations so that we ensure we get them sorted and out of the way. Otherwise, the laws are redundant and not helpful. The Climate Change Act has the same issue.

Hon. Frank Kabuye?

5.37

MR FRANK KABUYE (NUP, Kassandra County South, Kassandra): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I thank the chairperson and the author of the minority report, which provided us with some good information to guide our debate.

Mr Speaker, we are talking about digital transformation, innovation and technological development. When we are speaking about this, we are talking about the future of the country and the world at large.

Other countries are going beyond to explore boundaries, and they are going into space while we are still fighting to make sure that places a few kilometres away from the capital city can have access to the internet. We are still fighting to see that we provide computers to schools where our children can get the basic information and skills to run the ICT world.

It is high time the Government woke up to the fact that the internet is free. Let us not fear and suppress the freedoms of the people who come out on the internet to express themselves or to criticise us.

Mr Speaker, some social media platforms, like Facebook, are not working in Uganda right now. This was an avenue for young people to showcase their skills and products, especially when we went into the lockdown due to COVID-19.

They are now trying to adopt TikTok; however, they face restrictions and are being suppressed. The money they would have gained in our country, Uganda – the options are limited. Many of them can see the payments reflected and money accumulating, but they cannot access it because the payment options are limited within our country.

How I wish this Government could interest itself in seeing that all these platforms are sources of employment for the young people or getting an alternative – *(Member timed out.)*

5.39

MS JOANNE ANIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Madi-Okollo): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The committee recommends that the Government should increase resource mobilisation. Although I agree with this recommendation, I feel that this forces our tax body to look for ways to get money.

Mr Speaker, you said that the Uganda Revenue Authority wants to tax membership fees. These are some of the pressures that we put on them, and yet I believe that as a country, we should live within our means.

The committee has stated that the priorities of the Government match very well with the Budget Framework Paper. I submit that as a country we should try to live within our own means to prevent the same people from being taxed again and again. Thank you.

5.40

MS AGNES KIRABO (NRM, Youth Representative, Central): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I thank the chairperson and Hon. Ssemujju for the reports.

As we realise, in the Auditor-General's report for the Financial Year 2023/2024, electricity generation was in surplus, with 979 megawatts. What does this imply? The Government has invested a lot in electricity generation. As of now, we have 2,005 megawatts, and we are soon hitting the target in the Third National Development Plan (NDP III) which suggests 2,099 megawatts. What does this imply?

When we have a surplus, and the country's demand peak is at just 1,025 megawatts, it causes limitations in infrastructure development and also contributes to unemployment. We all know that providing electricity to our people can also help to reduce unemployment. One of the key factors for the informal sector is electricity distribution. The Government should prioritise investing in electricity distribution to reduce insecurity, rural-urban migration, and other

things that affect young people.

(Member timed out.)

The other point I wanted to put out is about the administrative units that were created but do not have health centres III. They are not funded in any way, and our people are still suffering. These issues should be prioritised.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Batuwa, Hon. Noah and Hon. Kajwengye?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Noah, Hon. Kajwengye, Hon. Katabaazi, Hon. Nebanda, Hon. Nabukeera and Kalangala (Hon. Nakimuli)

5.42

DR TIMOTHY BATUWA (FDC, Jinja South Division West, Jinja City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The boda boda industry is the biggest local industry in Uganda. To give you an impression on that, listening to the vice president of Bajaj Auto Ltd, Mr Soumya Das, he indicated that they have 90 per cent market share, and he said they sell 500 motorcycles per day. That is how big it is, and that is the rate at which it grows.

5.53

MR NOAH MUTEBI (NRM, Nakasongola County, Nakasongola): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the chairperson of the committee and Hon. Ssemujju Nganda for their presentations.

We have never had a boda boda budget. We call for a boda boda budget. We should put this biggest industry at the centre of the economics of this country. What I suggest is actually on the revenue side. We should align the boda boda budget with the Traffic and Road Safety Act, 1998, which requires every boda boda cyclist to have a driving licence. They are demanded to pay in excess of Shs 400,000. Many motorcycles are at the police stations, and the Government is not effectively using that law to collect money from them. That law needs to be amended and fees lowered so that they can participate in the development of this country.

Mr Speaker, a number of issues have been tackled by this Parliament. I have not heard of the issue of land funds being discussed here. I come from the central region, and the challenges of the different regions vary. When you come to the central region, a number of Ugandans are being evicted by the rich people every day and night. When you sit at home every evening and watch TV news, you will see Ugandans crying, “The Prime Minister and minister of lands, come and help us.” Go to Kiboga, Nakasongola and Luweero – the issue of the land fund has not been considered. I want to urge and implore the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to consider empowering the Uganda Land Commission so that they have money to secure land for Ugandans who are becoming landless every day and night.

The boda boda cyclists I have interacted with suggest that the fees should be reduced from Shs 400,000 to at least Shs 100,000. It is not a lump sum of Shs 400,000; it is subdivided – Shs 100,000 and Shs 50,000 for that – but when put together, a cyclist has to part with a total of Shs 400,000. We have no power as Parliament on our own to amend that law that affects revenues. It is you in the Government to come up with that Bill. We shall appreciate you in this budget process when you come up with a Bill to amend the Traffic and Road Safety -

Secondly, Mr Speaker, is about connectivity roads. The Government is planning to connect the road from Dokolo-Ochero-Namasale. That is the same road which comes to Zengebe, Sasira up to the Gulu highway. Why do you work on one part of the road and leave the other? I think the finance ministry could be isolating Nakasongola and leaving it as an island. They need to tell us.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, for some years, the President has been pledging to tarmac the Zirowe-Kikyusa-Bamugolodde road. Ever since I joined Parliament, it has been a presidential pledge but you do not see it in the development plan, the budget or anywhere else. I would like to ask the ministry of finance

to consider that road, as it will help avert traffic jam from Kampala - *(Member timed out.)*

5.47

MR WILSON KAJWENGYE (NRM, Nyabushozi County, Kiruhura): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity.

Agro-industrialisation is primed at the centre of transforming our economy ten-fold. With this, I want to highlight the need for provision of money for anti-tick vaccines. This runs into augmenting the pathogen economy that we have all along known to be saving money for us but also giving us capacity to fight diseases.

Mr Speaker, if we produce our own anti-tick vaccine and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccine, we will have stopped the cartel haemorrhage and colossal sums of money our farmers are spending on this. This will empower our people, and then it gives us better planning because last year, you know, the whole country was thrown into a quarantine because we had not planned. Now we have an opportunity to plan and put money into producing our own vaccines.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, electricity connection to milk bulking centres. In my constituency, farmers have come together to collect money and bulk in cooperatives. These centres are not connected to the grid. By afternoon – because they run a power generator to freeze milk, the middlemen or investors who are certainly not Ugandans, delay and by afternoon they can buy any price because they know that these farmers cannot sustain the cost of running a generator. This is a matter of urgency. It is not only in Nyabushozi, but throughout the cattle corridor. I thought we would work on this urgently – *(Member timed out.)*

5.49

MR FRANCIS KATABAAZI (NUP, Kalungu East County, Kalungu): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. My submission is mainly going to be about the committee recommendation that we should widen the tax base. I think that is where we are having a big issue. What we bring in as a country is really

going down. I have suggestions.

First of all, to all the communities and businesspeople, starting with the agriculture sector, we should put conditions that encourage increased production so that the Government can easily tax them. At the moment, for example, in the agriculture sector, somebody can buy maize seed at Shs 20,000, and when harvest comes, he sells a kilo at Shs 500. He needs to sell Shs 40 kilogrammes in order to raise the capital to cover the cost of 1kg of seed. The Government should really put a conducive atmosphere. Furthermore, we have natural resources like gold. For example, last year, according to the Auditor-General's report, we collected only Shs 480 million yet on the world market, a kilogramme of gold is at \$89,400 as of today. This means that, as a country, we only got money from just one and a half kilogrammes of gold and yet we sold 9,000 kilogrammes – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nebanda and Hon. Nabukeera.

5.51

MS FLORENCE NEBANDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Butaleja): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to congratulate the Committee on Budget for a comprehensive report. However, there is a concern, cutting across. Most of the Government policies are aimed at promoting the welfare of and fulfilling the NRM manifesto to our citizens. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, during planning, has not funded most of these NRM pledges.

Following the recent executive order, the current President of America, Donald Trump, has cut most of the foreign aid. His decision is going to affect most of the Government's programmes in health, education and agriculture. We are the Government. How prepared are we? How is this budget going to fulfill the NRM manifesto, which is in agreement with what the electorate want, as we are nearing the electioneering period?

I thank you.

5.52

MS HANIFA NABUKEERA (NUP, Woman Representative, Mukono): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate both reports – the minority and the main report. My concern is on Kome Island, in particular, in Mukono District. In Kome Island, we have a health centre II, but due to the growing population, we request for a health centre III.

More to that, I want to urge and support the Government to put more money on the medical supplies, most especially the medicines. This is because as much as we have the health centres II, there are no medicines in those health centres.

My request is for Kome Island to have a health centre III. Thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

5.53

MS HELEN NAKIMULI (NUP, Woman Representative, Kalangala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Like a colleague has said, the budget should speak to the people and it should be people-centred.

Mr Speaker, the budget does not specify, show or include the money to fund fuel for ambulances on the lake. We are grateful we got boat ambulances to help our people in all the islands – Buvuma, Namayingo and Kalangala. Unfortunately, they have not been funded in terms of fuel. A boat cannot consume water to take somebody from one island to the next or to Entebbe or a main hospital.

I do not know what these people were thinking by procuring ambulances without fuel. We were even thinking that they should give them to some of us to use them as maybe tourism boats or leisure boats. What are they doing there? They are just parked somewhere and they are not helping our people.

Actually, the Government should think of giving island districts hospitals. If you buy an ambulance and this ambulance has to take people from Kalangala to Entebbe to access

a hospital and you have not given us fuel, it means you would rather construct hospitals for these island districts.

Mr Speaker, Kalangala District is next to Masaka and one of the main means of transport from Bukakata is a ferry, but that place is a very short distance; the Government should construct a bridge.

Mr Musasizi, what are you thinking about that? Can't you, in your – you know. Can't we - [Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka: "Order."]-Mr Speaker, I need protection from –(Laughter)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are causing yourself trouble.

MS NAKIMULI: Mr Speaker, I apologise. Hon. Musasizi, please go back, sit down, look at Kalangala as a business centre and as a district that has people that we represent, and give us a bridge. It is a distance of just about four kilometres. We are tired of dying on the lake as we cross over from there to here. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

5.56

MS MILTON MUWUMA (NRM, Kigulu County South, Iganga): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the committee for the report.

My concern is on how we prioritise the few resources available. Two years ago, we passed a loan here for intensification of electricity connections countrywide. This loan was national in character and every Member here supported the passing of the loan. I saw you witnessing launches in Mitooma and I also saw people witnessing launches in Teso, but to date, no connections have been made.

We made people to connect their buildings – do the wiring – but nothing has happened. Iganga was allocated 16,000 connections but to date, no single connection has taken effect. How are we utilising the few available resources, as we scramble for more resources?

The other one is to do with Bukoyo Senior

Secondary School. It is a traditional secondary school that was founded by the Muslim community as far back as 1946. It has never received Government infrastructure and it is dilapidated. I am requesting the minister, because we have written several times, to get support for this school.

Honourable minister for finance and honourable minister for education, this school needs support. I thank you very much.

5.57

MR LAWRENCE BIYIKA (NRM, Ora County, Zombo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the chairperson of the committee and I want to address myself to the following issues: Number one, I need some corrections, both in the NDP and the report. This is because one time when you were chairing this House, Mr Speaker, I raised the issue of our road at the border, which is an economic and security road. In the NDP, it is captured as 16 kilometres long, but it is 120 kilometres long, from Nebbi to Vurra. It is put as at feasibility stage, but that road is not at feasibility stage. I laid here, on the Floor of Parliament, the final engineering design for tarmacking. That needs to be corrected by NPA.

Number two, I want to talk about disaster. Right now, we are quiet and are not talking about floods, but when the rains come, everywhere you will hear people talking about disaster. Therefore, let us give it priority.

Therefore, my concern here is that let us give priority to energy access and roads. The roads should be both for market, economic security and tourism – in this budget.

Then, on health, let us focus more on preventive measures. I think that will help us a lot. ICT is also very important.

Another thing which I need to talk about is the issue of green building. Institutions such as Makerere University can have their own source of water and electricity. Even Parliament can have its own source of electricity, from renewable solar energy. Why are we paying a

lot of bills, yet we would even use half of that money to put electricity here. These are the things that we need to start thinking about.

Finally, on education, we need rehabilitation - *(Member timed out.)*

5.59

MS JOVANICE TWINOBUSINGYE (NRM, Woman Representative, Kiruhura): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to join my colleagues in thanking the chairperson, the committee and even the authors of the minority report.

My concern is on the upgrade of health centres III to health centres IV level. I will be specific. I have a full constituency, Kashongi, without a health centre IV. I have written several letters. I get responses, but even today, the health centre is not included anywhere. I want to know what criteria we are using. We are really suffering.

My other concern is on Government-aided secondary schools. I have 14 subcounties in my district, but only seven subcounties have grant-aided schools. I request that some of these subcounties be considered. Some of these subcounties are Kinoni, which has Kinoni Seed Secondary School. The others are Kenshunga Subcounty, Nyakasharara Town Council, Kikatsi Subcounty. Then, I have Akayanja with actually nothing. Akayanja has no health centre, no secondary school; Akayanja has no offices.

Mr Speaker, we need to consider those subcounties. I beg to move. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Cuthbert?

6.01

MR CUTHBERT ABIGABA (NRM, Kibale County, Kamwenge): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker for the opportunity. I want to add my voice to appreciate the committee and Hon. Ssemujju for the reports. There is a very big problem. Actually, I consider this as a time bomb.

Mr Speaker, the recent studies and research

[Mr Abigaba]

have revealed that of the children who enrol in primary one, 45 per cent drop out. By the end of senior four, another 30 per cent has dropped out. So, the high drop-out rate needs to be addressed, and especially we need to plan for those people who are affected.

The Government is doing very well in investing in primary and secondary education. However, I would propose that the Government considers the issue of vocational education in our education system.

Mr Speaker, Kamwenge District – which I represent – does not have any single kind of technical institution. So, all our children who drop out of school are unaccounted for and it is a future problem for us.

Mr Speaker, I want to talk about information and communications technology (ICT). This sector is grossly underfunded. It is only this financial year, that we have been able to hit one per cent of the national budget. Yet, we all know the potential of ICT.

Therefore, I want to make a suggestion. As a committee, we have always advised the Government to centralise ICT infrastructure. It is quite disheartening that every ministry and department plan for their own ICT infrastructure, yet we could save a lot if we centralised the ICT infrastructure. All the budgets of these ministries are thinking of systems, computer upgrades, yet we can have a centralised ICT system that will help to save a lot of money – which we can deploy in other sectors.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, people have talked about-
(Member timed out.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kyooma and then Hon. Leku.

6.03

MR XAVIER KYOOMA (NRM, Ibanda County North, Ibanda): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and many thanks to the authors of

the majority and minority reports. Right away, under the climate change, natural resources, environment, water and management, I want to appreciate the recommendation by the Committee on Budget and also the relevant sectoral committee to increase access to water for agricultural production. It is commendable.

In addition, Mr Speaker, we need to increase access to water for domestic consumption. My biggest worry in this is that whereas the National Development Plan IV (NDP IV) provides for Shs 480 billion for this very financial year, what the minister has provided is Shs 412 billion. There is a big shortfall of Shs 68 billion.

Some places are far from accessing water for domestic consumption. I will give an example of Ibanda District, specifically Ibanda North. We have pipes but are short of water. We can take even a month without having water, yet bills – call them invoices – will be provided. Many attempts have been made but nothing is done. They will tell you they have put a high power lift pump but nothing happens.

Just one – (Member timed out.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Joel Leku?

6.06

MR JOEL LEKU (NRM, Terego West County, Terego): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join colleagues in thanking the Committee on Budget.

The issues of schools; improvement and expansion of all traditional schools in Terego District. We have schools that are in dire need of improvement. These are; Ombatini, Aria, Otumbari and others. I think, the Governments should consider the expansion of these schools.

In the health sector, Mr Speaker; there are sickle cell patients in this country. You can only get treatment of sickle cell when you go to Mulago. In Arua Regional Referral Hospital, the patients are fed on morphine to deal with the pain. It is really painful. It is important that

we first of all consider sickle cell as a disability. Actually, it is a disability that can kill. These people need our attention.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of revenue mobilisation for this country, many Ugandans open up companies and abandon them along the way, including the leaders here. If we want to raise revenue to finance the Budget, we need income tax clearance certificate on top of academic qualifications as we go for nominations during the political season.

We also need income tax clearance certificate if you are seeking for employment in civil service. Kenya actually does this. You want to be paid funds collected by the Government yet you are not paying taxes – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Sendawula Christine and then Hon. Lokoru Albert.

6.08

MS CHRISTINE SENDAWULA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kyankwanzi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I take this opportunity to thank the Chairperson of the Committee on Budget and the minority report which was presented.

My concern is on the teachers in Universal Primary Education (UPE) schools. Mr Speaker, it is our support, as the Government, which will help the UPE school teachers to perform well. When you move in most of the UPE schools, you will find that they do not have staff quarters, which leads to the teachers coming late and leaving early.

I request, if possible, we provide a budget for staff quarters in most of the UPE schools. This will improve the performance of our children in the schools. Even the teachers will perform well when they have where to sleep, around the school. Thank you very much. Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Lokoru Albert.

6.09

MR ALBERT LOKORU (NRM, Tepeth County, Moroto): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join the rest of the Members to thank the chairperson of the committee and our senior colleague, Hon. Ssemujju, for the reports.

What only shocks me from the sharing we have had is the phrase, “wasteful expenditure” in this era, when Ugandans need services. Should we entertain wasteful expenditure, or we realign this Budget with the areas where people need critical services?

The other one is that I come from Karamoja subregion, which is a water-stressed area. Why Karamojong sometimes are said to be bad people is because of the weather. The Government has talked of providing water for production in Karamoja. Year in, year out; each financial year, this is being done. Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, when will the water be availed to Karamoja? How I wish in this Budget that the issue of water is adequately catered for, so that these issues of Karamojong being seen as people causing conflict is ended.

The other one, Mr Speaker, is that the country is doing well, but there is one gap; the gap of monitoring and evaluation. Most of the projects of the last financial year are ongoing, but the quality and value for money – I can give you an example of a dam; a valley dam in my constituency which was awarded last financial year. We are still discussing it this financial year. You cannot tell whether it is a dam or playground – *(Member timed out)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Norah Bigirwa, Hon. Loy Katali, Hon. Bukenya, Hon. Chemonges and Hon. Geoffrey Feta. We are concluding, honourable members.

6.11

MS NORAH BIGIRWA (NRM, Woman Representative, Buliisa): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I appreciate the leadership of the Committee on Budget and the minority report.

Mr Speaker, some years back, some of the

[Ms Bigirwa]

health centres IV in this country were elevated to hospital levels. Unfortunately, there were no additions of infrastructure like theatres, more wards, equipment or even supplies. A case in point is Kigoya Hospital in Buliisa, the only district hospital.

I am glad that among the priorities of the Government, there is an issue of disaster management, but there is something that we need to do as a country. We have had a series of areas being flooded, especially near lake shores, for the past few years. Honourable minister concerned, especially the finance minister, it is important that we budget for some of these areas which have been affected by floods.

Secondly, the fishing communities in this country should be taken very seriously and given priority because we have not given them appropriate regulations to regulate the sector. I pray that this time around, the fishing sector is given priority.

Mr Speaker, I would like to appreciate the Government but as we budget for this country, a needs-assessment from our constituencies and other areas should be done as we do budgeting. Priorities are very clear. Can we also make sure that the priorities we have as a country are given funds, other than saying that it is a funded priority, yet you are not giving them the exact money required.

Mr Speaker, it is important that even as we budget, we get to know what studies we are basing on. As far as I am concerned, I am not very sure whether the study we have from the position that was passed – *(Member timed out)*

6.13

MS LOY KATALI (NRM, Woman Representative, Jinja): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I would like to thank the chairperson and members for the two reports.

On education, my colleagues have talked about Busoga University and Bunyoro University. All we need is a Vote and we have these institutions start next academic year.

The committee also recommends the completion of construction of health centres IV, but like my sister from Kiruhura said, we need to upgrade the health centres III in constituencies where we do not have health centres IV like Kagoma and Butembe in Jinja District.

Mr Speaker, when it comes to electricity, the Government should prioritise this, especially in Busoga and in particular Jinja, because we produce this power.

When it comes to town councils that were created in the last term, most of them are not funded. Like Jinja, we do not have headquarters. We still go to the city; we need funding to complete our district headquarters.

Mr Speaker, we need more funding to the National Animal Genetic Resources Centre and Data Bank to support the Parish Development Model programme.

When it comes to the East African Community and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; about the statutory obligations and non-payment of subscription fees, it is embarrassing to our nation. People working in these institutions must develop thick skins. You are undermined; you do not take part in decision-making. It is a mess. Some of us have been there.

Mr Speaker, I believe the Government should evaluate these international organisations, and have a cost-benefit analysis to find out whether we need to continue being members of some of these institutions. Thank you.

6.15

DR MICHAEL BUKENYA (NRM, Bukuya County, Kassanda): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to first thank the chairperson of the committee for the good report and Hon. Ssemujju for his submission.

I am going to talk about two small issues that are actually big. Mr Speaker, you used to be an investor in the ICT sector as an individual, but I do not know whether the Minister of Finance –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Doctor, are you a member of the Committee on Budget?

DR MICHAEL BUKENYA: Yes. These were very important issues, Mr Speaker. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: They were sorted out in the committee. Hon. Chemonges?

6.16

MR WILLIAM CHEMONGES (NRM, Kween County, Kween): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to support the motion with amendments. I read this report the whole night; I think I have never read other reports like this one and thank you for giving us time.

For a budget to reflect on our people or for our people to appreciate a budget like this one, we must talk about schools, power, health centres and water for domestic use and production. For example, in Kween, I have about 12 subcounties without power and eight subcounties without Government secondary schools.

Recently, I visited one of my secondary schools which has 800 – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, because you spent the whole night reading the report – *(Laughter)* – I will give you one more minute to conclude. However, I wish you would make submissions out of the report because the issues you are stating are not in the report.

MR CHEMONGES: Okay. Mr Speaker, I went through the report and the budget for water, schools and health centres is not impressive. I have a big problem with a school called Kworus Secondary School which has about 1,000 students and the parents have been struggling to support the school for the last 15 years.

We have been asking for this school to be grant-aided and the teachers to be on the payroll. According to the document I saw at night – *(Laughter)* – there is nothing captured

– *(Interjections)* – No, I got it.

Mr Speaker, I request that we review this document in detail and bring out issues that will help Members to explain to our people what we have been doing here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Feta?

6.18

MR GEOFFREY FETA (NRM, Ayivu Division East, Arua City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the committee for the report and I agree with its recommendations.

We have many development projects for which the Government has borrowed the money, but these projects do not have counterpart funding. This is similar under electricity, water and ICT. Everybody here is crying about electricity. We have borrowed money but it is sitting in the bank. We should focus on providing counterpart funding to unlock those loans. If we do not, we will pay more in terms of interest, and the projects will not be completed.

We have very many projects whose contractors have abandoned the sites because they cannot be paid. They cannot proceed with the works, but the communities are demanding for electricity. Almost every Member here has pressure on electricity connectivity in their constituencies, but there is money sitting in the banks.

So, this budget should prioritise counterpart funding to unlock these loans – *(Applause)* – because the more this money sits in the banks, the more we pay and also the more we get pressure from the constituencies because of electricity.

Two, there is the issue of internet connectivity. For instance, the National Information Technology Authority – Uganda needs Shs 45 billion to take electricity to the last mile in the villages, and this employs mainly the young people. Can we provide this money in this Budget?

[Mr Feta]

Thirdly, there are projects which have been ongoing. We have bridges that have been a construction site for four years. For instance, I – *(Member timed out.)*

6.20

MR JOSEPH KOLUO (Independent, Toroma County, Katakwi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would like to add my voice to others by mentioning issues which should be incorporated in this Budget.

One is the compensation of the people who lost their livestock. Two, desilting of the valley dams, especially in Toroma; there is a dam called Acuna Valley Dam. This could help our farmers in water for production and for their animals.

Also, I want this budget to incorporate those administrative centres which have not been put in. For example, in Toroma, we have two subcounties, that is, Angodingod and Amusia. The parish and subcounty chiefs are working inside a rented room. Sometimes they come to the shade because of the strong wind and the wind blows away their papers.

I have two suggestions, Mr Speaker: If there is a way, we can promote tourism in Uganda; that is one way our Government can get free money. Why do I call it “free money”? One tourist that comes to our country creates employment and brings in foreign exchange and also money to the ordinary people.

Two, water for production, because of climate change. If there is a way, the Government can provide at least every village – I request they start with those villages bordering Karamoja in – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Phyllis Chemutai?

6.22

MS PHYLLIS CHEMUTAI (NRM, Woman Representative, Kapchorwa): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I am going

to talk about two things. One is tourism – and I am happy that tourism has been put as one of the priorities for this country. I want to inform this House that Sebei is a beautiful subregion; it is endowed with many natural resources and implore the Government to take up the Sebei subregion for the promotion of tourism. There are many tourist sites which can be developed to attract tourists and earn revenue for this country.

The other one is about seed schools. There are subcounties in Sebei that are still missing secondary schools. We have Kapsinda Subcounty, Gamogo Subcounty, Chepterech Subcounty, and Amukol Subcounty – all those still lack seed schools. I implore the Government to include these four subcounties in the incoming budget.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Fr Onen?

6.23

FR CHARLES ONEN (Independent, Laroo-Pece Division, Gulu City): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for granting me this opportunity. I join my colleagues to thank the chairperson of the Committee on Budget and Hon. Ssemujju. There should be consideration for the Local Governments. In 2021, new administrative units were created – new cities, divisions, municipalities and districts – and yet in all these cities, only administrative units are operating without road equipment. For nearly four years, they have been hiring that equipment. If the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development could consider giving road equipment to the new cities.

People have been talking about the cancer issue. Last year, I was with my brother at Uganda Cancer Institute for six months; eventually, he passed on. I was with him and the issue of crowding – I am a witness. We need an infrastructure expansion policy for the cancer centre. So far, the Government has prioritised regional centres in northern, eastern and western Uganda like Mbarara, Mbale and Gulu.

At the same time, all these centres are

overcrowded because cancer is one of the serious silent-killer diseases in this country. For example, people are now moving from Mulago to Gulu, and Gulu is now overcrowded. We need more land for the expansion of these cancer centres.

Finally, on the issue of the elderly people. At one time we are all going to grow old and I have not heard about how the elderly people are going to be catered for in our budget. We need money to be prioritised for the elderly people so that they can age gracefully.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, do you have any clarification you want to make? – Hon. Alex, I asked colleagues who want to speak to stand up and I did not see you. You were my chairperson; I usually respect you; so please, submit. He is our elder so –

6.26

MR ALEX BYARUGABA (NRM, Isingiro County South, Isingiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am utterly sorry that I did not catch your eye but I thank the committee and those who contributed to this subject matter. I have four areas that I feel should be prioritised if this budget is to make sense to our people, especially during this time. All of you know what I am talking about.

Senior secondary schools, especially those areas that do not have. I have seven subcounties and only three have seed secondary schools. Health centres IV is a priority. Upgrading health centres III, especially in areas that do not have one, like Nyakitunda Health Centre III could be upgraded to a health centre IV to assist people in the Isingiro South.

Operationalisation of the new subcounties. New subcounties were created way back in 2016/2017. Mr Speaker, those subcounties have never been operationalised and it is a pity; you can imagine the inequality you are talking about. No allowances, ex-gratia, road equipment, or road funds and I think it is a very unfortunate development. This budget should prioritise that one and we should be able to see it alive and kicking.

Vocational institutes; the policy of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) today is that every constituency should have at least one vocational centre and we do not see it in this budget. We should be able to look at it in a phased manner.

Electricity; my colleague, Hon. Kirabo did allude to this. The experts indicate that within two years this business of having excess power is not going to be the case. There is a lot of demand for electricity connections. If only we had two – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Wanda Richard?

6.28

MR RICHARD WANDA (NRM, Bungokho Central County, Mbale): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First, I want to state that we may not have the excess power as it is stated because there are so many people lacking power, including factories and households. Allow me to thank the chairperson for the report, but also make a few comments.

I come from a village setting and when you are lighting a fire, you do not put a log and begin lighting it. You first light the small branches that will eventually light the log.

We are leaving out certain departments and sections like tourism. She has alluded to the fact that it has been considered but, Mr Speaker, the budget for tourism is too small. In Elgon Subregion, as she said, we have over a thousand waterfalls but all these sites have not been developed because there is no money. We do not have tourism roads in that region; so, the tourists cannot enjoy the beauty of this country.

It is my prayer that a re-visitation is done; we need money for tourism because it will open up many other sectors. The hotels will boom, and employment at the individual level will be there; so we need money in that section.

Power: If we have power, many individuals are willing to set up their enterprises but they do not have power. I come from an area that grows coffee; they are willing to set up coffee

[Mr Wanda]

processing plants, but they do not have access to power. It is my prayer that we – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson, I think it was only one issue because the rest the minister should be able to handle. The issue from the chairperson of the Committee on Gender.

MR ACHIA: Let me start with defence. I have gladly shared the recommendation of the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs as an annex without changing the recommendations there.

The concern of the chairperson of the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs was that he wanted me to bring to the House, as part of the record, that Uzima is profitable and is not a loss-making entity. That is the information that needs to be corrected.

Mr Speaker, I had put it to the House and also the Government, that as we move closer to elections, what is the mandate of police and what do they need? I have been made to know that there are two differences in this. The Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) as a matter of fact – and it is in their docket – during election time, they must ensure that the security and the international borders of this country are integral. They must be attended to while you are doing the normal civic duty of electioneering and voting. I think that that clarity must be brought to the fore.

There are other issues from the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development. Their recommendations, which should form part of the annex and should have been captured under the summary table, were inadvertently missed out in the hurry to print, bind and sign. It must have somehow got lost because they are in the electronic copy.

I want the House to know that the recommendations of this committee are part of this report and should be captured as such, although the paper might have slipped in the

process of photocopying and signing. Let the record capture that.

In conclusion, my appeal is to the Executive. You have listened to my colleagues, the Members of Parliament. As a country, we have prioritised agro-industrialisation, tourism, manufacturing, science and technology. Alright, that is our production sector.

However, you have listened since morning to the cry of the people. It is on education, health, infrastructure, electricity, vocational education, and water. Please, go back and reflect on this. The *Hansard* will be available.

Secondly, what I want us to share to summarise the concerns of the committee, is –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: But committee chairperson, you presented everything.

MR ACHIA: Yes. This is just what I have been listening to. I do not want to talk about –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, the minister is going to respond because he has been listening. This is his work. Now, let us listen to the minister.

MR ACHIA: Most obliged, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, committee chairperson. I will start with the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development. Minister for Karamoja Affairs, what is the issue? Let me start with the minister for energy but you must just take a minute because I want the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to refocus us.

6.35

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT

(ENERGY) (Mr Sidronius Okaasai): Mr Speaker, first of all, I would like to appreciate the two reports, which were presented. They brought out issues clearly concerning extractives – These are minerals and petroleum. It also brought out how we can actually turn our economy ten-fold through the extractives

and then energy being a catalyser for all the programmes of this country. This is what I got from them.

I also wish to thank you for bringing out the issues, which are relevant to your communities and yourselves, to make sure that you have power. However, I wish to clarify here that last year I had a budget of about Shs 171 billion but in the budget we are discussing, I have only Shs 57 billion for electricity- that is Government of Uganda funding. Many of our projects are triggered by Government funding. For the project which you approved in 2022, the electricity access scale-up project – unless you give me a budget – I have a budget of Shs 21 billion. Yet, reflecting on what I am going to get, I have only Shs 2 billion. It means then that I will be able to give you the free connections but not to extend electricity to wherever you want to take it.

Secondly, there are a lot of arrears that we have to the contractors. Even if you gave me the money, so long as I have not paid what I owe them (about Shs 25 billion), they will not be able to perform. I need to make them pay off their debts to enable them to come back to work. I have that challenge in the sector.

On the minerals; yes, it is clear that these can turn our economy ten-fold. However, you need to invest money to get money. The minerals have the potential to generate money within a short time. I can say minerals are a cash cow that we need to graze to be able to get the milk that we need from it. It is able to give us \$25 billion within a period of four or five years; so, we need to inject in money to develop that.

All of us are expecting our first oil out but with the money, which is provided for petroleum to get out – we have to go with the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) – we have got to get our refinery and even extract that oil out of the ground. However, the provisions in the budget will not enable us to get that oil out. Therefore, I am appealing to you to appropriate resources. It is up on you to see –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: But, honourable

minister, you agreed with the President as a Cabinet that we should stop tampering with your figures. We have given our proposals and supported you. Go to Cabinet and fight your way out so that we avoid getting embarrassed again. We have supported you for sure and we shall continue supporting you.

MR OKAASAI: I appreciate the support. I am only pointing out how much you have supported me. We shall go back to Cabinet and put our case before it and the minister for finance. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, the issue of the wires we talked about; some of them were for projects. For example, in my area, I think it was either Kuwait or the Islamic Development Bank. There was the funding but the kind of contractors you gave us –

MR OKAASAI: To answer that question, some of those projects are not completed because the contractors are in receivership. We are not able to pay what we owe them. They are in arrears that I have put before the budget that we need to pay them. It is the Government of Uganda funding that will trigger the completion of some of those projects.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Attorney-General, can you interest yourself in this contract? Since 2018? The Government is losing money. A contract was supposed to be for two years; now we are in 2025. Maybe, you discuss this with the minister for energy and find a solution to these issues. The honourable minister for Karamoja Affairs, what is the issue?

6.38

THE MINISTER OF STATE, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER (KARAMOJA) (Ms Florence Nambozo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Permit me to appreciate you for being resilient and patient since morning. At least I have been here with you. We want to thank you for steering the House very well. (*Applause*)

Also, permit me to appreciate the honourable

colleagues who have taken this Budget Framework Paper (BFP) through surgery. I know it is for the well-being of our country.

Mr Speaker, my point here is to just clarify to some of my colleagues of the Karamoja Subregion, who probably may think that it is this ministry that is supposed to deal with some of the budget items. However, ours, as affirmative ministers, is to do focused oversight on strategic interventions to bring the region to economic growth because it has been left behind for so many reasons that you know. This implies that the issues of water, roads, and schools, are supposed to be handled by the relevant ministries. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister for finance? Tourism has no issues if you give him money. – No, local government, I had given you earlier; you finished.

6.41

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I respond, let me take this opportunity to appreciate you and honourable colleagues for giving the desired attention to the Budget Framework Paper. From morning up to now, honourable colleagues have been debating this Budget Framework Paper, and their input has enhanced our thinking and approach. Without a doubt, it will inform the next steps going forward.

Mr Speaker, I will not respond to each issue, but I would like to give broad responses. Several honourable colleagues have been raising issues relating to where our priorities lie and what our priorities should be for the next financial year's budget. They are the following:

- i) Peace and security for both life and property for all people of Uganda;
- ii) Maintenance of roads and bridges, rehabilitation of the metre-gauge railway, and construction of the standard gauge railway, as well as water transport;

- iii) Electricity, with a focus on enhancing transmission and distribution, particularly in growth-supporting areas;
- iv) Oil and gas activities which are expected to boost growth in other sectors and exports;
- v) Full monetisation of the economy through investments in wealth creation initiatives, such as the Parish Development Model (PDM), *Emyooga*, Agriculture Credit Facility, Microfinance Support Centre, and Uganda Development Bank (UDB), among others;
- vi) Science, technology, and innovations, including ICT and digital transformation – the knowledge economy;
- vii) Investing in the people of Uganda through human capital development, including health, education, and provision of clean water for human consumption and production, creative industry, and social protection;
- viii) Management of natural disasters as well as regional and international commitments;
- ix) Irrigation, particularly the solar-powered irrigation.

These are the broad areas of priority in the next financial year's budget.

Mr Speaker, there was an issue raised on the numbers. Our preliminary resource envelope is Shs 57.4 trillion. When I compare this with the NDP IV target of Shs 67.7 billion, you can see we are not far off. I am saying this is preliminary; between now and the time of estimates in April, if we realise more additional sources of revenue, this may adjust to a figure close to the Shs 67.7 billion which was envisaged in the National Development Plan IV.

The Shs 92.2 trillion which attracted debate includes the private sector investments. The NDP not only looks at the public investments but also the private sector. Therefore, the private sector inclusive takes it to Shs 92.2 trillion.

There were several issues that the minority

report pointed out. The minority report raised an issue on luxury spending; Mr Speaker, I wish to respond to luxury spending as follows:

Whereas the shadow minister mentioned the allocation of Shs 132.251 billion towards beddings and cloth wear as the highest allocation for luxury items, this is not the case. The Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development is proud of its achievement in providing information on the budget to all stakeholders.

However, we urge you to request for clarification where you might not understand some of the allocations. I wish to clarify on the allocations to these items as follows:

- i) Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs; An amount of Shs 94.8 billion is provided for army uniforms and boots. This is what he is calling “luxury spending”;
- ii) Uganda Police Force; An amount of Shs 17.6 billion is provided for uniforms and boots;
- iii) Uganda Prisons Service; Shs 11.89 billion for uniforms, boots, blankets, and uniforms for prisoners;
- iv) Hospitals, Uganda Heart Institute, and Uganda Blood Transfusion Service (UBTS); Shs 1.144,5 trillion. This is the medical clothing for medical workers;
- v) We have an item of clothing under the Parliamentary Commission for protocol people, which the Speaker has already clarified;
- vi) Uganda Revenue Authority; Shs 998.8 million for tax collectors attire;
- vii) Under the Ministry of Health, we have Shs 929.4 million. These are medical-related attires;
- viii) National Citizenship and Immigration; Shs 899.4 million. This is for procurement of attire for immigration officers;
- ix) The Judiciary; Shs 603 million. This is the attire for judicial officers;
- x) Under Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB) and universities, we have Shs 2.06 billion for various attire for the staff working in

those institutions.

Mr Speaker, it is, therefore, not true that this is a luxurious expenditure. These are provisions aimed at facilitating the operations of people working in these sectors. The report also raises the issue of skyrocketing public debt to Shs 109 trillion. Mr Speaker, as we mentioned in the Budget Framework Paper, the debt levels of Uganda remain within sustainable levels – of 46.8 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as at the end of Financial Year 2023/2024 (that is, as at June 2024).

We are confident that with the 10-fold growth strategy, which focuses on the ATMs, the debt will further reduce because the economy is going to grow and we shall raise more taxes, and, as a result, we shall keep the debts within manageable levels.

On the domestic arrears, our response is that the Government has put in place the Domestic Arrears Management Strategy in order to clear arrears over the medium-term. An amount of Shs 13.8 trillion included Shs 9.1 trillion in outstanding debt to Bank of Uganda, which has since been paid – this is the minister for finance speaking. *(Applause)*

The most recent report from the Internal Auditor-General estimates the stock of domestic arrears at Shs 3.521 trillion, and they are in areas of court awards, pension, salary and gratuity, telephone, water, electricity, etc. Through the arrears management strategy, the Government remains committed to clearing all the remaining arrears over the medium-term.

There was an issue on tax policy. Our response on tax policy is that we have submitted a Cabinet memorandum on the draft national tax policy, and we shall fast-track it to ensure that it is put on the agenda as soon as possible

There was a question on capitation grant. Mr Speaker, from Financial Year 2023/2024, capitation grant for Universal Primary Education (UPE) learners is Shs 20,000, as opposed to the Shs 6,000. For secondary, it is Shs 176,000 per term. Over the years –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is that per term or per year?

MR MUSASIZI: I need to check with my team – (*Laughter*)- whether this is per term or per year.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let me instruct my people to cross-check with your team on whether it is per term or per year. They can write for you the clarification.

MR MUSASIZI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. However, important to note is also that this capitation grant has been growing over time. For instance, under USE, the capitation grant increased from Shs 126.99 billion to Shs 144.7 billion and under UPE, capitation grant has increased from Shs 67.85 billion to Shs 185.36 billion.

We had an issue on district funding. Mr Speaker, during the current financial year, all districts, which migrated from cities, received an initial funding of Shs 1 billion for construction and this has been released in full. For subcounties and town councils, the ministry for finance is working with the Ministry of Local Government to provide standard Bills of Quality (BOQs) to enable the Government to sequence the construction, subject to availability of funds.

We also had an issue of budget ceilings. From the debate, you could hear people saying “You have not provided for this and that, you have reduced this and that”. Mr Speaker, the preliminary figures which appear in the Budget Framework Paper are informed by the MTEF projections and they exclude the subsequent provisions, which were made after the second budget call circular was issued. That is why you find that under National Medical Stores, for instance, Shs 100 billion is missing.

Mr Speaker, I wish to assure the House that as we finalise the second budget call circular – which will be issued on 15 February 2025 – some of these considerations will be taken care of, funds allowing. (*Interjections*) A number of them will be taken care of, honourable

colleagues.

Mr Speaker, I have received information that under UPE, the capitation grant is Shs 20,000 per learner, per year and under USE, the Shs 160,000 is per learner per year.

What are we doing under tourism? Mr Speaker, our priorities under tourism are the following:

1. Increasing tourism-related research and uptake.
2. Development, improvement and diversification of tourism products.
3. Improving tourism infrastructure, including transport, trails, electricity, ICT and accommodation.
4. Reducing the tourism skills gap.
5. Strengthening and harmonising marketing and promotion of Uganda as a preferred destination.
6. Strengthening the enforcement of tourism standards and regulations, conservation and protection of natural resources.

Mr Speaker – I am trying to conclude. You raised a number of issues about the taxation of subscriptions for clubs. The manager of Entebbe Golf Club might have been referring to the VAT charged for the provision of some services. I do not want to believe that our law – I can cross-check, but our law excludes subscriptions from taxation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I just brought it to your attention; you will take an interest.

MR MUSASIZI: Much obliged, Mr Speaker. Busoga and Bunyoro universities – Let me read so that the record will capture me properly. This is our position as far as Busoga and Bunyoro universities are concerned.

To operationalise the takeover of the universities by the Government, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development provided funds amounting to Shs 41 billion to the Ministry of Education and Sports in the Financial Year 2024/2025. The ministry for finance will continue to support the operational activities of the task-forces spearheading the

transition of these universities from private to government in the Financial Year 2025/2026 and the medium-term.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, I do not have that time. I want you to conclude, please.

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, these are the major ones. In conclusion, if you approve our motion, we shall consider all the recommendations from Parliament and they will become part of our – because this has been a consultative process. Your recommendations, together with other emerging issues that have happened between now and when we presented the BFP here, will inform the second Budget Call Circular, the ministerial policy statements, and the estimates which I will lay on the 1st of April this year. Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister.

Attorney-General, there were a few issues that had legal implications. If you could also come.

7.03

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am just going to highlight the points that I have taken away for us to come back and report at the appropriate time. We are going to definitely study all the recommendations of all the committees and specifically pick out the issues.

- i. We are going to ensure that the budget process is in compliance with Section 7 and Schedule 3 of the PFMA;
- ii. We are going to ensure that the tax policy is addressed;
- iii. We are going to look at the statutory obligations that were mentioned;
- iv. We are going to report back on the rationalisation of the membership of the Government in international bodies;
- v. We shall look at the bailout and investment policy;
- vi. Together with finance, we shall look at the status of Government's stake in the

different state corporations;

- vii. We shall address, in our reply, Parliament on the issue of the encroachment of land of Uganda Railways Corporation. It was a special issue but we will give details on it because it was a funder obligation. We could not go around but we shall report on it as well;
- viii. We shall address Parliament on what we have done with the amendment of the Public Finance Management Act, particularly Section 13 with respect to the change from sector to programme budgeting;
- ix. We shall address our minds to the issues of the payments that are outstanding for Kiteezi Landfill and Naguru-Nakawa;
- x. We shall address the duplication of roles that have been set out in the budget structure;
- xi. We shall report back on the project management issues that have been raised and the monitoring and evaluation;
- xii. We shall address Parliament also in the report on Sections 25 and 26 of the PFMA;
- xiii. On the issue of domestic arrears, there was a specific question of how it arose. There are only two instances where these domestic arrears arise. One is where an accounting officer specifically breaks the law by contracting without having the funds.

The second one which is more prevalent is where we have multi-year projects where we budget for a project for a three-year period. In the first year, money is provided and probably in the second year, it is not provided and it is carried over to the following year. However, we are addressing that, Mr Speaker, and ensuring that the budgets once started are seen through to the end;

- i. On the issue of contract management, like the ones of electricity roll-out, they are better and when the minister comes back to report, he will report better. From where we are sitting, there is some improvement in this space;

- ii. We shall report back on the laws with regulations that have not been done;
- iii. We shall report back – the finance minister skipped this, on what we are doing about the Land Fund because it is provided for, and I am sure when he comes back he will report. The counterpart funding is actually also provided for in that Vote 130, which the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) was talking about;
- iv. We shall also address the health facilities, specifically in the island areas;
- v. Obviously Bukakata Road – we shall come back and report on what this is;
- vi. There was an issue of wasteful expenditure.

All in all, Mr Speaker, like the minister has said, this is a consultative process. We have taken notes the whole day of everything that has been said.

When the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development comes back, he will report on the schools; electricity; health and water; what has been provided for in the Budget and what not. So, we hope that what you have done today – Mr Speaker, we want to thank you all very much for the work you have put in, in analysing this Budget Framework Paper. It will definitely make us a lot better and I am sure when we come back, you will be hearing some improvement in what we have done.

We only pray, Mr Speaker, that you approve this and move a motion to approve this Budget Framework Paper. It is not an end in itself; so we can continue with the proposals to take back to Cabinet and then come back with the paper. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Attorney-General. I now put the question that the motion for approval of the National Budget Framework Paper for the Financial Years 2025/2026-2029/2030 be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Motion adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, congratulations. Honourable committee chairperson and honourable colleagues, congratulations. Thank you, Hon. LOP and the shadow minister. I implore the minister to look at the minority report seriously. It also raised some credible issues. Look at both – and I know you are good at that. Usually, you do that in the interest of having a fair process.

Indeed, now we are in the budgeting process. By the 15th of March, the minister will give us ministerial policy statements. We will start working on them. LOP, we expect the alternative policy statements by the 29th of March as per the rules. That is the deadline. We hope the minister will give us the annual budget estimates together with the tax bills by the 1st of April.

I would like to guide you on a few things. One, on tax bills, honourable minister, it is a request that you cost the proposals in the tax bills, that is, in terms of the revenue generation they are going to bring. Why? That is going to make it much better for us to look at the proposals we have not agreed with and we cost them.

Honourable colleagues, what we have been doing is that we have been rejecting proposals of raising money to finance the budget, but we continue and carry the whole budget. We carry the budget in full but when we have rejected the revenue sources, meaning that somewhere, somehow, you have supplied air because if the minister said that “From this proposal I will raise Shs 20 billion,” and you reject it, but you maintain the full budget, it means he cannot raise the Shs 20 billion.

That will be much easier if the proposals are costed so that we know – I think that was the aim of Rule 150 which says that we must first consider the tax proposals, the tax bills, before going to Committee of Supply. This is so that you know that which you have not allowed and you deduct it. Otherwise, you supply air and

we end up coming to blame the ministry. That will be very important. I know it might be an extra job but honourable minister, with your technical people, you are able. Otherwise, by the time you introduce a proposal, you know how much you want to get out of it.

Number two, when bringing the budget estimates, I would request, honourable minister, for clarity so that we do not have issues here; you show us the recommendations we implement them out of our BFP proposals. Please show us that “We were able to implement these recommendations and were unable to implement these ones because of ABCD.” That will make – you might not get the money. You might say that “I do not have the funds for now – I cannot raise the funds.” That will help colleagues to know that when we sat and made proposals, the minister listened, and he has taken action. We do away with this accusation that “We make proposals but you do not listen to us; you do not consider what we tell you”. Okay? I believe that will help us and give us more clarity when the minister is bringing the estimates.

Sectoral committees; I emphasise, that when you are considering Ministerial Policy Statements, also look at the Treasury Memoranda. We want to know why recommendations of the Auditor-General are not implemented. The Auditor-General, in this last audit report, said that they implemented around 30, 31 or 34 per cent only of our recommendations. These are accounting officers. Then we hold them accountable. If we gave you money and money was stolen under your watch as an accounting officer, why should we add you money? Maybe we can raise it to the minister and to the Permanent Secretary/ Secretary to the Treasury (PS/ST) and they take action by removing you as an accounting officer and give us someone who can look after our new budget. That would be the aim.

Otherwise, we shall continue having reports, the Treasury Memoranda showing that recommendations of the Auditor-General have not been implemented and we just keep them on the shelves.

That is the guidance I wanted to give. I really hope, especially the tax bills, if we could receive them early so that we can give Members enough time. I do not want to be moving around the corridors and hear Members saying that I hid the budget from them; that I gave them only one hour or two hours to discuss the budget. It looks like I was hiding something yet there is nothing the minister is hiding. He is always very open and he is always ready to answer our questions.

Honourable colleagues, House adjourned to Tuesday, 4 February 2025 at 2.00 p.m.

(The House rose at 7.14 p.m. and adjourned until Tuesday, 4 February 2025 at 2.00 p.m.)