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FRIDAY, 30 AUGUST 2024



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

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FOURTH SESSION - 15TH SITTING - FIRST MEETING

Friday, 30 August 2024

*Parliament met at 9.58 a.m. at Kaunda
Grounds, Gulu City.*

They are not developing or expanding for lack of titles.

PRAYERS

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

Hon. Omona, kindly help and follow up on that. We need the minister to report back to the House on the action being taken within two weeks. Thank you.

The House was called to order.

Chairpersons of sub-region groups, we shall move this way: I request that you appoint two people per sub-region to speak on the reports; on the issues which are being raised so that we are able to complete the Order Paper. Otherwise, if we are to debate for much longer, then there are salient issues which we shall leave before handling.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I want to welcome you to this Sitting. Thank you for coming. Today we shall finish by 4.00 p.m. so I would like to go straight to the Order Paper. The rest of the issues will be carried over to Kampala.

At the end, we shall be adjourning the House for two weeks so that we give you time to go to your constituencies. We feel that you should spend more time with your people. When there is serious business, we shall call you and you come and do it in the House. We shall adjourn the House to the 17th. You need to know that, in case you leave early.

Yesterday, I visited Gulu University and I found one critical pending issue. I do not see any minister from the environment sector but I would like to request my brother, Hon. Kenneth Omona, to follow up on the issue of degazettement of the land for Gulu University which the Government offered to the university.

I had received a special request from Hon. Remigio Achia; I do not know whether he is already here. We would start with his item if he is here. However, if he is not then we shall continue with the Order Paper. Clerk, please move to item five on the Order Paper.

The presidential directive was very clear. The university did all it could; it has fulfilled its part. I know this issue has been lagging on for long. The Ministry of Water and Environment must bring the motion for degazettement of that land so that we have it sorted. This is Government property. Government borrowed money from African Development Bank and built structures and now it cannot come around and say, no, we are not completing the circle.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF
PARLIAMENT URGING GOVERNMENT
TO FORMULATE A POLICY ON FREE
COMPULSORY BOARDING SCHOOL
EDUCATION FOR THE KARAMOJA SUB-
REGION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Achia? I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Rt Hon. Speaker who has joined us for this session.

10.04

MR REMIGIO ACHIA (NRM, Pian County, Nabilatuk): Mr Speaker, I stand here to present a motion for a resolution of Parliament urging the Government to formulate a policy on free compulsory boarding school education for the Karamoja Subregion. I am moving this motion under Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

“WHEREAS the Karamoja Subregion is located in the North Eastern part of Northern Uganda, covering about 27,000 square kilometres and characterised by a semi-arid climate, with erratic rainfall and a population of about 1,400,000 people out of the national population of about 46,000,000 people as per the 2024 National Census;

AND WHEREAS the Karamoja Subregion has traditionally experienced low literacy levels with 66 per cent of the population not having any form of formal education largely attributable to the high school dropout rate caused by the inability to afford scholastic materials, lack of school feeding programme, long walking distances, cultural chores like livestock farming, digging, and historical injustices against the Karamoja Subregion;

NOTING that the high school dropout rates at primary level has resulted into a minimal secondary school gross enrolment rate which stands at only 19 per cent and the lowest adult literacy rates of 25 per cent as per the 2019/2020 compared to the 73 per cent national enrolment rate. For instance, if you compare Karamoja to the rest of Uganda, the general enrolment rate for Kampala is 92 per

cent, 83 per cent for Buganda South and 79 per cent for Ankole, but Karamoja Subregion stands at the bottom of the table;

FURTHER NOTING that many of the male school dropouts end up being recruited into “warriorhood”, cattle rustling and armed violence while the female school dropouts end up in early marriages and/or as child mothers which has contributed to Karamoja having high indicators of maternal mortality, child mortality and under five mortality rates;

CONCERNED that Karamoja’s struggle with cyclic insecurity is attributed to its low rates of education and household poverty. Many children of school going age (3-18 years) are integrated into the livestock herding economy, taking care of livestock and experiencing the vagaries of conflict, and ultimately taking roles in either defending their livestock or participating in revenge expeditions and most often becoming the victims and perpetrators of conflict;

FURTHER CONCERNED that the human and economic costs of dealing with insecurity in Karamoja far outstrip the costs to the national economy of implementing high quality education. In the decade until 2010, Karamoja lost about 80 per cent of its herd to insecurity. When insecurity returned in 2019, as mentioned by Hon. Nakut yesterday, a district like Kaabong lost nearly all its herd. Therefore, investment into education is a direct investment in national economic growth, in stabilising the region and security and also cuts off the young generations from participating in criminal activities;

AWARE that with Government interventions, through the UPE and USE as well as the free compulsory boarding school programme in some schools in Karamoja Subregion, the literacy rate for the boy-child has risen by seven per cent between 2016 and 2020 but that of the girl-child has only risen by 1.3 per cent and out of this total primary school enrolment of both boys and girls, only 12 per cent of the girls make it to secondary schools;

RECOGNISING that the Constitution, in Articles 30 and 34, enshrines a child's right to basic education and obligates the state to provide it, together with the parents, the same is buttressed by the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that whereas there are policies on UPE and USE, there is no complementary policy on free compulsory boarding school education specifically for the Karamoja Subregion, given its unique historical injustices and vulnerable nature;

REALISING that there is need for a full-fledged policy on compulsory free boarding school education to boost the education of children in the Karamoja Subregion and to complement and strengthen the existing structures that offer free compulsory boarding school education;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that providing quality education in Karamoja Subregion requires long-term comprehensive and coordinated Government effort;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that;

- a. Government formulates a policy on free compulsory boarding school education for Karamoja Subregion;*
- b. The implementation of the policy should be fast-tracked in the Karamoja Subregion and other regions of the country with low literacy levels; and*
- c. Government strengthens the existing structures and framework on free compulsory boarding school education for the Karamoja Subregion."*

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Is the motion seconded? It is seconded by Hon. Abrahams Peter Lokii, Hon. Angura, Hon. John Baptist Lokii, the Minister for Karamoja Affairs, Hon. Lokeris, Hon. Lagen, Hon. Ababiku, Hon. Ecweru, Hon. Silas Aogon, Hon. Bwanika, Hon. Peter Okot - the whole House is seconding the motion.

Honourable, would you like to speak to the motion? You can use five minutes, because it is straightforward. It is important to also note Hon. Anthony Akol as among the first ones to stand up. Thank you.

MR ACHIA: Mr Speaker, I move this motion to address two fundamental matters.

One, that the Government of Uganda has not had a policy on compulsory boarding education for a long time.

Number two, this policy is the next level of the mental disarmament that we talk about in Karamoja. Most of you may not know that Karamoja, since the coming of colonialists into Uganda, was not provided with any form of education.

In 1898, when the British came to Karamoja, they encountered the people of Nyakwae in Napak District. One of them, called John Patrick, who was trying to rape a woman, was killed. From that time, Karamoja was closed and made a human zoo. There was no education until Independence in 1961, when the first secondary school was built in Moroto, called Moroto High School.

Karamoja is starting a race that the rest of the country has run for the last 100 years. Most of you come from constituencies - even here in Acholi - that have schools celebrating 100 years. We are just beginning education in Karamoja. Up to today, a number of parishes, Mr Speaker, do not have primary schools.

When the First Lady came to Karamoja, about 13 primary boarding schools were built between 2013 and 2016, and because of the boarding schools and school feeding programmes, suddenly the enrolment rate started rising.

I mentioned, in the motion, that the transition rate from primary to secondary, especially for the boy-child, jumped very high by seven per cent. Unfortunately for the girl-child, the statistics we have from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics show that it only moved by 1.3 per cent. Therefore, for every 100 girls that go to

primary one, only 12 finish primary seven and go to secondary. For the boys, 25 of them finish primary school and go to secondary school. Where do the rest go?

Mr Speaker, there is a recruitment programme that goes on in Karamoja, and some of us are the survivors of it. When a boy is born, they initiate you - like you would take a child for baptism - into looking after goats, cows, going to the kraal, and to a lifestyle that prepares you for warrior-hood; to be a man, as we call it, and to be initiated into another life. Just like the church does confirmation when you reach a certain age, the Karamojong also confirm young boys, the ones you call the *Karashuna*, into a different lifestyle.

This motion, Mr Speaker, is the next level of disarmament. We have done physical disarmament; the removal of guns from the hands of the young people. Most of them are under 18 years. However, the biggest population of the young men, and those who are growing up, are not mentally disarmed. Gen. Elwelu talked about it in his speech in Moroto. We need to move to the next level of disarmament; the mental disarmament and mind-set change.

Mr Speaker, if the country can accept to give them free compulsory boarding education - This is a security matter, colleagues, because of the young men who are recruited into this reckless lifestyle of running around. The people of Acholi, Lango, Teso, Bugisu, and Sebei have suffered, and they also suffer because of the impact of the South Sudanese and the Turkana from Kenya. The cows they take from this region do not all stay in Karamoja. They end up in South Sudan and Kenya. There is constant violent conflict in Karamoja because they do not think of any other form of lifestyle.

If compulsory boarding education is implemented, it should be an operational matter. It should be looked at from a security point of view. We must stop this recklessness by ensuring that the young boys go to school. This will disarm them mentally. The idea of removing guns is like me losing this pen. I

know how to read and write. I and all the MPs here; do you think we do not know how to use those guns? Just because I do not have it does not mean I do not know how to use it. The fact that you do not have this pen does not mean that you do not know how to use it.

We need the next level of disarmament, and that means we must create an operation where the security forces are involved in ensuring that we provide facilities for these young men to be retained in school, and continue with education.

The second aspect, before I sit down, Mr Speaker, is that for the girl-child it is worse. Most girls are married off at 14 to 15 years for cows. And what happens? A child goes to produce another child. Looking at the statistics, the maternal mortality rate in Karamoja is 558 today per 1000. The figure in the country is 36 per 1000.

In Karamoja, young children who are forced to be mothers die. 558 for every 1,000 die. For the country average, it is 36. Therefore, this early marriage is also a dimension of worsening infant mortality, the under-five mortality, maternal mortality, and all the health-related issues.

By doing this, we can delay the marriage time for young girls, address the question of insecurity and health permanently, and cause a change for that part of the country and also the rest of the neighbours to rest.

Honourable colleagues, support me in this motion. Let us work together to permanently change the situation in Karamoja and in that part of the country. I would like to submit, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Achia. Hon. Faith Nakut?

10.20

MS FAITH NAKUT (NRM, Woman Representative, Napak): Mr Speaker, I stand to second this motion to give access to free and compulsory education to all the children

in Karamoja. In Karamoja, the biggest burden of household welfare is shouldered by the women. They must ensure that there is food, a home, and that the children go to school so, you can imagine the burden our women are carrying. When they are overwhelmed, the children automatically support and they become labourers. The rate of child labour in our region is so high.

When they are overwhelmed, they end up in the streets begging. The children do it to support their mothers. We have repatriated a number of our children from the cities in our country. Two years ago, there were women and children here in Gulu City coming from Kotido. About 60 of them had come to look for a living. We sent them back to Kotido. There was another group that came from Kaabong to Busia. We sent them back to Kaabong. There are thousands of children from Napak who are begging in Kampala.

The reason is this: because of our cultural dynamics, the mothers are overwhelmed. They cannot afford both household welfare and now the cost of education.

I support this motion and I appeal that you support us in this one, honourable colleagues. When you do it, you will liberate not just the children who cannot access education at the moment, but also the women so that they will be able to focus their energy on other welfare needs, because the burden of tuition, in addition to what they are already carrying, is too much. I plead with you, colleagues, that we allow this to pass. It will be good for the region.

For every woman in Karamoja who does not have an income or even a living to sustain this burden, that burden is multiplied by six because we produce six children. And then you produce six children who will also be poor. The multiplier effect on the economic burden for this country is so high if we cannot have these children access education. I submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Bosco Okiror, Hon. Ricky Richard Anywar - These are the seconders to the motion.

10.23

MR RICHARD ANYWAR (NRM, Agago West County, Agago): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am here to second the motion. The Acholi people have been searching for sustainable and permanent solutions to cattle rustling for a very long time. The rustlers have caused a lot of suffering for the people of Acholi, especially in the districts of Agago and Kitgum.

Economic activities have been disrupted, and Mr Speaker, we need a comprehensive and sustainable solution for cattle rustling. You will never be at peace when your neighbours are not at peace. Education is the only comprehensive and sustainable mechanism to put an end to cattle rustling in the regions of Karamoja and Acholi.

Mr Speaker, research shows that there are cumulative benefits of education in ending any conflict. There are clear links between education and improved child ability to protect others. Indeed, it has been noted that children and young people in the Karamoja Subregion who have low education levels are the ones who are more involved in cattle rustling than their educated counterparts.

It is the lack of education that is driving this particular group of poor young people into rustling. Therefore, there are thousands of children and young people in Karamoja, right now, who are not going to school and they have become professional raiders.

Mr Speaker, the raiders would have worked themselves out of poverty to respect and dignity if they were educated. Therefore, we need to use multiple strategies to combat cattle rustling in the Karamoja Subregion. I beg to submit, thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. John Baptist Lokii -

10.26

MR JOHN BAPTIST LOKII (NRM, Matheniko County, Moroto): Mr Speaker, I rise to second the motion under rule 60(1), a motion for a resolution of Parliament urging

the Government to formulate a policy on free, compulsory boarding school education for the Karamoja Subregion. I want to thank hon. Remigio for moving this motion and honourable colleagues for supporting it.

Mr Speaker, we are moving this motion for a region whose development indices are very, very low. Talk about education, it is very low, the percentage covered is low. Health, water, roads, name it, are very low. The only indices that are high are illiteracy, insecurity and poverty which stands at nearly 70 per cent of the people in Karamoja in extreme poverty. The illiteracy level in Karamoja stands at 66 per cent.

Mr Speaker, we cannot just sit and observe part of Uganda lagging behind when the rest of the country is moving forward as far as education and other aspects of development are concerned. Leaving Karamoja behind has a pull-down effect on the rest of the country so, we must team together and pull this child called Karamoja, which is still lagging behind. And we can only do this on two approaches. The first approach is affirmative action, as enshrined in Article 32. The second is the right-based approach as embedded in Article 30 and Article 34(1) that every child of school going age has a right to education.

Mr Speaker, some people might argue that we have Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) so, why hasn't Karamoja utilised these existing Government policies?

We are saying yes, the Government policy of having a primary school per parish and a secondary school per subcounty are there. However, when you look at the dynamics therein, you find the distances covered by these young learners, commuting from their homes to the schools to either a primary or a secondary school are considerable distances which cannot be managed by the learners.

Therefore, we are saying if the Government can have a policy to enhance both boarding primary and secondary school education, these

young learners can stay at school and finish their education smoothly.

There is a destructive effect of moving from your home to school. Along the way, it contributes to absenteeism and increases the dropout rate of the young learners. So, having boarding schools for the Karamoja Subregion will address this issue.

Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, can you conclude?

MR JOHN BAPTIST LOKII: Mr Speaker, we have the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which is being practiced among the Pokot of Amudat and the Tepeth of Moroto Districts. These children are always in the villages and are prone to FGM. Therefore, having boarding schools will enable these children to stay at school and get a profitable education.

Mr Speaker, I implore you to support this motion so that the Government formulates a policy for boarding school education in Karamoja so that the problems of Karamoja, be it economic, education, service delivery in as far as education is concerned, are addressed once and for all. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Fr Onen, then Dr Lulume Bayigga.

10.31

REV. FR CHARLES ONEN (Independent, Laroo-Pece Division, Gulu City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. There is a saying that, "We cannot wait for the Karamojong to develop." However, this regional sitting must take devolvment to Karamoja Subregion.

I rise to support the mover of the motion. When you look at the Members of Parliament and some highly learned Karimojong, you ask yourself, where did they grow from? Mr Speaker, I studied with some Karimojong seminarians and I learned from them that the Comboni Missionaries and other Non-

Governmental Organisation (NGOs) like the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) did a lot to change the mindset of the Karimojong children. The Comboni Missionaries and NGOs like UNICEF built schools with boarding facilities and school feeding programmes, and so many Karimojong children were raised because of the boarding facilities and school feeding programmes.

Therefore, we need to support this motion. The Government needs to support the Karimojong by building boarding facilities and forcing these children to go to school.

Mr Speaker, secondly, the political leaders of Karamoja need to also change their style of politics. *[Text expunged.]* This makes the young raiders feel that their future is already sorted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, that is a very strong statement because those people should be in prison. They shouldn't be - Can you substantiate it?

FR CHARLES ONEN: Okay. Thank you. Maybe for the interest and for the peace of the nation and my neighbours, I withdraw that but this is what normally takes place during campaigns - *(Interruption)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, please, honourable. Point of order from Abim?

MR LOLEM: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I did not want to raise a point of order to my elder, who happens to be well versed with the Bible.

Mr Speaker, the mover of the motion told you facts about Karamoja on education, but I am very surprised when they say that during the campaigns, leaders in Karamoja distribute bullets to the voters. Is my brother, called by the title Reverend Father and a Vatican priest, in order to allege that the leaders in Karamoja use bullets to solicit for votes during campaigns?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Micah, I really get you. I had also allowed the honourable from Abim, Janet Okori-Moe. I will rule at once.

MS OKORI-MOE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Hon. Fr Onen is one of the Members of Parliament we hold in high esteem because of being a Reverend Father. Sometimes when we get challenged, we even go to him for prayers.

Mr Speaker, Karamoja has 11 ethnic groups recognised by the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. I have never known of any aspiring candidates or candidates in any election who have been distributing bullets. In any case, all the leaders of Karamoja are pro-peace and pro-development. Is Hon. Fr Onen, who is branding the best rosary during this regional sitting, in order to allege that leaders from Karamoja, including me, from the beaming district of Abim, distribute bullets without substantiating?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. You know, it is very painful to allege that honourable members distribute bullets. Number one, they should be in prison if they are doing that. Hon. Elweru would have candidates to take to the Court Martial. So, yes, Father -

FRONEN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I withdraw the statement. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable Father. You have made it very easy for me because you know I expect you to intercede for me in heaven. Now if I rule you out of order and you fail to deliver prayers for me - You have made it very easy for us, but let us be conscious about the statements we make, honourable colleagues.

Yes, I had just picked Hon. Dr Lulume Bayigga.

10.38

DR LULUME BAYIGGA (DP, Buikwe County South, Buikwe): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us first hear the submission. You see, honourable colleagues from Northern Uganda, on this, you are requesting colleagues from other areas to support you. That is why I am trying to pick colleagues from other regions to support you.

Yes, Hon. Bayigga?

DR BAYIGGA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank hon. Remigio for this motion and he knows that I am a supporter of the development of Karamoja.

We have had a lot of conversations with him and Dr Lokii, who is my OB in Lumumba, about Karamoja. Indeed, there has been a programme; Karamoja Development Agency, which is online, as one of the agencies we should do away with. I wonder whether it had produced any results or any investment had been given to it.

Perusing through it, Mr Speaker, it looked quite comprehensive because it was not touching education alone. It was also touching productivity, especially the mineral wealth which this region has.

For the information of the honourable Members of Parliament here, Karamoja can sustain Uganda for about 300 years, without us working. It is a home of very many minerals, including gold, diamond and uranium; we can even have a lot of energy if at all we developed these kind of minerals, Mr Speaker.

Therefore, Karamoja cannot be seen to be begging us. We should be begging Karamoja to be merciful to us, Ugandans, so that they can feed us for the next 300 years, by investing in them in order for them to take charge of their region; working together with us to enable Uganda to grow.

I would like to support the motion, but I also want to elicit the response of this country so that the development agency that had comprehensive programmes to holistically handle the problems of Karamoja is sustained and funded so that the rest of us can coalesce to see how it can be put into action. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Please, *Hansard* team, take note. The apology from Fr Onen was registered, but I want to invoke Rule 229 of our Rules of Procedure to

have that statement expunged from the record of Parliament. It was a very strong and heavy statement, which should not remain on record.

I will pick Hon. Abrahams Peter.

10.41

MR ABRAHAMS LOKII (NRM, Jie County, Kotido): Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I rise to amend the motion, I would also like to make a substantive contribution.

Mr Speaker, peace in Karamoja is a prerequisite for socio-economic transformation in the neighbourhood. Like Fr Onen said here, for long we said, "We cannot wait for Karamoja." Since we did not wait for Karamoja, our neighbours have suffered. I think it is now time that we move together.

It is on record that the *Kabaka* then, Muteesa II, sacrificed his whole salary as a king to support education in Karamoja in the 1960s. It is also on record that the likes of hon. Pulkol, whom again Fr Onen tried to allude to, went to school through force. The parish chiefs, at that time, the Nyamparas, would collect children and take them to school forcefully. However, these were not Government schools; they were church schools.

My late father used to tell me that he would walk from Kotido on Saturday, be in school on Sunday, attend classes up to Wednesday, and walk back to Kotido, because there were no boarding schools. That was in Lotome in Napak district.

Given all the circumstances, Mr Speaker, we made an effort, as the Karamojong, and introduced something called Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK). We thought that we needed to help the learners to continue to do their work. One thing we found out was that if you removed a boy child or a girl child from the household to school, there would be a disequilibrium of labour, because each of them has a role to perform.

Therefore, ABEK was introduced to allow the herds boys to study in the morning, after

milking the animals, before they graze, and go to graze in the evening. That recorded progress because we produced graduates out of ABEK. Unfortunately, conflicts in the region and cattle rustling could not allow the mobile school to continue.

Mr Speaker, I would like to make the following amendments to the motion: that besides the idea of having a policy on free and compulsory education, we would also like to urge the Government to support the Karamoja Peace and Technology University to build a chain to support the education in Karamoja.

Karamoja Peace and Technology University is a university that is going to be established for the first time in Karamoja with the support of the Catholic Church, the International Catholic Lawyers Association and the Government of Uganda. President Museveni is the founding chancellor. Why should this university be adopted or included in this motion?

As already submitted by the mover of the motion, the children of Karamoja need to get to the schools but there is also need to have the schools that will pick on them. Like Fr Onen said, "Where did these educated Karamojong come from?" People studied outside Karamoja and those who studied outside Karamoja were children of chiefs. Those of us whose parents were not chiefs - I remember, for two years, I used to ride a bicycle from Kotido to National Teachers' College (NTC) Ngeta in order to be in school. How many Karamojong can do that now?

Mr Speaker, my proposal to amend the motion is to add the words, "To also urge the Government to support the Karamoja Peace and Technology University in Karamoja", because it is going to be a catalyst of mindset change; it is going to be a catalyst of economic transformation. We believe that in the next 10 years, we will have taken 350,000 school-age-going-children to school and that will be the joy of Fr Onen, because there will then be more Christians coming to seek for penance and prayers from Fr Onen. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. (*Hon. Ochero rose*)

Honourable colleague, that is not how I run the House. Please, we have points of order. You seek permission; you do not get a microphone and start speaking.

Hon. Gilbert Olanya, any further amendment? (*Hon. Ochero rose*)

Honourable member, do not speak through the microphone without my permission. First get that permission and then you speak.

10.46

MR GILBERT OLANYA (FDC, Kilak South County, Amuru): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Being a teacher by profession, I value education, and the mover of the motion in this paragraph stated that many of the school dropouts are being recruited into warriorhood and cattle rustling. We need to first change our attitudes towards education.

On this note, I would like to amend the motion to include adult education. Let those school dropouts who are ever training their children into war - let their minds be changed positively towards education first. Therefore, I move that we include adult education for Karamoja. I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We shall vote on all the amendments later. Hon. Noman Ochero?

MR OCHERO: Mr Speaker, I apologise for my earlier attempt to speak before you gave me permission. I just want to add some critical information that there is a greater need for supporting education in Karamoja.

Mr Speaker, insecurity in Karamoja has taken a bit of time. Successive governments have made a lot of attempts to bring peace to Karamoja. I want to concentrate on why there has been failure by one government after another to bring peace to Karamoja. The insecurity of Karamoja is complicated because it is caused by known people.

Why do I say they are known? It is easy to predict who will be a warrior because there is a roadblock. There are only two ways in Karamoja; either you go to school or you become a warrior. You know the function of a warrior. There is no business, no farming, there is drought and everything is in total confusion. The only chance left is either you go to school and become a Member here or you branch to the other school and begin raiding.

This means we already know the incoming candidates for raiding. These are young children who will fail to go to school. When you hear the Karamojong Members of Parliament asking, "Educate all the Karamojong", that is what they mean. They are putting their road into one so that everybody goes to educate themselves so they do not raid.

Mr Speaker, this means that the solution to the problem of Karamoja is one of the simplest but there has been a lack of commitment. We are here to seek for commitment. Once you educate all the Karamojong and Karamoja becomes peaceful, you will have solved big problems in Acholi, Lango, you will have rescued the Iteso, you will have sorted the Bagisu and the Sebei, and our international neighbours will be resting.

Mr Speaker, it is cheaper to educate the Karamojong so that there is peace in Karamoja and all neighbours rest. I add my voice that Karamoja Peace and Technology University (KAPATU) is sensitive and has been tailor-made to suit the circumstances in Karamoja at the moment. You can have all these universities but Karamoja will never go there. However, KAPATU is a new university being developed, arising out of the situation in the region.

It is my prayer that this Parliament enters a record that they have sorted the problem of Karamoja by educating the Karamojong. So, let KAPATU be supported by the Government of Uganda to answer the current problems in the region. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Norman, this is what the President was talking about

yesterday when he said that we should support him in his efforts for free education. What we are waiting for is a blueprint from the Government on which kind of support they want from Parliament.

Is it budgetary support? We are waiting for Government's guidance. Minister of Education and Sports - Let me first get further amendment from Hon. Anthony Akol, then the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) and the minister concludes.

Honourable colleagues, I guided you at the beginning that we have to finish by 4.00 p.m. so these are the last three submissions. Hon. Anthony Akol, access the microphone.

10.51

MR ANTHONY AKOL (FDC, Kilak North County, Amuru): Mr Speaker, I support the motion with an amendment. When you look at the results of Primary Leaving Examinations, in the top performance, you will see the private schools, then other sub-regions. Top down you see West Nile, Acholi, Lango and Karamoja down at the bottom.

My amendment is looking at the justification of people joining the warriors and those going for teenage pregnancy. That means we should be dealing with the upper classes rather than talking about the boarding section right from down. That is one amendment.

Secondly, it should capture West Nile, Acholi and Lango because the problem is not only in Karamoja but also affects these other subregions. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr Bwanika?

10.52

DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City): Rt Hon. Speaker, Karamoja holds one of the most brilliant human beings on the face of the earth. I have had the opportunity to teach and I taught Dr Lokii and another Karimojong person who holds a record as the most brilliant veterinary doctor that has ever passed through Makerere called Dr Ilukor.

In 2011, while I was campaigning in Matany, I picked a young boy called Alex Lochero who was in P6 by then. I took him to Kampala and paid his school fees. He graduated with BBA and is now working in Moroto.

Those young people are only missing the opportunity to go to school and we must support them. Two weeks ago, when the Speaker sent us to Karamoja, I interacted with the LCV Chairperson of Napak. Napak has 59 parishes but only 22 have got primary schools. 37 parishes of Napak do not have a primary school. It produces 80 per cent children who are on the streets in Kampala because they do not have education. I am very supportive that we not only provide compulsory boarding education but also, schools all over Karamoja.

There should be an affirmative action which should help the Karamojong to go to school. We are losing brains which would have innovated. Mr Speaker, I stand to support this motion and it should be with urgency. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope those people supported you when you went there for - because you did a fantastic job. Just before I allow the Minister of Education, there is a Minister for Karamoja - Can we just get one statement then the sector-specific issues will be left to the Minister of Education.

Hon. Lokeris - Colleagues, I have received very many requests from you but I have an Order Paper to manage. All these issues are very critical so please, you will have to bear with me so that I go back to the Order Paper and to other items. Minister for Karamoja, three minutes.

10.55

THE MINISTER FOR KARAMOJA AFFAIRS (Mr Peter Lokeris): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will be speaking to give you an example of a person who comes to school, gets to know that there was a boarding school, starts fearing to go home and now he is a minister. One time, my own father asked me to drive a bull with him to go and sell in order for him to pay poll tax at that time.

In the morning, we passed near a school where I saw very many children. Then I asked my father, "Why are these children too many here in *mabaati* houses?" He answered, there is something called a school. I asked, "A school?" He replied, "Yes." Then I asked, "What will they become in the future?" He told me, "When they study, they grow up and become drivers and chiefs. Like the chiefs who have forced you to bring the bull here." I said, "That is very good." He then said, "In the evening when they rest, they go and take tea. They used to give us some tea and it was very sweet." When I heard about it, I said, "Yes, I will come here to study with these people because of the tea."

From that time, I asked for permission to go but he was delaying. I decided to run away myself and I was welcomed. There was a boarding school for the missionaries. I stayed there for only one month and they said that it was holiday time. I said, now, where will I go? Those people will beat me for abandoning their cows.

Then the priest told me, "No, they are building a church here. Come and help me with carrying bricks." I was young. I would only carry two. All the time I was there, staying with them very well. If there was no school at that time, where you could come in freely, eat and sleep - it was boarding - I would not be here. From that time, I continued. In fact, I did not pay any school fees up to Senior Four. The rest came by themselves.

Therefore, for Karamoja, pre-primary and primary boarding education is very important. All these people who are now raiding and running around - if they were educated like us, they would not be there. We would have reduced the number of raiders. The rest of the country is moving. We better move the country together in a unified manner. In, maybe, 20 years' time, when there is a mindset change, then, other things can relax.

However, right now, it is high time we swept all of them from the villages and educated them; give them free and compulsory education. The whole country will be safe, automatically. Let

us change their minds and move. These people will get jobs and alternative ways of livelihood and that will be the end. I am very happy that all of you are supporting it. We are Ugandans. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, this is a motion where we are limited by the law, as Parliament – in Article 93 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. That is why you see it is a motion for “urging”, meaning we are sending it to you, in the Cabinet. When you reach there, please, give that example that you have had and push harder so that it can be supported, as it has a financial implication. Honourable minister for education?

11.00

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank my colleague for presenting this motion. Permit me to, first of all, make the mandate of the Ministry of Education and Sports very clear. It is to provide quality education for all children in Uganda. I am happy that Article 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda stipulated that education is a fundamental right for our children.

In that spirit, Mr Speaker, the President of the Republic of Uganda, Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, to ensure all our children have a right to education, brought on board the universal education for our children; primary in 1997 and secondary in 2007. The principle and spirit of universal education is to leave no child behind. There should be no barriers for our children to access education.

As a result of universal education that was brought on board, the enrolment of our children in schools increased drastically. For instance, in 1995 when Universal Primary Education (UPE) was brought on board, from 2.5 million pupils, the enrolment rose to 5.3 million in 1998. Thereafter, in 2023, it went to 8.5 million and, today, we are speaking about 10.9 million learners enrolled in primary education. This is

because of the principle of universal education. The principle is to increase access to education, especially to the disadvantaged children.

Also, the design in that principle is to construct classrooms and sanitation facilities as well as administrative blocks for primary, while secondary has an ICT block, multipurpose hall and science block. There was no provision for boarding facilities, in terms of dormitories and what it takes to have a boarding facility.

Mr Speaker, despite this high enrolment in universal education, we, as the education fraternity, have seen challenges in terms of high rates of dropout, uncoordinated charges of fees, climate change that has caused problem for children to access school – the floods and the destructions in our school. We have seen violence against children and overcrowding in classes.

The Ministry of Education and Sports, indeed, recognises the challenges that are unique to areas in the Karamoja region and in island communities, where we have seen children coming to school using boats or canoes. We have seen challenges in areas that are prone to disasters. As a result of floods, we see day scholars not able to cross the bridges.

Mr Speaker, on 17 March 2023, Cabinet, under the chairpersonship of His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, approved a document that was presented by *Mama Janet*, the Minister of Education and Sports. It is about the Government implementing free and compulsory universal education for all our children in Uganda, starting with the primary education and, then, we move to secondary education. This will bring on board issues to do with increment in enrolment, recruitment of teachers, funds to increase capitation grants and what have you.

We are to start with primary and then move to secondary because the funds that are needed to start this free and compulsory education went up to over Shs 300 billion. We had to prioritise the upcoming AFCON activities in the country.

Mr Speaker, in that meeting, my colleague, the minister for Karamoja affairs, was there. My colleague, Hon. Anyakun, ably articulated the issues of Karamoja and the challenges of disaster-prone places and island communities. It was discussed, with the proposal of granting affirmative action - special consideration – for Karamoja, islands and the disaster-prone places.

The special affirmative action is to be, specifically, on the boarding section. That comes on board together with the compulsory free universal education for all. I recall very vividly that this was discussed and the President himself saw the challenges in Karamoja. Indeed, he recommended that the ministry should further discuss these challenges and see to it that the best solution is provided for those specific areas, as we move to implement the universal compulsory education.

Mr Speaker, I welcome the motion but wish it is not only limited to Karamoja. As Cabinet looked at it, Karamoja is not alone. We have disaster-prone places – like the islands. That is what the Cabinet is looking at.

Mr Speaker, for this Parliament to appreciate the overall enrolment in our country, together with the national statistics, when we speak, we need to speak on evidence-based, scientific information. On primary enrolment, as Uganda, we have got a total of 10,976,773. The total number of primary schools in Uganda was at 43,534. The number of teachers who have been captured under the Education Management Information System (EMIS) is 196,364.

The distribution for Northern Region

Acholi:

The total enrolment in primary school in Acholi is 544,434, which represents 4.86 per cent of the total enrolment. If you permit me, Mr Speaker, I just want to give the percentage of the national enrolment.

1. Lango represents 7.17 per cent;
2. West Nile represents 10.2 per cent ;
3. Karamoja represents 2.02 per cent.

In total, the Northern Region represents 24.35 per cent of the total enrolled children in the country. In terms of primary schools, the total number of primary schools in Northern Uganda stands at 11.49 per cent.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleague, the minister is giving you information. I do not know what is wrong with information. You might disagree with the information but giving it is not wrong. Let the minister – Hon. Betty, Member for Amudat, what is your procedural matter?

MS CHELAIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I also thank the honourable minister for the presentation. My procedural matter – Mr Speaker, I am pissed off because she is bringing the information when we are just laying our motion about the highland people.

Mr Speaker, when Government wants to start a programme, it is good to have what we call piloting areas. It is our plea to the Government to consider Karamoja as a piloting centre. Otherwise, we have a lot of problems. Members understand the situation we are in; the urgency. There is space in Karamoja so why can't we settle and find out what can be done to bring to the region? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, what is the procedural matter? Honourable colleagues, we have submitted and I requested the minister to give a response to our submissions. These are her views and the views of the ministry. You might disagree with the views but she is entitled to those views and clarifications from her side. So, let the minister give the submission. You might disagree with the information but she is a minister. Honourable minister -

DR MORIKU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I gave this information as of 17 March 2023 regarding what was discussed in Cabinet about free and compulsory education and a proposal for affirmative action for Karamoja, the island communities and disaster-prone areas. It was discussed last year in Cabinet. Thank you for allowing me to proceed.

Mr Speaker, I was talking about the enrolment of our children; the national enrolment vis-a-vis Northern Uganda Region, the total number of teachers we have in this region vis-a-vis the national position and the number of primary schools.

To make the matter short, in total, Northern Region has 21.49 per cent of the total teachers in the country. In terms of primary schools, Northern Region has a percentage of 11.49. Those are the statistics that we have for primary enrolment for Acholi, Lango, West Nile and Karamoja.

For secondary education, as of June 2024 from our EMIS data, Uganda has enrolled a total of 1,710,403 students in secondary school. Out of that, the teachers in secondary schools are 71,918 while the secondary education schools are 7,466.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you are not responding to the motion. The motion was requesting you - In fact, you are responding to the petition which is an item that we have not yet handled. You are on item No.3 yet we are handling item No.5. The issue is about boarding facilities. They are requesting you to introduce boarding facilities in Karamoja, as a Government. Simple.

DR MORIKU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thought I would come to that last but let me go to that area straight away.

I gave the background for the principles of universal education which do not cater for boarding section. My ministry gives permission to schools who wish to operate as a boarding section only after meeting the required minimum standards and the basic requirements for a boarding section.

A study was conducted and we found out that quite a number of schools that were operating boarding sections were not meeting the minimum standards in terms of the boarding facilities. Over 52.5 per cent of boarding facilities have not met the minimum standard. They do not have the required place for

boarding schools and do not meet the standard for sanitation and the electrical installations are equally wanting. Of course, there are many gaps that have been found in those boarding sections.

Mr Speaker, due to the glaring gaps in boarding sections, my ministry is still studying the proposal that was discussed in Cabinet to ensure some special considerations for some regions to have a boarding facility. This is because -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you have run out of time.

DR MORIKU: Thank you. I beg to submit that we still be given time to study so that we present the findings to Cabinet before bringing it to Parliament. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I now put the question that the motion for a resolution of Parliament urging Government to formulate a policy on free compulsory boarding school education for the Karamoja Subregion be adopted with proposed amendments.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Motion adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, I think six months are sufficient as per Rule 220 of our Rules of Procedure. We give you six months to report back to Parliament to tell us the action you would have taken. This is a motion urging so when you develop a policy, see how best you can implement it.

Honourable members, in the VIP gallery this morning, we have:

1. Hon. Bernard Atiku, former MP, Ayivu County
2. Ms Jane Frances Amongin, RCC, Gulu City
3. Mr Peter Banga, Deputy RCC, Gulu City
4. Mr Moses Opio, CAO, Abim
5. Mr Samuel Kitang Ojok, District Speaker, Agago

6. Mr Bosco Ochen, District Speaker, Kitgum
 7. Hon. John Nangiro, Nakapiripirit District Chairperson
 8. Col (Rtd) Obwoya Oyat, Pader District Chairperson
 9. Mr Emmanuel Orach, LCV Chairperson, Nwoya District Local Government, and
 10. Mr Stephen Obitre, LCV Chairperson, Maracha District.
2. *Article 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda guarantees the right to education, and Objective XVIII of the National objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy enjoins the State to promote free and compulsory basic education and take appropriate measures to afford every citizen equal opportunity to attain the highest educational standards possible.*

They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me once again in welcoming them. Thank you. Next item.

PRESENTATION OF PETITION ON
THE LOW NET ENROLLMENT AND
COMPLETION RATES IN PRIMARY
AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND
CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING TERTIARY
AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN
NORTHERN UGANDA

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Dr Samuel Opio -

11.19

DR SAMUEL OPIO (Independent, Kole North Country, Kole): Thank you, Mr Speaker. As we noted in the previous discussion, the issue of education is not just a challenge in Karamoja, but a problem in West Nile, Acholi, and Lango as well.

I hereby move under Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure, on a petition on the low enrolment and completion rates in primary and secondary schools and challenges in accessing tertiary and university education in Northern Uganda.

This is the humble petition of stakeholders of Chase Foundation, represented by Hon. Samuel Acuti Opio, Member of Parliament for Kole North County, and it states that:

1. *“Your humble petitioners are members of Chase Foundation, a community-based organisation established to undertake interventions to drive socio-economic development, including the provision of educational services and support within the communities that it operates within Northern Uganda.*
2. *Article 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda guarantees the right to education, and Objective XVIII of the National objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy enjoins the State to promote free and compulsory basic education and take appropriate measures to afford every citizen equal opportunity to attain the highest educational standards possible.*
3. *The Education Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary Act, 2008 emphasises that basic education shall be provided and enjoyed as a right by all persons and provides for the objective of the Act to give full effect to the Universal Primary Education Policy and full effect to the Universal Post-Primary Education and Training Policy of Uganda.*
4. *The fundamental right to education is also affirmed by a number of international and regional instruments that Uganda has ratified, including the International Covenant on Economic and Social and Cultural Rights.*
5. *The Government of Uganda has made commitments in the National Development Plan III and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030 under the theme ‘Leaving No One Behind’, where specifically SDG4 seeks to ensure the provision of free, quality, equitable, and inclusive education for all.*
6. *The Government has taken measures to ensure access to education for all through both Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education programmes that have increased access to education by millions of children.*
7. *However, despite these interventions, the Northern Uganda region, which comprises the subregions of West Nile, Acholi, Lango and Karamoja (WALK), continue to face significant challenges in accessing education. The Uganda National Household Survey, 2020 by the Uganda*

- Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) showed that primary school and secondary school net enrolment in the Northern region as the lowest in the country and below the national average.*
8. *Net average enrolment in primary school in the region was at 68.65 per cent against the national average of 80 per cent. Karamoja stands at the lowest at 42.1 per cent, implying that out of every 100 children of primary school going age in Karamoja, only 42 are enrolled. 58 are out of school and have been left behind.*
 9. *Net enrolment in secondary school was at 7.2 per cent in Acholi, 12.1 per cent in Karamoja, 14.3 per cent in West Nile, and 14.5 per cent in Lango Subregion, less than half the national average of 27.3 per cent, with some sub-regions having enrolment rates as high as 46.2 per cent and 52.3 per cent, more than three times the WALK region statistics.*
 10. *These statistics in effect show that in the Northern region, on average, out of every 100 persons of official secondary school going age between 13 to 18 years, only 12 are enrolled in secondary education with 88 persons not able to have access and have been left behind.*
 11. *Furthermore, in regard to primary education, anecdotal evidence suggests that the P7 completion rates are also way below the national average of 61.6 per cent, with some districts reporting completion rates as low as 30 per cent. This implies again that in such districts, for every 100 children who commence P1, only 30 will reach P7, while 70 will drop out and be left behind.*
 12. *Whereas access to tertiary and university education is not yet well documented, reports indicate that it is equally low due to the low enrolment at the primary and secondary levels.*
 13. *As a result of the limited access to primary, secondary and tertiary education, the communities in Northern Uganda have not fully utilised employment and career opportunities available within the various public and private sectors, even for jobs that require minimum qualifications, such as O-Level and A-Level, among others. This has hindered the socio-economic transformation of the region and partly contributed to the high poverty levels due to limited income diversification.*
 14. *Lastly, the Uganda National Household Survey noted that education was the key determinant in exposing one to employment opportunities, with the results showing that the majority of those without education or who had attained only some primary education were engaged in subsistence agriculture while those who completed primary and other higher education levels were mostly in employment. Lango Subregion, for example, had the least population in employment at 20 per cent across the country against a national average of 52.1 per cent.*
- NOW, THEREFORE, your humble petitioners pray that:*
1. *An inquiry is made on the causes of the below average and low net enrolment in primary education and low completion rates in the Subregions of Lango, Acholi, West Nile and Karamoja.*
 2. *An inquiry is done on the causes of the below average and low net enrolment rates in secondary education in the Subregions of West Nile, Acholi, Lango, and Karamoja.*
 3. *An inquiry is done on the status of access to tertiary and university education in the Subregions of West Nile, Acholi, Lango, and Karamoja.*
 4. *Lastly, interventions and affirmative action be developed and funded for each of the subregions to address the low net enrolment in primary and secondary education and low completion rates of primary education alongside challenges in accessing tertiary and university education.*

AND your humble petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

AND hereto appended are your humble petitioners' signatures as attached."

Mr Speaker, I beg to submit and I hereby lay this petition. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable. Just looking at the prayers, most of these will require direct Government intervention. Therefore, I invoke my powers under Rule 30(6) and refer the petition to the Minister for Education and Sports for handling and report back within six months. Thank you.

Honourable colleagues, this is a reminder that as you come in, ensure that you clock into our system to register your attendance today. Next item.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF
THE REPORT OF THE SECTORAL
COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE,
AND INDUSTRY ON THE STATE AND
PROSPECTS OF TOURISM SITES IN
NORTHERN UGANDA

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry - this is going to be presented by our young, energetic and brilliant deputy chairperson, Hon. Okot Boniface.

11.28

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY (Mr Okot Boniface): Mr Speaker, warm regards from the youth of Uganda and congratulations upon holding the regional sitting. I beg to lay a Report of the sectoral Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on the state and prospects of tourism sites in Northern Uganda and the attendant minutes. I beg to lay, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, you are guided to just give a little bit of the introduction and go to observations so that we can save time for Members to contribute to the debate.

MR BONIFACE OKOT: Much obliged, Mr Speaker. As guided, pursuant to rules 159(c) and 189(e) of the Rules of Procedure, the Sectoral Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry, between the 13th and 15 August 2024, conducted a field activity to appraise the state of the following tourism sites and to consider related matters:

The first is Kabalega and Mwanga Monumental Site in Dokolo District. The others are Barlonyo Massacre Site in Lira District; Mary Mother of the Church Shrine in Iceme, Oyam District; Aboke Massacre Site in Oyam District; Sir Samuel Baker's Fort, Patiko, Gulu District; and Amuru Hot Springs in Amuru District.

The committee also acknowledges and prioritises, for subsequent oversights, the heritage sites in Gulu-Gulu Hills in Amuro; Napak Fossil Site in Napak; Emin Pasha Fort Site in Wadelai in Pakwach; Karamoja Museum in Moroto; Dufile Heritage Site in Moyo; Tien Olum footprints site in Ibuja-Kokoro in Lango; Palabek in Lamwo; Lototoro in Lamwo; Agoro Hills in Acholi; Abiyam Memorial Site in Lango; Nziri Tomb in West Nile; Winam Old Palace in West Nile; and Arua Museum in West Nile. Those are 19 sites in total.

The terms of references, I already indicated. To save time, I will go straight to the methodology. But okay, I will also not go through it, but it is important to mention that the committee conducted a desk review on a comparative analysis of investment sites in three East African community countries.

One, the committee noted that for the management and administration of museums and monuments in Uganda, we are guided by the Museums and Monuments Act of 2023.

Mr Speaker, Uganda also has a tourism policy of 2015, which prioritises four areas, national parks, cultural heritage sites, Lake Victoria, mountains, and community-based tourism. The focus of this report is on cultural heritage sites.

We also compared the tourist visits to museums and monuments in East Africa. We noted that in

2022, Tanzania recorded 1,223,583 and Kenya recorded 856,604 tourist visits to museums and monuments. However, Uganda recorded only 67,366 tourist visits.

This underperformance raised concerns, given that Uganda is comparatively endowed with a rich cultural and natural heritage. We also have numerous sites and monuments. In total, there are about 614 throughout the country.

The committee also did a cooperative analysis of the expenditure or the amount of investments in tourism, especially with a focus on cultural and natural heritage. We noted that Uganda, in the Financial Year 2020/2021, invested Shs 4.29 billion, but that in the budget for Financial Year 2023/2024, we have now invested Shs 9 billion, which is still comparatively lower than the rest of the East African countries.

In terms of revenues, between 2016 and 2020, Uganda only got the visits from monuments and museums \$127,747. In that year the whole tourism sector only got revenues of \$1 billion. Kenya got about \$11.2 million during that period. Therefore, comparatively, we also get much lower revenues.

I will go straight to the general observations and recommendations of the committee on page 12.

Inadequate Tourism Infrastructure

Mr Speaker, during the field visit, the committee established the inadequacy of key tourism infrastructure to support, boost and sustain tourism at tourism sites. Notably among the infrastructure were roads that are almost impassable to the sites, which inhibits the smooth movement of tourists from metropolitan areas to site locations.

The committee further observed that except for the Mary Mother of the Church Shrine in Iceme, Oyam District, all other sites visited had no major or significant iconic and impressive features to welcome tourists.

Barlonyo and Abok Massacre sites, for instance, did not have graphic images, artefacts, and expressions that would depict the incidents of the massacre. Such graphic images, among others, create lasting impressions and memories among visitors. Some sites visited by the committee were not even connected to the national grid of utility services like water and electricity, and even toilet facilities at the sites were in deplorable conditions while in others they were even non-existent.

Recommendations of the committee

- i) The committee recommends that the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities should, in collaboration with key stakeholders, take deliberate measures to budget for the development and improvement of key infrastructure with the view of boosting tourism at the sites; and
- ii) The Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities should champion inter-ministerial collaboration for the development of key infrastructures at the sites under the tourism development programme.

Ownership of Land at the Tourist Sites

The committee observed that there was no proof of ownership of land on which some tourism sites are located. As is the case with Amuru Hot Springs, Sir Samuel Baker's Fort in Patiko, Gulu District. The committee was informed by the State Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities that the ministry had signed a memorandum of understanding with Local Governments where some of the sites are located, like the case of the Barlonyo Massacre Site and Kabalega and Mwanga Monument Site. The land title was yet to be transferred to the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities.

The committee further observes that the absence of land titles for all these tourist sites visited may attract third-party interests.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities should engage with the relevant government institutions to expedite the processing of acquiring land titles where the aforementioned sites are located.

The need to collect, verify, process, and document verbal history on the tourist sites

The committee observed that there was a general lack of documented literature on the history of each tourist site that was visited. The only information that was available was in verbal form and largely inconsistent.

The committee was concerned that the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities has not acted fast enough to collect, verify, process and document such verbal information, yet chances of losing persons having such invaluable verbal information are so high and inevitable.

The committee was informed by the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities that whereas there are persons with vast knowledge and historical information on sites, the Ministry has a Department of Museums and Monuments where key information on sites is archived, and that further documentation of other information on the sites would be handled concurrently with the development of the sites.

However, the committee noted with concern that the development of these sites are long-term plans, yet the individuals with such rich historical information are mortal, may lose their memory, shift residences, or die, thereby Government and the people of Uganda losing out on such rich historical information.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities should prioritise and expedite the process of collecting, verifying, processing, and documentation of verbal history of each tourist site, regardless of its long-term plans to physically develop these sites.

5.3 Budget allocations

The committee observed from discussions held with the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities that save for Kabalega and Mwanga cultural heritage sites that received Shs 3 billion out of Shs 14 billion total project costs, this Financial Year 2024/2025; all other sites are unfunded. For example, Fort Patiko with Shs 12 billion, the Barlonyo Massacre site Shs 4 billion, Amuru Hot Springs Shs 10 billion, Mary Mother of the Church Shrine Shs 2 billion, Abok Shs 1 billion, and maintenance of the sites, is about Shs 4 billion.

5.4 Recommendations of the Committee

The committee recommends that considering the fact that Uganda's tourism sector has great potential of contributing to Uganda's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the Government should prioritise and allocate adequate budget lines to develop the aforementioned sites.

5.5 Tourism promotion and marketing strategies

Mr Speaker, from discussions that the committee held with the ministry, the committee observes that there is limited popularisation and implementation of the Museums and Monuments Strategy 2023-2030, the Explore Uganda campaigns, and other promotions conducted by the Uganda Tourism Board to promote and market the sites, and also encourage or facilitate effective stakeholder participation.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities should develop more robust and innovative campaigns domestically and internationally to promote and market these sites through collaborations and strategic partnerships.

5.6 Community involvement and benefits

The committee observed that the Government has not effectively involved communities neighbouring these tourist sites to appreciate and make innovations that will promote tourism

and also generate income for themselves. The committee was informed by the Minister of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities that the ministry plans to construct craft centres at the sites and to involve communities in music, art, dance, and drama.

The committee recommends that the ministry should provide an enabling environment to support community-led tourism and economic initiatives in and around the sites, and should provide relevant training and resources to the communities.

5.7 Absence of captivating graphical expressions and animations at the tourist sites

The committee observed that some tourist sites visited do not have adequate infrastructure or even modern state-of-the-art facilities, artefacts and information necessary to stimulate visitor experience and create, among them, lasting impressions of their visits. The Barlonyo Massacre Site, Abok Massacre Site, and Sir Samuel Baker's Fort in Patiho, should at least have captivating graphic expressions and images to depict incidences that happened at the site.

The committee recommends that the ministry should urgently collaborate with academia, graphic designers, local developers, the private sector, and content creators to produce high-quality, captivating graphic expressions and animations to recreate patterns of thoughts about the site and its history.

5.8 Staffing

The committee observed that the ministry has endeavoured to promote local content through the employment of locals as site attendants, tour guides, and research assistants. However, the committee noted that staffing numbers at the sites are still inadequate.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities should continue to prioritise the recruitment of adequate local staff and mainstream them into public service structures.

Specific observations of the committees -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Chairperson. You have given us an aerial view because I read through your report when you go to the specific ones, you realise that they feed into the general ones. There is nothing that is not covered under general. So, I would propose that we save time by giving Members a chance to submit. Otherwise, the whole report will be captured on the *Hansard*. Do you want to conclude?

MR BONIFACE OKOT: Yes, sure. In conclusion, Mr Speaker, the committee conducted the field activity and is convinced that Uganda has immense untapped potential for tourism.

The committee, therefore, urges the Government to expeditiously profile and develop the sites into captivating tourism destinations that will meaningfully boost the economic gains from the tourism sector, thereby increasing Uganda's revenue base. Mr Speaker, I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Chair. Let us have Hon. Aza, Hon. Judith Achan, and Hon. Timuzigu.

Honourable member, a point of information is raised when you have a Member holding the Floor. Womam MP Otuke and PP, I am going to give you a chance, honourable colleagues, but let us use a short time so that as many colleagues as possible can contribute. I already allowed the Hon. Achan.

11.45

MS JUDITH ACHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Nwoya): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I thank the committee for this elaborate report.

I would like to inform the committee that if we are to promote tourism, we should also look at the challenges that bring down the revenue from the tourism sites.

I come from Nwoya District where we always get a lot of challenges when our youth go

for poaching. Why? It is because most of the time when they go to dig in the gardens, the elephants cross to their gardens and destroy all the crops.

This is coupled with very many issues that we have already been having, but with no compensation coming through yet in 2019 the Uganda Wildlife Act provided for compensation for all the victims of these human-wildlife conflicts. We love tourism and it contributes to the development of Nwoya District but let us also look at the challenges and issues that interfere with revenue collections, because we do not want the youth to go poaching - there are no options, Mr Speaker.

I am a promoter of tourism; but let us also look into the nitty-gritty of compensation. Nwoya District has not received any compensation yet we have lost so many lives. On the 25th, I lost a child of one of my voters called Mutimungu, who was in primary six, with a promising life, in a village called Obira, in Got Apwoyo Subcounty. So, let us think of human beings, as much we as protect the species that promote development in the country.

Lastly, of late, the route from Karuma was diverted to Nwoya District. There are limited toilets for the buses and passenger vehicles that pass through the park. And I would like to thank the committee for raising that issue. The toilets that were put there are not enough.

Secondly, the bus owners should have dustbins in their buses, so that the passengers do not litter the park.

Mr Speaker, I support the committee report and the recommendation to increase the toilet facilities for sanitation at tourism sites. I beg to submit.

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

11.49

MR TOM AZA (NRM, West Moyo County, Moyo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and the committee members for the report.

I advocate for domestic tourism. We have domestic, national, and international tourism sites. In West Nile, in general, and in Madi Subregion, in particular, we have some significant tourist sites, which if exploited, can contribute to job creation, foreign exchange earnings, heritage conservation, as well as social cohesion. These are some of the poorest areas in West Nile and Madi Subregion:

One, Fort Dufile along the bank of River Nile. It was a military fort established by Maj. Gen. Charles Gordon, the Governor of the Equatorial Province in 1874. It was later occupied by Emin Pasha. That place was a transit route for slaves; for the Khartoumers. Slaves were collected from Acholi Subregion, and as far as Bunyoro, and Buganda, and they transited through Fort Dufile. If this place is developed, Mr Speaker, we shall make a lot of money from it.

We have Mount Otce Forest Reserve, the Madi and the Lugbara culture, and Mount Otce, for trekking and hiking, bird watching, sight viewing, primate viewing, nature walks, camping, and photography. We have the River Nile. We have Kotelu Sacred Forest for the burial of Kings. Chief Rendike's subjects used to be buried in that place. We have the Aulogo Monument (the cock), the Aybe Central Forest Reserve, the Angel's Foot and Knee, Ilingwa Hill, Mount Nyeri, Mount Ulo, and the elephants.

Mr Speaker, lastly –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleague, listen to the guidance. When you debate a committee report, you should be specific to observations and recommendations. These are issues that you should have written to the minister a long time ago, by you, the Member of Parliament.

MR AZA: Most obliged, Mr Speaker.

Lastly, we have challenges of human-wildlife conflict in this place. Elephants normally roam about from Nimule National Park in Sudan. They come and destroy crops and houses, and everything in our area.

Otherwise, funds for tourist activities, facilities, and amenities must be increased, and the roads too, must be improved upon. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Timuzigu and then, Hon. Susan Abeja.

11.52

MR MICHAEL TIMUZIGU (NRM, Kajara County, Ntungamo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for recommending that the Government should invest in these heritage sites.

Tourism has already been identified as one of the best sources of foreign exchange in Uganda but we have not invested enough in it as a Government business because it collects revenue and spends. When we do not invest enough in tourism, we shall add little, which means we shall leave the potential of tourism untapped. In that case, we shall be exposing ourselves to borrowing year in, year out.

Therefore, I thank the committee, and I propose that the ministry responsible for tourism should consider investing more in tourism. The minister should be assertive and bold in Cabinet meetings to ensure that the President also buys our proposal. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Susan Abeja.

11.53

MS SUSAN ABEJA (Independent, Woman Representative, Otuke): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the committee for the report and its recommendation that the Government should support tourism sites.

I implore my younger son to accept that the most original –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, we do not have children in Parliament.

MS ABEJA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I just want to inform him that the only original site of

tourism in the Lango Subregion is *Got Otuke*. I was surprised when he did not mention *Got Otuke*, yet it was chosen as the site where the only *Won Nyaci* is going to be crowned.

You are not a child, I have forgiven you, but please include that before you submit. Otherwise, God is seeing you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, information is given to a Member to enrich their submission. Your colleague did not give you space. Yes, Hon. Okin Ojara.

11.55

MR OKIN P. P. OJARA (FDC, Chua West County, Kitgum): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I thank the chairperson of the committee for a well-deserved report. The report had many key recommendations and observations. I thank you for that.

Mr Speaker, the report did not take care of what we term as cultural tourism. For example, when you look at the culture and tradition of the Acholi people, you will notice that we have a variety of cultural activities that can be supported to promote tourism locally, and internationally. The Acholi have over 22 different types of dances and several songs. Coupled with that, they also have cuisines that can be prepared, which can also promote food tourism. We enjoy a variety of food here, and a lot more that could actually be invested in to promote cultural tourism.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, the committee did not mention the issue of trade. Recently, there was a significant rise in the prices of food and commodities yet this committee deals with the issue of trade. We hope -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, their terms of reference were clear and they are in the report.

MR OKIN: I have not seen the report talk about the significant rise in prices.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: So, what are you debating? Honourable member, listen. The terms of reference of the committee were very specific on tourism and tourism sites.

MR OKIN: No problem.

THE SPEAKER: So, we did not include trade.

MR OKIN: It is okay but I was saying that because the committee is in charge of Tourism, Trade, and Industry. Anyway, lastly, I have a humble petition from the Kitgum NGO forum, which stipulates the challenges of wildlife in Kitgum District; the challenges of the elephants, and the game park, which is situated on the eastern side of the Acholi sub-region.

I would like to lay this on the Table to inform the committee and beef up the recommendations that they have so far mentioned.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, petitions are referred to the House under Rule 30(2) of our Rules of Procedure.

MR OKIN: A research document.

MR SPEAKER: That is not how we work, honourable member. Yes, Hon. Betty Aol –

MR OKIN: Can I lay it on the Table?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, that is not how we work. You said that you have a petition. Please refer to Rule 30(2) of our Rules of Procedure; here we work through rules, honourable member.

11.59

MS BETTY AOL (FDC, Woman Representative, Gulu City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to thank the committee, for the very good report presented. Much as tourism brings something to us, we allocate very minimal resources comparatively. Here in the North, efforts have not been made to develop tourist sites.

I would also like to remind the committee about Aruu Falls. They are much loved by the young

people. Much as they are a little bit dangerous most of the young people go there during holidays. So, we need to develop the site; there are birds there. I have seen this missing in the report. I wish you could take an interest and put Aruu Falls to be the 20th so that they can also be allocated resources to develop it as a good tourist site.

There are very many sites here such as Sir Samuel Baker's Fort, but the road going there from Gulu to Patiko and then onwards to Kitgum through Palabek is not very good. I think that big trunk road has to be considered as a tourist road because it leads people to Fort Patiko. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us hear from the Hon. Rachael Magoola.

12.01

MS RACHEL MAGOOLA (NRM, Woman representative, Bugweri): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the committee chairperson for the report though there is one thing I need to point out, and this is about cultural sites, which are a function of the people who own them. We have separated the people who know about these sites from the tourist sites.

So, the people who own them develop them in partnership with tourism. When you talk about tourism, it is like saying you are going to make millet porridge and you do not put it. The millet is the people, they own these sites, they understand them, and they can take care of them in partnership with you.

The sites that exist are beyond physical. Cultural tourism looks at the communities. People travel to a country to see how the people there live or eat.

One member here mentioned that when they see the dances, and eat the food - in tourism, we tend to focus on sites and animals but when you leave out the people, you have left out the main ingredient that makes tourism worth it.

People come to Uganda to see monkeys, and baboons because that is what we promote.

What about the people? I give an example of Kagulu Hill. The Kyabazingaship of Busoga has partnered with some entities every year for people to climb that hill because that is where Busoga started with the kings crossing over from Bunyoro.

It is working because the cultural institution is hand in glove in promoting that institution. You are talking about toilets, bringing modern paintings. Without the Acholi painting them, it will not be something imported.

The youth are here without jobs, involve them in creating the beauty on these sites because they have the cultural and institutional memories of what that site means.

I am the Chairperson of the Culture and Creative Industries Forum, and so, I request the Committee on Tourism to talk to us so that we can share ideas on what a cultural site should be and should do. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, let us hear from Hon. Siraji then hon. Andrew Oulanyah.

12.03

MS SIRAJI EZAAMA (NRM, Aringa County, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee for the elaborate report that they have presented on the Floor of the Parliament. Though the committee has come up with those historical sites that are tantamount to the attraction of tourists, there are still many sites that were not mentioned in the report.

In my district, there are religious sites, like the Lodonga Basilica and Alelinga sites, the earlier site where all the Muslims from West Nile were gathered and circumcised. When you go to that area - Arabs come and see where their religion started and was put into practice.

The Basilica attracts pilgrims from all over the world but these sites have not been included in this report. I feel that there is something that still needs to be done in order to incorporate many of the sites. I beg to submit. Thank you.

12.05

MR ANDREW OJOK (NRM, Omoro County, Omoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to submit on only three points. While I want to thank the chairperson of the committee, I would like to focus on three aspects of the report.

One is on the infrastructure. Moroto Road is a tourism road. It connects people to Gotodek, Barlonyo, and Ambrosoli Shrines. But Odek Bridge itself is just about five rains from being washed away. I want to draw this to the attention of the committee and the whole House because it is a national road.

Secondly, in the plan to tarmac Moroto Road, they have only given Omoro two kilometres of tarmac. It would be our prayer that the cultural institutions are taken care of. If you were to visit the residence of Puranga, one of the biggest chiefdoms in Acholi, you would notice that the road to there is in a deplorable state; if they could extend some tarmac to that route, which goes to the residence of that cultural leader.

Thirdly, on the issue of a tourism-centric nation. When you are coming to Uganda, it is not the destination. It is not that you are going to Got Odek, but you will go through the market vendors, hotel providers, and transport service providers. It is the whole system. What is Uganda's readiness to make sure we are all able to welcome our visitors?

Why I would visit a place because of how I feel I was treated. It is not at that hotel, but how I was treated outside that will make me come back. Therefore, I implore the committee to look at building the capacity of the nation to be tourism-centric. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Santa Alum.

12.07

MS SANTA SANDRA ALUM OGWANG (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this motion. I stand to support the committee report.

Mr Speaker, Uganda is grappling with the lack of or low revenue yet tourism is a key aspect that can generate for us revenue, both locally and internationally.

Mr Speaker, I want to start with the report, which the committee presented. In Oyam, there is St Mary's Mother of the Church Shrine, which is in Iceme. This shrine attracts both local and international pilgrims, in thousands. The church has tried its best to renovate and do something, but the Government has not put in anything.

Mr Speaker, the late Speaker, Rt. Hon Jacob Oulanyah contributed and the Government promised to come and add to what the late Speaker had done. How I wish the Government, this time around, gets some money to work on this shrine of Mother Mary. We get a lot of miracles at this very site.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, I want to add my voice to the voices that spoke to the Barlonyo site. The management and the road are so poor. A journey of 20 kilometers takes more than one hour. Are we really serious when we talk about generating local revenue and the tourism site?

Even in this very place, there is no latrine, yet the place hosts so many people. When you look at the site – we have ever gone to Kigali, Rwanda and we have pictures of what we are talking about. The local community is struggling. When you reach Barlonyo, for example, you notice that they are struggling to communicate; there are no graphic images or pictures.

Therefore, I would like to urge the ministry, since the minister is here - I hope you have ever gone to the genocide site in Kigali - we can start by having something in place.

Mr Speaker, in this very place, there is a lot of vandalism that takes place. The area is not fenced. So, as I support the committee, I want to say that instead of the Government funding only one site in a year, how about taking three sites in a year? This is so that we start at a better rate. Thank you so much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us have Hon. Felix Okot-Ogong and Hon. Linos Ngompek. Karamoja group, agree on one person. I need to pick someone from Karamoja.

12.10

MR FELIX OKOT-OGONG (NRM, Dokolo South County, Dokolo): Mr Speaker, I want to thank Hon. Boniface Okot for his wonderful presentation. I would also like to thank the committee members for visiting the Kangai site.

The Kangai site is where the Buganda and the Bunyoro kings were captured. It is a very important tourist site, and I am happy that they visited that site. However, I appeal to the committee members and the minister - we have been going there many times, but no implementation has been made. I am happy that, this time, the Government has provided Shs 14 billion to develop the Kangai Tourism Site, and Shs 3 billion has already been provided this financial year.

However, my concern is about the plan of the site. It is not there; we have not seen it. When are you going to begin the implementation, when the plan itself is not there? You have not even invited us to discuss the plan of the site and how it is going to be developed.

While I am happy that we have provided money, the implementation should begin. Now that we are going into September, the financial year is about to end, and you have not utilised the money that has already been put in the budget.

Therefore, I appeal to the minister and the Government to ensure implementation begins as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

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

12.12

MR LINOS NGOMPEK (NRM, Kibanda North County, Kiryandongo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee

for their findings and recommendations. My concern is on the safety and who is charged with maintaining these cultural sites. For example, a few days ago, I visited Pakwach – that is where I come from, originally. I also visited the Eclipse Point.

The structure is good, but the site has been abandoned and left to wild animals. Villagers also, sometimes, access and use it as their latrine. Hon. Avur here can testify. Therefore, the question is: who is in charge of maintaining these sites? This is because many of them are abandoned.

In terms of safety, for example, when you go on top of the Nile or Murchison Falls in the national park, you find that the barriers that were erected many years ago have rusted, and, for some of them, algae have grown on them and they are slippery. The size of the metal used cannot provide any safety anymore.

Therefore, I call upon the committee or wildlife to also, at least, replace the barriers so that our tourists are protected instead of falling into the Nile. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I had said that I would pick one person from Karamoja. Yes, honourable member.

12.14

MR PHILIPHS LOKWANG-ILUKOL (NRM, Napore West County, Karenga): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. Tourism is all about leisure, research, and knowledge. The case of Karamoja region has all the tourist potentials, but the Government's intervention has somehow delayed.

For example, when you talk about a site like Kidepo, it harbours many of the animals that people are talking about – problem animals and whatever. I am happy that the President has written for it to be fenced. The problem in Kidepo, which brings wild animals outside, is that the environment has been inhabited by dangerous plants that have swept off the pastures for the animals.

Therefore, the Government could enter into research to ensure that the grasslands or the pasturelands of the park are rejuvenated to allow the animals to get back. This will stop the animals from disturbing people.

Kidepo is the second most visited tourist destination in Africa. However, the tourists struggle to reach there due to poor road infrastructure, although the Government has brought in a loan, which was approved – and we are waiting. We wish that it could be done such that the tourists can reach there easily.

My colleague talked about local tourism. It is upon the managers of the tourist sites and areas to ensure that there is adequate preparation for one to feel free and happy to reach there. However, if the managers are not handling the local tourists, how can the foreigners enjoy that? For us in Karamoja, we have coined the insecurity problem to look like it is permanent even when we say the insecurity has gone down. We want tourists to come to Karamoja but many of us outside here say, Karamoja is insecure.

Beginning Monday, we are hosting a cultural event to which we invite all the tourists, both local and international. And I welcome all of you to come and see what takes tourists to Kidepo as the second tourist destination.

I would like to say that tourists and all of you should know that Kidepo National Park is a park you need to reach before you die. Thank you very much.

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

12.17

MR ACON JULIUS (NRM, Otuke East County, Otuke): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to appreciate your good vision for seeing me today.

Mr Speaker, what I want to let this House know is that when you look at history, you notice that the tribes that live in Northern Uganda all originated or departed from Otuke in the early 70s to 90s. Therefore, I would like to ask

the chairperson of the committee to consider Otuke as one of the greatest tourist places.

In 2002, I remember a Whiteman from California flew to Otuke just to take a photograph of a red lizard; look at what Otuke can bring to this country. *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, we have the coronation of our *Won Nyaci* in Lango on 2 November 2024, which will take place in Otuke. So, I want to urge the chairperson and committee to make sure Otuke is included.

Mr Speaker, the road from Lira–Alebtong–Otuke–Abim should be tarmacked. I would also like to say this: if you climb *Got* Otuke, you will find footprints of all the tribes in Northern Uganda who were gathered in this place. You will find footprints of the Iteso, Acholi, Jabwor, Lango, and Kumam. These are the things I wanted to raise in this House; they were burning me and I could not hold them. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I am going to make a special consideration. Let us welcome back our colleague who has been away after losing her beloved one; Hon. Sharon Balmoyi. It is her first attending a sitting since she lost her dear husband. Honourable colleague, we keep praying for you and we welcome you back to the House. Submit your point.

12.20

MS SHARON BALMOYI (NRM, Woman Representative, Gulu District): Thank you. Allow me to first start by appreciating you, Mr Speaker. Yesterday, you took your time and came to my home to pay your last respects to my beloved husband who departed from us. I also thank other honourable colleagues who moved with you. Thank you so much. My family will forever be grateful. *(Applause)* May the soul of my husband continue to rest in peace.

Mr Speaker, I wanted to give information but according to the rules, the Member is already off the Floor, so I cannot. Thank you for giving me way.

I want to respond to Hon. Acon that not all northerners came from Otuke. For us, the Acholis, our origin is from Bahr el Ghazal, Southern Sudan. So, is it in order for Hon. Acon to allege that all northerners came from Otuke? At least to the best of my knowledge, I originate from South Sudan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS BALMOYI: Mr Speaker –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can have friends in Otuke.

MS BALMOYI: Oh yes and Hon. Acon is one of my best friends from Otuke. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS BALMOYI: Yes, Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you have another submission to make?

MS BALMOYI: Yes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, I gave you a special consideration. So, continue.

MS BALMOYI: Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity. I know it is not in order for me to bring a matter of national importance here but there is a pressing issue in Gulu District and Gulu City.

There is a ban on charcoal business in this region. Mr Speaker, I would like to let you know that for the last two weeks, there has been an operation for the curb charcoal business in the region. All that we were trying to do was to conserve the environment. However, it is very unfortunate that for the last two weeks, the people of Gulu District and Gulu City have been suffering and almost failing to cook food at their homes because soldiers have been deployed to ensure that bags of charcoal, a single bag of charcoal or even a half sack of charcoal is not allowed to pass or to be sold or bought by the citizens of this area. For that reason, people are crying foul. Here, we cannot afford to cook using gas.

My plea is that let them go soft on our people. What we do not want is to see lorries carrying chunks of charcoal crossing Karuma taking it to other places for business purposes. My prayer to the Government is to give us alternative sources of energy so that we can live normally.

We wish for the Government to give free gas cylinders to our people at reduced prices when refilling for a given period until we are able to have alternative sources of energy for cooking. The government should also reduce the tariff on power for those who are able to cook using electric cookers. I submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I made a special consideration under the general authority of the Speaker under Rule 7 of our Rules of Procedure. The issue, which the honourable colleague has raised on charcoal crossing Karuma and charcoal remaining in Northern Uganda has the same impact on the environment.

You cannot say a tree cut to make charcoal to serve the people in Northern Uganda will not affect the environment compared to a tree cut to make charcoal to be taken to Kampala. I am among the people who raised this issue on the Floor after watching a documentary on how Zoka Forest is being destroyed despite the presidential directive to stop charcoal burning around those areas.

Therefore, honourable colleagues, it cannot be Parliament to sit here and say let us be lenient to the people who are destroying the environment. We would be sending a very wrong message; it cannot be Parliament. On that one, if the minister was here - he would answer the one of charcoal but when it comes to destroying the environment, let us all be strong. Otherwise, it will come back to destroy you. Nature pays back more even roughly.

Honourable Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities? A small correction on record - yes, Hon. Lucy Akello - if it is a correction that is on record. Honourable colleagues, the Speaker is on the Floor, therefore, we are proceeding well.

MS LUCY AKELLO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to make a small correction, which is in the report on page 32 on point 6.6, talking about the Amuru Hot Springs and talks of Paga Parish. There is no parish as such. That parish is called Pagak Parish and it is found in Amuru Subcounty. I thought this was a very critical correction to be made. If not corrected, it will affect the whole report. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The *Hansard* has captured it. Yes, honourable minister.

12.27

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Mr Martin Mugarra): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Also thanks to the committee vice chairperson, Hon. Okot, and the committee members, for a very good report and for raising most of the issues that we have raised as a ministry.

Mr Speaker, of the 19 sites in the Northern Region, we are only in charge of nine and the reason is mainly resources. Our request still goes out there that some more investment is put into tourism, just like the other Members were requesting, because tourism indeed brings in a lot of revenues if invested into.

The honourable chairperson quoted figures for 2022 on the performance of the sector when he said that the number of visitors that we received at the sites was around 67,000. But for the last three years, the Museums and Monuments Department has been receiving around Shs 2 billion as a recurrent budget and Shs 2 billion for development. You can see that even with that little money, once we invest in promotions, we get the results.

In 2023, our figures improved from 67,000 to 131,000; twice the number in just one year. So, if we invest in this sector, definitely we will have better results.

For the Members who have raised issues on a number of sites that have not been captured, I want to assure you that under the Museums and Monuments Act, the minister has powers to gazette any other sites that you feel would form

part of the Museums Department. Please write to us and we will make this consideration.

Mr Speaker, the statutory instrument was signed; it should be making its way to Parliament any time soon. I agree with the committee that we have identified so many sites, around 614. Our issue is resources to have a presence in each of the sites to develop and promote them.

There has been an issue of human-wildlife relations. I do not want to call it conflict, because we are going to stay with these animals and we have stayed with them since creation; we shall continue to stay with them.

Just for Northern Uganda, I speak to Karamoja and the Murchison Falls National Park. Last week, in Parliament, based on the directive of His Excellency, the President, we assessed what we need to do to resolve the issues of human-wildlife conflict around the Kidepo Community Wildlife Management Area, which is Kidepo and Karenga, which is around 317 kilometres.

We need Shs 20 billion to have that area fenced and have the issue of elephants getting out and destroying crops, resolved once and for all. The most interesting bit or the difficult bit is that even when we deploy more rangers with the UPDF, these elephants are very intelligent animals because they know when they come out during the day, you will easily intercept them. So, they choose to come out in the night. It is very dangerous for rangers to run after elephants in the night.

Usually, they have already entered, and then in the morning, we have to go and get them out of the community. Once we fence, we will have the problem resolved. For the Murchison Falls, which is 394 kilometres, we are doing the entire boundary; we have so far faced 44 kilometres in Nwoya and Oyam. We are currently doing 10 kilometres in Nwoya and 10 kilometres in Buliisa.

We have an uncovered boundary of around 330 kilometres and it would cost us around Shs 21

billion to also fence Murchison Falls and have the issue resolved once and for all. The issue is with Parliament, and the Prime Minister has been holding meetings with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to see how we resolve it.

I have been to the communities, Mr Speaker, and I want to assure you, if you see how people suffer, especially when a group of elephants, let us say five, or six, goes into the gardens. I understand the pain, and this is the only solution and way out.

With those few remarks, again, I want to thank the committee. But, chairperson, indeed, let us support tourism. It is a low-hanging fruit, and the revenues can come in at any time. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you know we have been doing it. I have been guided that under your subregional groups of the North, there are additional issues, which you were assigned to as subregional blocks to present. The people who were assigned, are they ready? I mean those to speak to subregional issues, not a Member coming up to give their views. Who is ready? Which subregion is ready so that I know you are presenting issues of a subregion, not your issues as a Member?

If West Nile is ready, you can - so that they are captured to be part of amendments to the report. I can start with West Nile if they are ready. Who is presenting? Hon. Feta, are you presenting for West Nile? If yes, please do. I will give each a maximum of two minutes. It has to be quick. Just read the outline. Honourable colleagues, I must finish the Order Paper by 4.00 p.m. and so, you will have to forgive me. Today we are going to sacrifice many submissions.

12.33

MR GEOFFREY FETA (NRM, Ayivu Division East, Arua): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity for West Nile to present the subregional issues that were directed here on Wednesday.

You are aware that on the third day of this month, West Nile was connected to the national grid after 110 years. The Government has introduced the electricity scale-up programme of one pole or zero pole. However, this project is coming when the region does not have connectivity. The region does not have a last-mile connection.

The uptake of this project will be difficult, and therefore, the regional position is that the Government should consider West Nile for affirmative action so that electricity scale-up can be enhanced through rural electrification, to increase connectivity, access, increase in usage, the promotion of value addition, to create jobs for youth and women, and to promote self-employment.

The second is the affordability of electricity. As you are aware –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable, these are issues, from what I was guided, that should be related to the report. We are now on tourism. Are there issues to do with tourism that you agreed upon? If not –

MR FETA: Specifically, with tourism, Mr Speaker, the report did not highlight the Alikua Pyramids that were constructed in 1911 in Yivu Subcounty of Maracha District. I would appeal that the committee should consider this.

Two, we have the Ombachi Massacre ground where 89 people were killed on 24 June 1981. This has not been captured. We have issues of cultural sites in West Nile – the Alur Kingdom, which has enormous potential for tourism that has not been captured. We have the Lugbara Kari, which has enormous potential; covering seven districts of West Nile, which has not been captured. Further, there are key other areas in the Madi Sub-region. I beg to submit. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The rest seem not to be ready for their areas. Honourable colleagues, I now put – (*Member rose*) - let me run the House the way I know how to. This is going to cause confusion. From

what I am seeing, Members are giving their submissions.

Honourable colleagues, I now put the question that the Report of the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on the State and Prospects of Tourism Sites in Northern Uganda be adopted with proposed amendments.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The areas that you said have not been captured, have been captured under amendments. Honourable minister, please bring us an action-taken report within three months from today as per Rule 220 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament. Next item.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES ON THE PETITION ON
UNFAIR COMPENSATIONS BY THE
KARUMA DAM HYDRO POWER
PROJECT-AFFECTED PERSONS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, honourable chairperson of the committee? As the chairperson comes, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have pupils and teachers of Credo Nursery and Primary School, Gulu and Omoro branches. They are represented by Hon. Onen Charles, Hon. Aol Betty Ocan, Hon. Okot Peter, and Hon. Lamwaka Catherine, respectively. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them (*Applause*) They are in that corner looking very smart. Thank you. You can take your seats, our visitors.

12.38

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (Mr Herbert Ariko): Mr Speaker, this is a report of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources on a petition by project-affected persons of the Karuma Hydropower Plant.

The committee looked into several issues. We held meetings. We also visited the site and had on-site meetings with Project-Affected Persons (PAP), the ministry, and other stakeholders. Before I present the report of the committee, I request to lay on the Table, a file containing the report of the committee, minutes of our meetings, and several other documents that were compiled in the process. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR ARIKO: In the interest of time, I shall just read the highlights of the committee findings because this matter has been on the Order Paper since Wednesday. I am sure the honourable colleagues have addressed themselves many other issues in the report.

On 12 September 2023, the Rt Hon. Speaker directed the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to study and revert to Parliament on a petition submitted to her office by the Environment Governance Institute on behalf of the Project-Affected Persons of the Karuma Hydropower Project. The committee considered the petition in accordance with Rules 30(6) and (7) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament and hereby wishes to report.

Karuma Hydropower Plant is a run-off river plant located along the River Nile, northwest of Uganda. It is 23.5 kilometres upstream of the Masindi-Gulu Highway. The project area falls within the Kiryandongo and Oyam districts, located in the vicinity of Karuma Village and Murchison Falls protected areas, including the Karuma Wildlife Reserve.

The project utilises a gross head of about 700 meters and a design discharge of 1,098 cubic meters for the generation of 600 megawatts (six units of 100 megawatts each). It has six different generation turbines.

In a letter dated 5 September 2023, the Environment Governance Institute petitioned the office of the Speaker on behalf of the Project-Affected Persons who were affected by the works on the Karuma Hydropower Plant and requested that the Speaker sets up

an inquiry to look into how compensations of these persons had been done by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development.

The petition by the Environment Governance Institute recognises that in 2021, the Government of Uganda, facilitated by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, initiated the acquisition of 465.52 hectares of land in Karuma and Awoo villages in Mutunda Subcounty of Kiryandongo District and Nora and Akurudia villages in Kamdini Subcounty of Oyam District to make way for the construction of the hydropower plant.

Energy Infrastructure (PVT) Limited was contracted in 2010 to prepare and carry out a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) and a livelihood restoration assessment for the Karuma Hydropower Project. Consequently, between October and November 2011, it undertook a population census and land survey on behalf of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to assess the socioeconomic characteristics and property evaluation of the affected individuals. This data was used to compile a Resettlement Action Plan report that was finalised in 2012.

Notable is that the Government set 16 January 2012, as the cut-off date, signalling that any development made on the affected land after that date would not be compensated and that the Government had taken over the property of the Project-Affected Persons (PAPs).

The grievances of the PAPS in the petition included:

- i) Failure to relocate vulnerable APAs;
- ii) Lack of social services;
- iii) Uncertainty about the proposed relocation areas in Lapono Village in Nwoya District;
- iv) Unfair land acquisition;
- v) Lack of a grievance reporting platform; and
- vi) Presence of ghost landlords.

Mr Speaker, the prayers of the petitioners included, among others:

- i) Parliament should establish a commission of inquiry to thoroughly investigate the compensation issues around the Karuma Hydropower Project;
- ii) The Government should adhere to the guidelines for compensation assessments under the land acquisition framework;
- iii) The Government should urgently construct houses for the displaced households; and
- iv) The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should establish a grievance-handling committee.

In response to the prayers of the petition, the committee therefore set out the following objectives to look into the matters raised in the petition:

- i) To determine whether the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources has the capacity and competence to look into the matter since the petitions had prayed for a commission of inquiry;
- ii) To assess whether there was fair, adequate, and prompt compensation for the PAPs;
- iii) To ascertain the status of implementation of the Resettlement Action Plan; and
- iv) To report any other matter incidental to this.

Mr Speaker, I will skip the relevant legal regime because we all know that. I will also skip the methodology. I will also skip the methodology. I will just go straight to the committee findings.

Mr Speaker, under 5.1, the land and number of people affected by the project.

The total area affected by the project, that is the Karuma Hydropower Project (KHPP) generation site is 462.52 hectares. Out of these, 238.6 hectares is land from the Karuma conservation area, 192.7 hectares is private land belonging to the Project-Affected Persons, while 34.17 hectares belongs to NORPAK. The land belonging to the Project-Affected Persons is in Karuma and Awoo villages in Mutunda Subcounty in Kiryandongo District and Akuridia and Nora Villages in Kamdini Subcounty in Oyam District.

The total number of affected households was stated at 414 out of which 280 are landowners and 134 are tenants. The total population of the affected households is 3,735, comprising 50.04 per cent male against 49.96 per cent female.

On the assessment of the competence of this committee to undertake the assignment, under Article 90 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, by the time we assign you, we know.

MR ARIKO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Much obliged.

Evaluation of the status of Project-Affected Persons (PAPs)

Let me skip those - the committee observed that despite the significant progress made in the compensation process, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development is in contravention of Article 26(2) of the Constitution to the extent of the 125 claims.

We recommend, therefore, that the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development expedites the compensation process of the 125 outstanding claims as required by law.

On compensation of ghost landlords

The committee observed that the presence of ghost landlords has resulted in the rightful PAPs being deprived of the compensation they were entitled to. This has led to unfairness and injustice, severe economic hardship and social displacement, which affects the trust in Government processes.

Mr Speaker, as you might note, I am only now looking at the committee observations and recommendations. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should collaborate with the relevant authorities, such as the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, especially the Office of the Chief Government Valuer and the Office of the Auditor-General,

to conduct a thorough investigation on the issue of ghost landlords.

They should take immediate legal action against those found to have fraudulently undertaken activities of claiming for compensation yet they are not entitled to and this should be reported back by the ministry to Parliament by 30 November 2024 on the actions taken.

That the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should also ensure that the rightful land owners should be duly compensated to the full.

I would like to go to the status of compensation. The committee established that the total outstanding claims for physical resettlement are 119. And the proposed budget for implementation of the RAP is Shs 28,031,079,000, out of which Shs 4,265,279,694 is for compensation, including the statutory disturbance allowance of 15 per cent.

The committee observed that the assessed compensation value of Shs 4.2 billion aligns with the figures approved by the Chief Government Valuer in his report.

There is a table there that I am sure colleagues have seen, and in the interest of time, I request to draw their attention to look back into it.

Therefore, our observations are as follows:

Although the valuation report budgeted for Shs 4.2 billion, to settle the assessed compensation for land, buildings and crops, and the statutory disturbance allowance of 15 per cent, this value overshoot by Shs 2.55 billion, which is more than a half of the value that was initially budgeted for.

Two, the completion of implementation of the RAP has delayed by 12 years. Nonetheless, the disturbance allowance was revised from 15 per cent to 30 per cent because the PAPs had been given less than six months to vacate their land.

According to the Value-for-Money report on compensation of the Project-Affected Persons under Karuma, it was noted that the significant increment in the valuation amounts for Karuma was due to change of the disturbance allowance payable from 15 to 30 percent, resulting to an increment of Shs 0.56 billion.

In addition, Shs 1.26 billion resulted from the supplementary evaluations of 505 claims relating to missed persons or properties and the re-evaluation of values rejected in the initial report.

Such a significant number of fresh claims following a total valuation points to gaps in the work done by the consultant and inadequate supervision by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development.

Number three, the purchase of land for the resettlement of PAPs and court cases were a different budget item, which does not form part of the valuation compensation sum item that amounted to Shs 4.26 billion.

The committee is in receipt of the cases where PAPs claim they were not adequately compensated besides the six cases that are in court. These are provided as Annex 2

The recommendations are as follows:

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Energy expedite the implementation of the RAP so as to fully acquire the project land.

Two, that the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL) should ensure that supervision of consultants during the valuation process is done in order to detect and avoid errors and omissions.

And three, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should investigate and take appropriate action to address the grievances of all persons that were not adequately compensated as per the attached list, which is Annex 2 and report back to Parliament not later than 30 of November 2024.

The status of land acquisition for relocation of vulnerable PAPs

Observations

The committee noted that there was a protracted delay in acquiring land for the PAPs between completion of the RAP assessment in 2012 and the purchase of land, which was done by 2018.

The committee also observed that whereas there are copies of land titles for the purchased land, no copies of transfer forms were received. And this partly explains the continued failure to transfer the land titles to the Government since 2018.

The committee further observed that it was erroneous for the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to purchase land without conducting an official search as advised by the Chief Government Valuer. Moreover, the land was purchased at Shs 75 million more than the value recommended by the Chief Government Valuer.

Recommendations

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and the Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development should conduct a search on the land to ascertain the ownership status of the purchased land, as this will enable or facilitate clarification of other imposters who have also been claiming compensation.

Second, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should carry out boundary opening of this acquired land in order to mitigate and prevent encroachment of land for the project.

Third, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should ensure that ownership of the land acquired in Nwoya is expeditiously transferred to the Government awaiting parcelling of the said land for the resettlement of Project-Affected Persons.

The status of resettlement of the PAPs

The committee observed that although the Karuma Hydro Power Project is nearing completion, with 99 per cent progress and an official commissioning date set for 25 September 2024, all the vulnerable PAPs, 119 households, have still not been relocated, despite the comments made in the Resettlement Action Plan over a decade ago.

Further, the committee noted that the delays in the resettlement might increase the likelihood of new claimants emerging.

The recommendations, therefore, are as follows:

- i) The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should expedite the construction of houses for the vulnerable PAPs and should aid their relocation;
- ii) An ad hoc joint assessment committee composed of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development staff, the local leadership and the representatives of the PAPs themselves, should be formed to periodically assess progress at the resettlement site. Their terms of reference and timelines for execution of the construction of the houses should be developed and agreed upon by all the parties; and
- iii) The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, together with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, should first track the transfer of land titles to the Government of Uganda for the land in Lapono Village.

Failure to return titles for uncompensated PAPs

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should immediately return the land titles to the Project-Affected Persons or ensure that all their outstanding claims are paid promptly.

Claims before court

The committee observes that since some of these cases are before court and in line with the Rules of Procedure, it will not dwell on the specifics of these cases since this might constitute subjudice, as per Rule 73, which in part reads that: *“A Member shall not refer to any particular matter which is subjudice...”* So, the committee restrained itself from dwelling into the details of what is before court.

Implementation of social services

The committee noted that the PAPs had highlighted a number of additional services to be considered as part of the RAP. This included water and sanitation facilities, electricity provision, and upgrading of health centres II to health centres IV.

The committee noted that where these social services are not catered for under the RAP, they are provided for in the Community Development Action Plan or the Corporate Social Responsibility from the developers of the Karuma Hydropower Project.

The committee also observed that the failure to provide essential social services undermines the well-being of the resettled communities. This also undermines the community's acceptance and trust in the project, potentially resulting in resistance and reduced public support for future initiatives of the Government.

Mr Speaker, the Committee, therefore, recommends as follows:

- i) The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should prioritise to avail the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development with the necessary funding, so that it can promptly implement the Social Services Action Plans as outlined in the RAP; and
- ii) The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should expedite the extension of electricity to the neighbouring communities, especially public institutions

because it negates understanding for you to be the community from which electricity is generated, and yet remain without supply of energy.

Implementation of the Community Development Action Plan (CDAP)

The Committee observed as follows:

- i) Funding by the Government remains very low despite the CDAP being a critical foreseeable expenditure requirement. Out of Shs 38.3 billion meant for the implementation of the CDAP project, only Shs 0.3 billion has been received resulting in the non-implementation of planned constructions; and
- ii) It is imperative that the Government avails funding for the implementation of CDAP initiatives in the project-affected communities. This will help to have a buy-in from the communities and to facilitate project acceptance.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that the Government provides Shs 3.82 billion for the CDAP activities under Karuma over the next three financial years.

Acquisition of land titles for public institutions

The committee observed that the absence of land titles for public institutions creates legal and ownership uncertainties, which could lead to future disputes.

It recommends, therefore, thus:

- i) That the relevant authorities should expedite the process of issuing land titles to these public institutions to ensure clear ownership, legal protection, and the ability to access further development opportunities; and
- ii) That the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should refrain from boundary opening on land that it has not fully acquired until the PAPs have been

fully compensated and relocated.

Mr Speaker, as we come towards the end of this report, on the issue of land wrangles at Karuma Primary School, the committee established that there is a dispute regarding the amount of land taken from Karuma Primary School.

The school survey report indicates that 17 acres were initially available, out of which eight acres were taken by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development though the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development contends that 4.7 acres were acquired. This discrepancy arises from conflicting survey reports between the two.

The committee, therefore, recommends thus:

- i) That an independent survey be conducted to resolve the discrepancy in land measurements and ensure accurate documentation and demarcation; and
- ii) That a review meeting involving both the Ministry and the School Management Committee and other representatives should be organised to address the issue in order to reach a fair conclusion.

The Karuma Hydropower Plant PAPs Orphanage Scholarship Fund

The committee observed that failure to issue clear guidelines risks mismanagement and ineffective use of the resources, potentially preventing the intended support from reaching the PAPs themselves.

The committee, therefore, recommends as follows:

- i) That the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, in collaboration with the relevant district local governments, should urgently develop and disseminate clear guidelines for utilisation of the Orphanage Scholarship Fund;
- ii) That regular audits should be conducted by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to ensure transparency and accountability in the fund's management.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, after a thorough investigation into the grievances of the PAPs of Karuma Hydropower Project that were raised in the petition, the committee has established significant gaps in the implementation of the RAP, as well as the compensation process.

This is characterised by delayed, unfair, and inadequate compensation, and protracted resettlement of vulnerable PAPs, which have negatively impacted their livelihoods.

The committee, therefore, recommends for the immediate Government intervention to address these grievances by expediting the construction of houses for relocation of the vulnerable PAPs.

Mr Speaker, the outstanding compensation claims should, as a matter of urgency, be implemented. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Chairperson. Honourable colleagues, this is very straightforward. Maybe if it is additional information. Otherwise, I am trying to save time because I want to get space for subregions to bring brief reports - a summary on the issues, which have not been captured by the committees. So, I want to create that space, and yet I do not have it on the Order Paper.

I am only going to allow the woman MP for Nwoya, which is the affected district and the MP, Hon. Linus Ngompek.

1.06

MS JUDITH ACHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Nwoya): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the committee for bringing up and responding to this petition. There are so many ministries that are involved in these cases that should also be brought on the Table to handle it. The 119 people that are supposed to be relocated from Karuma to Nwoya in Lapono village did not go to court.

The six people who went to court and reside in Karumba Town Council right now, should not be a stumbling block to the suffering people who are supposed to be relocated to Nwoya. We have lost so many from this figure already. and some of them died of old age -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, you are repeating what the committee has said. The committee put it clearly; it did not even touch the cases that are in court. It talked about the people who need compensation and are not in court. So, let us not repeat it.

MS ACHAN: Thank you, for your wise guidance, Mr Speaker. On the land title, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development bought the 200-acre land from a family in Nwoya. If there is any challenge of producing the land title, then the Ministry of Energy should respond to this because they bought the land and are responsible for processing the land title.

My prayer is that this issue is handled today and our people are served because we are losing so many of them. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable for Kiryandongo-

1.08

MR LINOS NGOMPEK (NRM, Kibanda North County, Kiryandongo): Mr Speaker. My prayer on behalf of the people is; we request Parliament to expedite the observation and findings of this committee because our people have suffered especially on compensation. Most of our old people, who were due to get compensation, have passed on and some were compensated forcefully. So, we request Parliament to really expedite this process. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Woman MP Kiryandongo, Hon. Helen Kahunde-

1.09

MS HELEN KAHUNDE (NRM, Woman Representative, Kiryandongo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the chairperson for the detailed report and to associate myself with most of the recommendations. There are two issues that I want to comment on.

One of them is on corporate social responsibility. Mr Speaker, you are aware that corporate social

responsibility as an important aspect of any development project. Kiryandongo District got a raw deal.

At first, we were promised a hospital and a secondary school but later, we learnt that the hospital was taken to Masindi Army Barracks. We have waited for the only secondary school but we have not received it, to date. Our people are not happy as far as the corporate social responsibility is concerned. We cannot host this very big project and come up with nothing completely.

On the issue of the land title, the chairperson said it all. However, our people are worried, especially those who were compensated but the land has not been transferred from the Government's name so that these land titles are returned to the owners.

People are worried that they are going to lose their land. They fear that the process of acquiring letters of administration, especially when somebody dies, will be longer for them to acquire back their land titles. We pray that this august House works together with the community and continues to support their cries, as they have been presented before the community.

It is very true that the people who opted for resettlement have suffered the most. They have been rendered homeless up to now. I pray that we support these communities so that they can be resettled. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources on the petition on unfair compensation by the Karuma Dam Hydro Power Project affected persons be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson, I saw some were talking about

action by November but some of these matters are very urgent, very specific, and they are in the hands of the ministry and the project team. So, the minister should bring an action-taken report within one month on this matter. Thank you. Next item.

**MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC SERVICE AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON THE
FUNCTIONALITY OF THE DISTRICT
SERVICE COMMISSIONS AND CITY
SERVICE COMMISSIONS AND
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN
SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT
DISTRICTS ACROSS NORTHERN,
EASTERN AND WESTERN REGION**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Chairperson. You are our host; you know what time means. I know that you will use as little time as possible but cover the subject much efficiently. Hon. Mapenduzi -

1.13

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Mr Ojara Mapenduzi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Permit me to present the report of the Committee on Public Service and Local Government on the functionality of the District Service Commissions and City Service Commissions and on the personnel management in selected Local Governments across Northern Uganda, Eastern and Western Region.

As I embark on that, permit me to lay the minutes of the meetings, together with the report of the committee for that effect.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Mapenduzi, I am sorry - I scanned and could not see any minister from the Ministry of Energy. You know, Hon. Nyamutoro has a precise size, so the pole had covered her. I did not give her an opportunity.

She wanted to clarify just a few things. I am sorry about that. The Hansard team will find a

way of re-arranging this. So, let us give her a chance.

1.14

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (MINERALS) (Ms Phiona Nyamutoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the chairperson for the elaborate report and also present some of responses from the ministry on the petition by Project Affected Persons (PAPs) under the Karuma hydropower project.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of outstanding compensation claims, as the committee rightly mentioned, out of the 125 outstanding compensation claims, six are civil suits that are before the courts of law and the ministry is seeking the support of the Attorney-General to expedite the closure of these cases. The remaining 119 claims relate to physical resettlement in Lapono village, in Nwoya District.

The ministry is currently engaging NEMA and Nwoya District Local Government to fast-track the necessary approvals required to commence procurement of contractors to construct the physical resettlement facilities.

The ministry has also budgeted for the construction of the resettlement facilities in the budget of Financial Year 2025/2026. Our prayer is that this request is prioritised during the allocations and releases.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of compensation of ghost landlords, the ministry takes note of the committee's recommendation and will immediately commence investigations on the alleged ghost landlords and report back to Parliament.

The ministry also takes note of the committee's recommendation on the compensation of rightful owners, subject to the findings of the investigations.

On the issue of evaluation of the resettlement action plan, the ministry is committed to fast-tracking the outstanding resettlement action

plan, and, in line with this, we have engaged the services of a consultant to address the outstanding PAPs and grievances under the dam site. The consultant has constituted a grievance redress committee at village, subcounty and district levels to support the process.

Additionally, the ministry is engaging the Attorney-General, NEMA and Nwoya District Local Government to fast-track the necessary actions required to close the outstanding civil suits and attain approvals necessary to commence procurement of contractors to construct the physical resettlement facilities as well budgeted for in Financial Year 2025/2026. The remaining period of Financial Year 2024/2025 shall be used to attain the necessary approvals and procurement of the contractors.

Mr Speaker, on the same issue of grievances of the persons that were not adequately compensated, as attached in the annex, the ministry takes note of the committee's recommendation, but observes that out of the list of the 29 Project Affected Persons, 18 are listed as plaintiffs under Civil Suit No.30 of 2017: Helen Labeja & 60 Others v. Attorney-General & Others. As for the remaining 11, the ministry commits to investigate and take appropriate action through the grievance redress committees.

On the issue of purchase of relocation land for the PAPs, the ministry takes note of the committee's recommendation and would like to inform Parliament that due diligence was carried out before purchase of the subject land, and confirmation of ownership was supported by the area chairman Local Council I of Lapono Village, Pabali Parish, Anaka Subcounty and the Chief Administrative Officer Nwoya District Local Government.

The ministry is currently in possession of the original land title and transfer forms, pending subdivision. The land is to be subdivided and transferred in the names of the individual project-affected persons.

On the issue of carrying out boundary opening of this required land to mitigate or prevent

encroachment, we take note of the committee's recommendation and commit to updating the boundary opening report that was prepared during the design of the facilities.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of resettling the 119 households in accordance with the resettlement action plan, the ministry commits to expeditiously resettle the PAPs, subject to availability of funds for the construction of the facilities.

On the issue of the ownership of the land acquired in Nwoya to be transferred to the Government awaiting the parcelling of the said land to the resettled PAPs, the ministry commits to transferring the land title to the Government of Uganda following the boundary opening before subdivision and transfer to the resettled PAPs.

On the issue of the status of relocation of vulnerable PAPs, the ministry commits to resettling the PAPs, subject to availability of funds that have limited us over time in starting the construction of the needed facilities.

On the issue of failure to return land titles for uncompensated PAPs, the ministry commits to identifying the outstanding land titles, subdividing them and returning them to the rightful landowners.

On implementation of social services, I entirely agree with the committee's recommendation.

On implementation of the community development action plan, the ministry entirely agrees with the committee's recommendation and commits to putting it into action.

On completion of the mosque at Karuma, the ministry commits to expediting the completion and handover by December 2024. Currently, the contractor is on site and works are ongoing.

On refurbishment work for Karuma Primary School, the ministry would like to inform Parliament that the contractor to undertake works was jointly procured by Kiryandongo District Local Government and the Ministry of

Energy and Mineral Development.

However, the designs, bills of quantities, supervision of construction works and clearance of payment certificates, including issuance of the completion certificate, was undertaken by Kiryandongo District Local Government, as was agreed in a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development.

On ensuring that corrective measures are implemented immediately, including replacing substandard materials with those specified, we commit to undertaking any required corrective measures that have been identified.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of land wrangles at Karuma Primary School, the ministry totally agrees with the committee's recommendations and commits to putting this into action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of procedure from Hon. Gilbert Olanya. Minister, please continue until he gets a microphone.

MS NYAMUTORO: Mr Speaker, on the issue of the acquisition of land titles for public institutions, a consultant was procured to undertake the titling of all project land as well as processing –(Interruption)

MR OLANYA: Thank you. Mr Speaker, the minister's response is too casual, by saying "it depends on the availability of funds", without giving the timeframe and leaving those people in suspense. The Government may take even 10 years by saying, "we have not yet got the funds".

Is it procedurally right for the minister to give a blanket statement? I would love for the minister to give us a timeframe or put it in the budget for a particular financial year for those people to be compensated. Such a casual response puts our people in suspense. I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, honourable colleagues, you see, the minister is not giving her opinion. The minister, on such issues especially which have budgetary implications,

cannot come and say "because I am a minister, I will put in this money". No. Otherwise, you are going to force her to lie on the Floor. The minister must go back and consult with the Treasury, and the Cabinet, before they put in money.

What is very important - but Hon. Tinkasiimire, you are a senior. You know that when the Speaker is talking, you are supposed to be quiet. When the Speaker is talking and you raise a procedural issue – for the minister, we are protected under Rule 220 of the Rules of Procedure, where we can ask for an action-taken plan. That is why I have said that under Rule 220, you will come back within one month and show us which action you have taken, on the recommendations adopted by the House. That is when we shall go into the nitty-gritties.

However, for the sectoral committees, when they are budgeting, they have to go back and say, we resolved this. Why didn't you include it in the budget? Otherwise, for now, I do not want us to crucify the minister, to force her to make declarations on behalf of the Cabinet without further consultations. Let us be fair to her.

Hon. Tinkasiimire. There is a microphone nearby.

MR TINKASIIMIRE: Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, sometimes I sympathise with you when you have to balance the sides of both the Executive and the people of Uganda. You are aware of the provision of Article 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. For avoidance of doubt, it says that compensation shall be timely. Compensation, which is referring to the direction of our rules, where you have to give a lot of time to the minister, I do not think that it is complying with Article 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

The guidance I seek is: in the case where you have two - the Constitution saying this, and the rules giving you leeway to balance, how do we proceed, Mr Speaker? I cannot give you my land to carry out a project, and you want me to wait for three, five, six years? No! It is

unacceptable. That is why people are running to court, because the Constitution says it is timely.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, when you are seated in positions like we are, you should avoid making resolutions in vain. You have to be cautious. Either you want to appease the public that you talked and you resolved, or you have to be practical. That is why your resolution is advisory. Even if I tell the minister that tomorrow, I want her to go and compensate and she has no money, how will it help? Did you include this money in the budget? No.

Therefore, if it is to be paid urgently, she has to go process a supplementary, come back here, and you approve it. That is why I was very cautious. If you heard me after your resolution, I said, honourable colleagues, this is an urgent matter. Honourable minister, come back within one month. That is why there is a window. Where someone finds the route through Parliament short, they may take the one through court. There are those who have taken the one through court because the one through Parliament is advisory. The route through court is mandatory.

Honourable colleagues, I do not want to sit here and direct that they should pay tomorrow and the money will be released. No, I know I do not have that power unless I want to lie to myself. I want us to remain within the limit of the kind of power we have. We should not give false hope. By the way, even if the court declares that go and pay, it will bring in the element of interest because it knows someone might not be able to raise money. Therefore, they say, for the time you have not paid, please pay interest until you get the payment.

Let us work together, honourable colleagues. Let us be harmonious. Let us support the minister in her endeavours. In one month, we shall call her back to come and explain what they have done because some of the items are budget-neutral. For those that are budget-neutral, she should be able to expedite the process. For those which require money,

she will come here, and we shall support the budgeting process.

Honourable colleagues, I can tell you I do not know whether you have a shop where I will go and buy time. Direct me to a shop in Gulu where I will buy more time to complete these matters, if we are to continue with matters of procedure.

MS NYAMUTORO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. On the issue of acquisition of land titles for public institutions, a consultant was procured to undertake titling of all project land as well as processing land titles for the public institutions affected by the project. The consultant is currently on site.

On the issue of grievance handling mechanism for the remaining 11, the ministry commits to investigate and take appropriate action through the grievance redress committee and report back to Parliament.

On the Karuma Hydropower Plant People Affected Persons Orphanage Scholarship Fund, the ministry agrees with the committee's recommendation. However, our prayer is that the audit is undertaken by the Office of the Attorney-General on the issue of regular audits to be conducted to ensure transparency and accountability in the funds management.

Mr Speaker, like the chairperson of the committee rightly stated, and supported by Members of Parliament from the project-affected areas, this is not only a matter of urgency but also very sensitive to the communities. The ministry is working tirelessly to see to it that we have these project-affected persons settled. We call upon the support of Parliament in seeing that our budgeting for the Financial Year 2025/2026 is prioritised during allocations to enable us have this issue settled once and for all.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, our advice would be like Hon. Tinkasiimire said: these issues are straightforward in terms of the law; present a

case to Cabinet and see. We have passed very many supplementary budgets. I know you are going to bring many supplementary budgets. I do not think we would reject the supplementary budget for compensating these people who have suffered for long, and whom you have been told are dying. We request you not to wait for the budget of Financial Year 2025/2026.

MS NYAMUTORO: Much obliged, Mr Speaker. We shall duly report back to Parliament in a month's time.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Nyamutoro. Hon. Mapenduzi, can we go?

MR MAPENDUZI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I had requested permission to lay on the Table a copy of the minutes of the committee and a copy of the report. I beg to lay, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, this report is rather bulky, and in the interest of time, I request that you permit me to take the House through an executive summary that I have prepared. As I said, this report looks at the functionality of the district service commission and city service commission and also on personnel management in selected local governments across northern, eastern, and western regions.

Mr Speaker, we already know the mandates of our committee, and in line with these mandates, the committee conducted an oversight visit to selected cities and districts of northern Uganda such as Arua, Maracha, Terego, Yumbe, Zombo, and Moyo in West Nile; Gulu District, Gulu City, Nwoya, Kitgum, and Pader in Acholi; Moroto Municipality, Moroto District, Amudat, Nabilatuk, Karenga, Kaabong, Kotido Municipality, and Kotido District in Karamoja; Lira City, Lira District, Amolatar District Local Government, Kole, and Otuke in Lango, to assess the functionality of the District and City Service Commission and to analyse the personnel management issues within local governments.

Mr Speaker, the committee has made a comprehensive report with a detailed version of its findings, observations and

recommendations, giving examples and scenarios from local government to bring out the issues affecting the functionality of these commissions and the staff.

Without prejudice to the comprehensive report, this Executive Summary highlights the key issues as follows: Committee findings, observations, and recommendations.

On the functionality of District Service Commission, Mr Speaker,

1. We looked at gaps in the commissions. The committee found out that 98.6 per cent of the District and City Service Commissions were functional by end of the Financial Year 2022/2023, and most commissions were fully constituted. However, there are some districts that are non-functional with insufficient number of commissions. For example, Amudat District had only one District Service Commission member, which severely affected the recruitment processes, leading to delays and increasing the risk of corruption.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Local Government, together with the Public Service Commission, should ensure that all commissions are fully constituted for efficient service delivery in local governments.

2. Delays in Public Service Commission approval processes

The report highlights delays by the Public Service Commission in approving Service Commission nominees, often without providing reasons for rejection. This lack of transparency and delayed approvals impede the recruitment process and affect service delivery. In Moyo, delays in submitting approved names to the Service Commission were noted, attributed to negligence. The committee also noted poor grievance handling by the Public Service Commission, which has been slow in responding to appeals, leading to prolonged disputes and inefficiencies.

The committee therefore recommends the following;

- i) The Public Service Commission should fast-track the approval of Service Commission appointees. When appointees are rejected, the Service Commission should provide clear justification and recommendation to local governments on the criteria needed for approval.
- ii) The Ministry of Public Service should establish and enforce clear guidelines on the timelines for submitting nominees for District Service Commission membership and ensure prompt approval by the Public Service Commission nomination, once nominations are made by the district councils.
- iii) The Public Service Commission should handle appeals before it within the timelines stipulated under the law and should give a report to the Committee on all appeals handled by it every financial year and a summary of such appeals.

3. Inadequate funding for District Service Commissions and City Service Commissions.

Mr Speaker, the District Service Commissions and City Service Commissions faced significant funding shortfalls and late releases. While the Government provided an additional Shs 25 million for each Service Commission in this current financial year, this is still inadequate given their responsibilities. Low retainer fees, sometimes as low as Shs 30,000 per month in certain districts, especially in Karamoja, compromised the independence and integrity of Commission members leading to potential corruption.

Committee recommendations:

- i) The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and Public Service Commission should consider an increase in funding for Service Commissions from the Consolidated Fund to reduce reliance on local revenue.
- ii) The Ministry of Public Service and Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic

Development should consider a monthly remuneration for members of the Service Commission just like the chairpersons. Mr Speaker, only the chairpersons get monthly emoluments while the other members stay only with the retainer. This will help to motivate the members and attract competent persons to occupy those positions.

- iii) The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should ensure that the funds of the commissions are released promptly to enable the district and city service commissions to execute their mandates effectively.

4. Lack of independence

Mr Speaker, District Service Commissions and City Service Commissions are supposed to operate independently but they face undue influence from political leaders, technical staff, and communities. Allegations of corruption and bribery are common in almost all local governments, especially in handling recruitment processes, although most of them are not formally reported and most times evidence is not provided.

The committee recommends the following:

- i) To roll out the e-recruitment system across all local governments to reduce physical interactions and corruption.
- ii) Anti-corruption agencies should strengthen reporting mechanisms and take action to ensure recruitment integrity.
- iii) The Inspector General of Government and other agencies should conclude investigations into irregularities swiftly to maintain service delivery efficiency.

5. Operational challenges

Mr Speaker, many District and City Service Commissions face operational challenges such as understaffed secretariats, lack of appropriate office space, and inadequate equipment; things like computers, storage cabinets and so on. Most local governments lack essential staff and office resources, forcing them to borrow from

technical officers, which in turn compromises confidentiality and independence of the commission.

Recommendation

The Ministry of Public Service and the Ministry of Local Government should ensure that the service commissions have sufficient staff, office space, furniture, and equipment to ensure their functionality.

6. Lack of training and induction

Mr Speaker, just to give you a summary, we found out that most of the Service Commission officers in the districts and cities did not receive training. And we recommend that the Ministry of Public Service and Public Service Commission should ensure that all the Commission members are inducted immediately after assuming office and receive continuous training to effectively execute their mandates.

On Term of Reference No.2: Level of effectiveness of the Service Commission in handling appointments, promotion, and disciplinary actions

Local governments generally reported appointments, promotion, and disciplinary actions are handled promptly and in accordance with the law. Mechanisms to ensure fairness and transparency, such as merit-based recruitment, public advertisement, and feedback channels like suggestion boxes, are in place. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms varies. There is lack of effective formal mechanisms to address citizens' concerns related to the recruitment processes.

Complaints committees are often non-functional in many of these entities, and the entities lack proper filing, archiving, and record-keeping systems.

Recommendations

- i) Accounting officers should ensure that the complaint committees are duly constituted

and functional and empowered to address the concerns of the people in their areas of jurisdiction.

- ii) The entities should strictly follow or continue to strictly follow the guidelines on recruitment to ensure transparency and open feedback channels.

On Term of Reference No. 3: Recruitment Processes and Staffing Gaps

3(i) Recruitment

The committee noted that while local governments claimed that recruitment, promotion, and disciplinary processes were transparent and followed public service guidelines, many issues of corruption, favouritism, and nepotism were reported.

Allegations were made during public interactions, such as a radio show on Voice of Lango, where a caller accused the Commission members of soliciting bribes like Shs 5 million to guarantee jobs. The Service Commission chairpersons denied the allegations, attributing such allegations to disgruntled applicants who did not qualify for the position.

However, the committee found scenarios pointing to nepotism and favouritism, where children or relatives of Commission chairpersons, Commission members, and staff were appointed despite having less or no years of experience compared to other applicants and where other applicants who were qualified candidates were side-lined.

Mr Speaker, there were also scenarios where candidates who failed aptitude tests and interviews were nonetheless appointed and we found this in Gulu District, where several people who failed interviews were appointed, instead of those who passed.

They also raised concerns about the fairness of the process. On the other hand, the committee discovered that non local candidates or people who do not come from specific areas where the interviews are carried out, were being discriminated against.

Mr Speaker, the committee also noted cases where jobs that should have been internally advertised were advertised externally, neglecting the existing experienced staff. Some job adverts even failed to list job experience or some important qualifications as a requirement for job positions, even at senior level. In some cases, key documents like independent score sheets were missing from their recruitment files during the committee's interview.

Mr Speaker, a general concern was noted, that local governments deliberately keep positions vacant and ring-fenced for years until their preferred candidates meet the qualifications. The committee recommends the following;

- (i) The Minister of Public Service should ensure that members of the District and City Service Commission implicated in corruption tendencies and investigation by anti-corruption agencies should step aside until such investigations are concluded to preserve the integrity of the Commission and to prevent inter-meddling in evidence.
- (ii) The police Criminal Investigations Directorate (CIDs), in liaison with the Public Service Commission, should investigate the appointments that have been highlighted in the report with a view to possible prosecution.
- (iii) The committee acknowledges that being a child or a relative of a civil servant or politician should not be a barrier to employment. However, all applicants should have equal employment opportunities based on merit.
- (iv) The investigation by the Inspectorate of General Government (IGG) and other anti-corruption agencies should be concluded and pending reports should be released.

Mr Speaker, we realised that in many districts, there are several investigations that have

taken so long. Therefore, all the processes get affected.

Mr Speaker, on 3(2) factors affecting staffing in the district and cities. The committee noted the following. Failure to attract staffing in key positions. There were difficulties in filling critical roles like the district health officers and district engineers due to low wages and high qualification requirements.

For example, districts like Kole and Bukwo struggled to retain staff in hard-to-reach areas. The committee recommends the following:

- i. The Ministry of Public Service working with professional bodies should review the requirements for recruitment of critical positions such as district engineers, with a view to addressing the challenge of failure to attract registered engineers at the local government level.

This will address the gap where currently, there are only 25 substantially appointed district engineers across the entire country. The rest are all acting. There should be special consideration for hard-to-reach areas.

On long-acting periods and delayed promotions, Mr Speaker, staff often remain in acting positions and on assignment beyond the period mandated under the law and also face delays in the promotion. There are local governments that have not had substantive staff for many years and local governments have no heads of department.

Mr Speaker, we discovered that in Arua District there is only one head of department, substantially appointed, and is due for retirement next month. The rest have been acting.

The committee recommends that local governments should, subject to the relevant laws and guidelines, enable accelerated promotion for qualified and deserving staff, especially those that have been in acting capacity and assignment for long.

On junior staff in an acting position, the committee discovered in local government that junior staff are often appointed to high-level positions due to favouritism and political interference, despite the presence of qualified senior staff. This practice has been observed in districts such as Gulu, Pader and Nwoya, and is detrimental to staff morals and career development. These junior staff make blatant errors while acting in such positions because they lack the requisite expertise for such offices.

Mr Speaker, the committee recommends that assignments and acting duties should be based on seniority, experience and merit.

The impact of low pay and discriminatory -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Chairperson, I have a suggestion. This is a critical report that is cross-cutting to the whole country. I would like to propose that since you have captured this part, we take it from there, and then we discuss it when we resume Parliament.

I wouldn't want to rush this - and then we will give Members a chance to read the report in full. Once we resume, - the issue of Public Service Commissions across the country is a very big issue. Now, let us save time, and we go to issues of Northern Uganda only. Okay, two minutes, then we conclude.

MR MAPENDUZI: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your guidance. In just two minutes, when you look at the issue of the impact of discriminatory payment, we have provided details, but allow me to mention this, and in the interest of time, because the rest are with the Members and you can look through.

Mr Speaker, I would like to note that the committee also interacted with pensioners in Northern Uganda, and if you will permit, we have the representatives of the pensioners who have been here from day one, because they have been following up on a number of the issues they raised.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Read that part.

MR MAPENDUZI: Mr Speaker, on effectiveness in ensuring pensioners' access to payroll and payment of arrears. Pension management is problematic, with delays in accessing the pension payroll due to data migration issues and other bureaucratic hurdles. Some local governments reported that the transition to the human capital management system delayed pension payments. There were pension arrears reported in this region but these were largely attributed to errors in pensioners' bio-data and budget cuts.

The extension of pensions is not being done effectively and despite review of salaries, pensions are not being reviewed to match the new salaries.

We recommend the following;

- (i) The Minister of Public Service should reform the pension system to ensure timely pension payments, execute the indexation of pensions as per the law required, and adjust pension amounts in line with salary increments for public servants.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, the committee has done a comprehensive report and highlighted with examples from the requisite local government all areas of concern in that report with the corresponding recommendations.

The committee calls upon the Government to address the critical issues raised in this report and ensure the smooth operation of all local governments to restore the confidence of the citizens in service delivery and the recruitment processes in the country.

Mr Speaker, I am not afraid to say on behalf of the committee that the citizens of this country, especially in the districts we covered have lost confidence in the recruitment processes and the Government needs to take this seriously.

Finally, Mr Speaker, if you will find it prudent, through you, I would like to recognise the presence of Mr Nyego Paulinos, who is aiding

the team of pensioners here, together with Mr Ogal Oluedo, Mr Menya, all the way from Kampala.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: They can stand up for recognition.

MR MAPENDUZI: There are quite a number of them. You will forgive me; I will not be able to mention all their names. Mr Speaker, I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. When debating in Kampala, you can, - they can come back and witness the debate. Honourable colleagues, this is a very salient issue. I have seen Hon. Paska Menya having a list she wanted to lay on the Table of how people have not received their gratuity and, you know-

The rules cannot allow that, that would require me to open the debate. So, we shall handle that when we resume. Honourable colleagues, I suspend the House for 20 minutes maximum, otherwise I would have done 15 - there are colleagues who have not moved at all - so that we can have a quick lunch and come back 20 minutes later. We shall be remaining with only one hour to finish the rest.

(The House was suspended at 1.54 p.m.)

(On resumption at 2.16 p.m., the Deputy Speaker presiding_)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, we are resuming. Next item.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
DEFENCE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS
ON THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE
DISTRICTS OF MOROTO, KAABONG
AND ABIM

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON: Chairperson, Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs? Let us go to the next one.

MOTION FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH ON THE OVERSIGHT VISIT
TO ASSESS THE STATUS OF HEALTH
SERVICES IN THE NORTHERN REGION

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON: Chairperson, Committee on Health? You know what we have been doing; following the same trend.

2.18

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON HEALTH (Dr Joseph Ruyonga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am Dr Joseph Ruyonga, the Chairperson of the Committee on Health of Parliament. According to your directive, Mr Speaker, we did the oversight and wrote a report.

Mr Speaker, I request you to allow my deputy, Dr Opio Samuel Acuti, to present the report. He participated in the oversight visit and the most important thing is that he comes from the region. It would be unfair if I were to present when the host Member of Parliament is here. I would like you to grant that permission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, you have wasted my time. I wish you had done it directly. You are now remaining with 10 minutes because you are eating your own time.

2.19

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON HEALTH (Dr Samuel Opio): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I proceed to read out the report, I hereby lay the minutes of the Committee on Health meeting for this report. This report covers the different subregions, and because of time constraints, I am going to pick some of the key issues in each of the subregions.

Under the introduction, I will not go through the details, but there is a table that shows the summary of the districts within the different subregions.

The scope and objectives of our oversight are captured in the report, which looked at the distribution of health facilities, the health

service infrastructure, the human resources, availabilities of medicine and supplies, and the diagnostics.

Methodology

I will not go through the details, but we met with the regional referral hospitals that gave us a representative report of the different districts. We also engaged the District Health Officers (DHOs) to give us reports of the key issues within their districts. In addition, we sampled several general hospitals, health centres IV and health centres III.

Findings

I will begin with the Acholi Subregion, which we had an overview on table three of the health facilities; the 214 health facilities. However, within the subregion, we also got information on the different causes of morbidity; that is the most common diseases, and also mortality. Key to note is malaria, where they registered 1.4 million cases in the last financial year.

Secondly, in terms of mortality, malaria is also the leading cause of mortality, followed by several conditions that affect neonates, anaemia, neonatal conditions, and neonatal sepsis.

Nodding disease syndrome

The committee was informed that where there were no new cases of nodding disease syndrome reported in the Acholi Subregion, the current patients affected by the syndrome are in dire need of nutritional, and psychosocial care and rehabilitation.

Sickle cell disease

The committee also noted that sickle cell disease presents a big burden to the population with challenges of accessing sickle cell testing and medication.

In the specific findings in terms of:

1) Distribution of health facilities

Acholi Subregion has a population of 2,047,118, and it has one regional referral hospital, Gulu, located in Gulu City, two general hospitals; Anaka General Hospital and Kitgum General Hospitals, are Government and two private not-for-profits, which are Lacor Hospital and Kalongo Hospital.

The ministry guidelines on designation for upgrading health facilities require that for every population of 500,000, there should be a general hospital and it also provides for every 100,000, there should be a health centre IV. We noted that there are eight health centres IV in the subregion, serving 19 constituencies and there are several subcounties without a health centre III, contrary to the ministry guidelines where every subcounty must have a health centre III. For example, Amuru District only had four subcounties.

Recommendations

- i. The Ministry of Health should plan and add more general hospitals in the Acholi Subregion;
- ii. They should also have an additional health centre IV to cover the remaining areas; and
- iii. They should ensure that those subcounties that need to have health centre III are also provided.

2) Infrastructure and utilities

Whereas a number of infrastructure had been constructed within the subregion, there were several facilities with old dilapidated structures, incomplete structures, stalled projects, and inadequate scarce, among others. Gulu Regional Referral Hospital, for instance, had a project of 54 units of staff accommodation that started 10 years ago and is still incomplete with stalled works due to the non-release of funds for the previous three financial years. They require Shs 3 billion to complete this project, whose total cost was Shs 6.8 billion at the time it began in 2014.

On health centres IV, we visited Awach Health Centre IV and noted that they do not have enough infrastructure. However, we were informed that a supplementary budget amounting to Shs 400 million, which was released in 2023/2024 for remodelling the general ward, was reportedly, as informed to us, diverted by the Ministry of Health after the procurement process had reached the Solicitor General's office, and since then all works have stalled.

We also noted that there are some of the health centres III that have been upgraded, but do not have an outpatient department section to make them fully functional.

We also visited the Uganda Cancer Institute, which has a regional branch located in Gulu, and we were informed that they need 15 acres for land expansion and staff accommodation. However, the in-charge informed the committee that there is government land, which was identified and titled under Omoro District Local Government, yet it currently falls under Gulu City. Therefore, the institute is facing challenges in acquiring this additional land for expansion.

Recommendations

- i) The Government to appropriate funds to the tune of Shs 3 billion to complete the 54 staffing units at Gulu Regional Referral Hospital that has taken over 10 years to complete.
- ii) The Government appropriates funds for completion of the maternity units that have stalled in the different health facilities.
- iii) In addition, we recommend an upgrade of health centres to make them fully operational and the construction of OPDs in health centres III where they are lacking.
- iv) The Shs 400 million supplementary budget for Financial Year 2023/2024 for remodelling of the general ward at Awach Health Centre IV that was diverted should be reinstated.

We also noted that one of the theatres had been damaged and destroyed due to a fire. We, therefore, also recommend that the Government should further institute fire prevention measures across all health facilities and should also engage the Uganda Cancer Institute, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development to address the issue of additional land for the institute.

In regard to the status of human resource, Mr Speaker –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I do not have that time. You should have read the summary report, which has an aerial view of the findings and then we will discuss the report later.

DR OPIO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will leave out the human resource. The general findings are that there are staffing shortages across all the different health facilities and also in the region.

The recommendations also cut across for Government to increase wage to address the staffing gaps.

On availability of medicine, there was a general issue or concern on rampant theft of drugs, which affected availability, drug stock-out and also medicine for sickle cell disease.

The recommendations are also general, which will cut across the different entities and sub-regions. Specifically, they are to ensure that National Medical Stores (NMS) adheres to delivery schedules and fulfilling those outstanding deliveries. Notably, National Medical Stores should have a specialised budget for sickle cell disease.

Our recommendation is that Nakasero Blood Bank should address the issue of shortage of blood supply and this is also a challenge that we noted with the several other subregions that we went to.

On the status of diagnostic services, there were concerns in relation to functionality of different machines, such as the x-ray machines and the ultrasound machines. In Gulu Regional Referral Hospital, we found that they were non-functional and in Kitgum, one of the ultrasound machines was also not functional.

Very key to note was that the facility does not have a sickle cell electrophoresis testing machine for confirmatory testing. As a result, patients have to have their samples sent to National Public Health Laboratory in Kampala, which takes two weeks and that leaves a long turnaround time for treatment.

Our recommendation, therefore, is that there should be arrangements to ensure that they are equipped with these machines.

On West Nile sub-region, I will go directly into some of the key specific findings. The distribution of health facilities, still the guidelines indicate that for every 500,000, there should at least be a general hospital. They have a population of 4,283,000 and, therefore, there is still a gap in general hospitals. There is also still a gap in health centre IIIs that are required.

On the status of infrastructure and utilities in the region, again there were similar observations of old and dilapidated infrastructure but notably was Arua Regional Referral Hospital, which had a seven-storied, 21-unit staff housing project that has been under construction since 2018 and 2019.

This has stalled and it is at 85 per cent it has not been completed due to challenges of funding. We also noted that Arua Regional Referral Hospital does not have a mortuary and utilises the one at Nebbi General Hospital.

Our recommendations are again in increasing and provision of budgets to expedite the process of completion of stalled and on-going projects.

As regards the diagnostics and medical equipment, notably, was in Nebbi General

Hospital where the X-ray machine, which only requires Shs 1.2 million to repair, has been down for the last one year.

The reason was that the hospital indicated that the health guidelines require that the maintenance should be done by a service provider from the Ministry of Health.

That has led to a delay in operationalising or repair of the old x-ray machine at Nebbi General Hospital; together with a number of other x-ray machines and orthopaedic equipment that was not available at Arua Regional Referral Hospital, or not fully functional.

Human resource is a general challenge at 40 per cent and the same recommendations apply. As regards to availability, supply and utilisation of medicine and supplies, we noted the same observations of stock-outs.

The recommendations are for National Medical Stores to ensure that they commit to the timelines.

To address the issues of theft of medicine, which was strongly highlighted, the ministry should expedite the digitalisation of medicine supplies and utilisation in order to mitigate theft and diversion.

Notably, West Nile Region has a strong and large refugee population and therefore, there is need for strong surveillance systems, including screening of travellers for symptoms of communicable diseases and other related illness.

I will now go to the third subregion, which is Lango Subregion. In the overview, again, malaria is noted as one of the key causes of mortality and morbidity.

In addition, there has been a big burden of epilepsy. There is also still a burden of nodding disease syndrome, majorly in the areas that border Acholi, such as Lira, Oyam and Kole districts. They also have a big burden of sickle cell disease, with challenges of accessing sickle cell testing and medication.

In regard to distribution of health facilities, Lango subregion has only one general hospital, despite having a population of 2.567 million, which necessitates at least an additional four general hospitals to cover that gap.

On the status of infrastructure within the region, we noted that Lira Regional Referral Hospital was constructed in 1928 and is limited in terms of space.

We actually found a tent being used as a ward for post-natal, holding mothers who had just given birth in one or two days. It was in very poor state in terms of ventilation, air circulation and cleanliness.

We also noted that Apac General Hospital, which was constructed in 1968, has never had any renovations done since. We found several structures that were in a significant dilapidated state.

Our recommendations are:

- i) Ensuring that Lira Regional Referral Hospital gets alternative space for accommodating the pregnant mothers or mothers that have just delivered to avoid the challenges that we observed and appropriating more funds for renovation of Apac General Hospital.

Another key finding is that there are health centres III and health centres IV that have never got any support for infrastructure funding. These need to be considered, plus having a standard design and size for the drug stores. Each year we have been increasing the budget for medicine but have not increased the budget for the storage areas.

The third aspect on the human resource is as generally observed, but notably was a shortage of staff within the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

Specifically, we found that, for example, in Apac General Hospital, x-ray department, the waiting time was as long as five hours because there was only one radiographer to operate the two x-ray machines that were available.

We also noticed that in Lira Regional Referral Hospital, the radiographer who was assigned to be on duty on that day had not turned up and for two to three days, patients had not had scanning services; CT scan, x-ray and ultrasound scan services provided.

In regard to the availability of medicine, we observed that some of the facilities like Lira Regional Referral Hospital was well stocked together with the health centre IIIs that we visited.

However, the general hospital was in a significant shortage of drugs. We actually found that only 40 patients had turned up on that day, yet the health centre III that we had gone to had about 80 patients.

Notable was the issue of artificial stock-outs, where in Lira Regional Referral Hospital we found unlabelled medicine in the wards but when we went to the drug store, we found the same medicine labelled, "Government of Uganda." This means that the medicine was available but the patients still had to go and purchase it despite the same being within the facility.

Critical in our recommendations is that the Ministry of Health should expedite the rollout of digitisation of medicine supplies and linkage to National Medical Stores in order to mitigate the artificial stock-outs.

As regards the diagnostic services, we noted that the ICU had four beds only, yet they had a capacity of 10. So, six were not installed, and the reason was because they had inadequate human resource and space. In addition, for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, which had a capacity of 20, they were receiving up to 100 neonates within it.

We also noted that the CT scan charge rates differed from those provided by the Ministry of Health, where the facility was charging Shs 200,000 as the upper limit, yet the ministry had directed for a maximum of Shs 150,000.

In our recommendations, the key one is that due to the huge burden of sickle cell disease, Lira Regional Referral Hospital needs to be equipped with an electrophoresis sickle cell testing machine to avoid the transport – or having the samples sent to Kampala for testing.

Karamoja subregion

We noted that in terms of the burden of disease – there were also cases of mortality – there was a high malaria burden and, in addition, we also noticed that there were high cases of liver cirrhosis. This was mainly attributed to two factors: Hepatitis B infection; and alcoholism – as reported to us.

On the specific findings on distribution of health facilities, Karamoja has a population of 1.4 million with three general hospitals that are Government's, two private not-for-profit facilities and one private for-profit facility.

Notably, we were informed that one of the private not-for-profit facilities, Matany Hospital in Napak district, was facing financial constraints due to an impending total withdrawal of funding from the Italian funders. We have recommended that the Government should consider taking over Matany Hospital as a Government facility, plus planning for other health centres IV and III.

The status of infrastructure

Mr Speaker, this is one of the areas where there were big challenges in Karamoja subregion. We noted several buildings within Moroto Regional Referral Hospital that were dilapidated, having been constructed in 1948. Also, they did not have a functional mortuary and, therefore, have to rely on Mbale and Soroti regional referral hospitals.

They, also, did not have a functional ICU despite having the equipment, because they did not have the space.

In addition, they had the highest rate of caesarean section. What is acceptable is that for every 100 mothers that come, a maximum

of 15 should undergo a caesarean section for delivery. However, the figures were as high as 45 per cent, and this was attributed to non-functionality of some of the theatres in the health centres IV.

We also noted that one of the big constraints in terms of infrastructure development is because they were not among the major beneficiaries of Uganda Government Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers (UgIFT) programme because they had the Karamoja Infrastructure Development Plan, which delayed to commence and, as a result, many of the health centres II have not been upgraded to the level of health centres III.

We also noted that Abim Hospital and Kotido General Hospital had not received the required funds for renovation. For example, Abim, since 1968, has never had any renovation. We also found out that the facility did not have any water supply available.

So, we recommend the provision of the necessary funds. Notably, Abim Hospital did not have three-phase power, which was critical for running some of the equipment that they have within the lab and, also, in the imaging.

Status of human resource

On the status of human resource – these are the same observations that we made across the subregion. However, notable was that there were staff working in critical areas, majorly as volunteers without substantive appointment.

As regards the status of diagnostic services, we noted that the digital X-ray in Abim Hospital has not been functional for the last seven years. This is a new digital X-ray machine, but because of lack of three-phase power, it has never been installed.

The ICU is also not functional despite having 10 ICU beds that were delivered there two years ago. Therefore, there is need for intervention on the diagnostic services.

As regards availability and utilisation of medicines and supplies, we noted that,

in Karamoja, they did not have the same challenges of drug shortages observed in the other subregions. However, they had challenges in regard to availability of blood. They also had challenges on issues to do with malnutrition within the subregion.

Therefore, as I conclude, our recommendation is for Nakasero Blood Bank to work with the regional referral hospital to mitigate the blood shortages. Also, National Medical Stores should make adequate provisions for malnutrition therapies for the health facilities in the subregion. We noticed that most of the support they get is from the development partners, but support for therapeutic foods or medicinal foods from National Medical Stores is limited.

It is also very important for the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries to scale up interventions for food security in the region.

In conclusion, the committee notes that the Government policy on health emphasises access to high quality healthcare by all Ugandans as a means of guaranteeing their contribution to the country's socio-economic transformation in line with the Government's commitment to preventive healthcare as opposed to curative services, which are costly. More emphasis should be on ensuring equitable access to well-equipped health facilities and trained and motivated health workers, in addition to improvement in the healthcare service delivery systems. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, committee chairperson. (*Members rose*) Let us have Hon. Wokorach, Hon. Paska Menya, Hon. Stella and Hon. Amos. I am trying to pick those who have not spoken. We will also have Hon. Linda, Hon. Taban, Dr Ayume, Hon. Moses Ogwal and, then, I come to the Opposition.

2.43

MR SIMON WOKORACH (NRM, Aswa County, Gulu): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I would like to join and identify

myself with the committee's report, which was well presented by my senior brother, Hon. Dr Opio.

Mr Speaker, sometimes you just ask yourself questions. An appropriation is done, specifically to execute a duty towards service delivery - like what happened to Awach Health Centre IV. Money was allocated - Shs 400 million - but, all of a sudden, the money disappears, yet the work has already begun. Then, the work stalls and nobody can give a clear explanation, either to the people on the ground or to the district local government. You wonder why.

Number two, Mr Speaker, looking at the Government policy of having a health centre III in all the sub-counties that we have - I want to plead with the committee and the whole House. In my own district of Gulu, up to now, you find that Paibona, Pukony, Owalo and Bungatira subcounties are still lacking health centres III, giving a big load to the health centre IV, which is serving a population of 135,000 people.

If the Government wants to walk the talk, let us implement the policy the way it is on paper and the way it is in the country.

Mr Speaker, up to now, in Awach Health Centre IV, when a patient dies, you need to come up to Gulu City to access the mortuary at Gulu Referral Hospital or you beg and access the mortuary at the UPDF 4th Division Barracks.

I would like to plead, again, that that should be taken into account so that our population gets the services down and near where they are. I beg to humbly submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Paska Menya?

2.45

MS PASKA MENYA (Independent, Woman Representative, Pader): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the chairperson of the committee for the elaborate report.

Mr Speaker, the President pledged to elevate Pajule Health Centre IV to a district hospital.

We believe that the pledges of the President take precedence because the President gives pledges aware that there are some criteria or procedures it follows for something to be given, like a health centre, to be upgraded to a district hospital. So, why can't the Government take into consideration Pajule Health Centre IV to be upgraded as the President pledged?

Secondly, Pajule Health Centre IV is currently the biggest health centre we have in Pader District. We have many mothers who deliver in Pajule Health Centre IV yet it is incapacitated for deliveries. We do not have enough delivery wards for the mothers that deliver from there. The ministry pledged to fully facilitate the health centre IV to have every facility required to the standard of health centres IV. To date, we do not have that.

Concerning the issue of Nodding Disease Syndrome, with your wisdom, Mr Speaker, last time, you recommended in Parliament that the children suffering from Nodding Disease Syndrome be given priority in the budget. Up to now, we have not realised anything allocated to these children who are battling with nodding disease. Let the Government take serious intervention with affirmative action for these children because they are there and are still living with us in that condition.

Lastly, Awere Health Centre III was upgraded to a health centre IV. However, as I speak, Awere Health Centre IV has not yet received drugs to the level of a health centre IV. Our plea to the ministry is to ensure that all the health centre IVs receive the recommended level of drug to the standard. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Stella Atyang –

2.48

MS STELLA ATYANG (NRM, Woman Representative, Moroto): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity. I join my colleagues to thank the committee for having carried out the field activity and coming up with a report that has identified challenges and given recommendations on how to solve

the problems regarding the sector of health in Northern Karamoja.

I disagree with the report on the aspect that states that Karamoja does not face drug shortages. Karamoja equally faces drug stocks-out. There are cases whereby you go to the referral hospital and you are told to buy gloves, bandages, and all the drugs to treat a patient. That states that Karamoja also faces drug shortages. These drug shortages are mostly caused by the noncompliance of the National Medical Stores to deliver drugs to the health facilities as required by the policy.

Secondly, in the Financial Year 2022/2023, the Ministry of Health gave Moroto Regional Referral Hospital an Oxygen Plant and contracted the UPDF Engineering Brigade to do the construction of the plant. The plant was meant to produce 100 cylinders of oxygen in 24 hours to facilitate all the health centres in the region.

The construction was supposed to take one year. After the UPDF Engineering Brigade finished the construction, the oxygen plant equipment was brought. However, it was realised later that some of the oxygen plant equipment would not fit the structure that was already in place, leaving some of the equipment outside, exposed to harsh weather conditions. To date, that has not been rectified. Yet, the referral hospital reported that to the ministry.

I request that the ministry quickly intervenes to make sure that the design of the structure is rectified such that the equipment that was meant to get in, gets in, in order for the plant to start functioning to serve the Karimojongs. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Dr Taban –

2.51

MS SHARIFAH TABAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Koboko): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I would like to support the motion and I thank the committee for this report. In Koboko District where I

come from, we do not have a district hospital. Our current hospital is under construction. The delay in payments to the contractors has stalled the work. Therefore, the process is very slow and the Shs 500 million comes once in a while. Therefore, we need the Government to look into this.

Secondly, West Nile does not have a regional mortuary. Our mortuary has a capacity of five people. I do not know how as West Nile Subregion, can be able to be assisted to increase the capacity of the mortuary so that we can keep our dead people longer for those who are willing to do so.

Lastly, there is understaffing in our hospitals, generally in the subregion. The state in which our people are handled is very sickening. If only the Government can deploy our interns so that we from West Nile can benefit from extra doctors, we could use this opportunity. I take the information.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Linda Irene.

2.53

MS LINDA AUMA (Independent, Woman Representative, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am Linda Agnes -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry and this is the second time I am doing it.

MS LINDA AUMA: No, I do understand. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to join my colleagues in appreciating the Committee on Health for the elaborate report on the status of our health facilities in Northern Uganda.

I would like to be specific to my district of Lira. Lira District, since this political term started has never officially received any infrastructural development fund for health in Lira District.

Mr Speaker, we have written several letters requesting the district leadership, but nothing was given to us. It was unfortunate that in the last financial year, a fund worth Shs 4 billion came abruptly to the district account and a

letter was written immediately to transfer it to another district. That is when the LC V Chairperson, the CAO and I battled it out and managed to get one health facility that is under construction. However, pushing for that caused us more problems.

Right now, we have a health facility called Onywako Health Centre II at the border of the Government Chief Whip's constituency and my constituency. It is too crowded for the capacity of the health facility to handle the patients. We have tried to lobby under UgIFT which was under the ministry to no avail.

Mr Speaker, in Erute North at Aromo Health Centre IV, the maternity ward is in a very bad state. The ceiling board collapsed on a mother during delivery. I even pleaded for renovation but nothing was granted.

Luckily enough, we had to try to use some Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) to try to renovate. This Sunday, I will go to a health facility called Abala. Women are going with a small torch for delivery but we have tried our best.

My humble prayers are:

1. The Ministry of Health should try to balance their services.
2. The Ministry of Health should liaise with the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to provide electricity in these health facilities because now the burden is on us. I have to take solar panels with its installation to a health facility to protect my women.
3. Mr Speaker, the President came to Lango and we requested him because of our population and he agreed to upgrade five health centres IVs to a district hospital where Ogur Health Centre IV was among. A follow-up letter by the district leadership together with us have resulted to nothing. So, my humble request is that these health facilities should be put as an amendment in the report so that it is adopted as a whole. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Amos Okot

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2.57

MR AMOS OKOT (NRM, Agago North County, Agago): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand to support most of the recommendations that they have indicated in the report of the committee. Allow me to thank the village health team. Many of them are doing very wonderful work, especially during immunisation time.

In most cases, they do the work and sometimes they do not even receive the small allowances that are supposed to be given to them. I recommend that this Parliament passes a resolution so that the Ministry of Health does something great to these people. If anything, support them with good transport means.

Number two, the Government has come out with a policy of upgrading all the health centre IIs to health centre IIIs, which is good. However, in the north, many of our subcounties are big and when you look at a parish, it can even be the size of a subcounty. But you find that these health centre IIs before the policies were changed, they were in some parishes and others were not having health centre IIs.

I support the idea, but there are those remaining health centre IIs which have not yet been upgraded to health centre IIIs. For example, in Agago North County, I have Okwadoko, Paluti, Toromo, Kasasiro in Ominya Pacwa, Abilinino, Amyel and others that are supposed to be upgraded to health centre IIIs.

I request that the Ministry of Health rolls out these health centre IIs to health centre IIIs. On the other hand, subcounties like Kalongo Town Council is big to the level that can even accommodate a municipality. However, this is a place which does not even have a Government health centre and people in Kalongo town have to travel to a subcounty which is neighbouring them.

I even made a request on that, on 26 May 2022, I wrote a letter to the Ministry of Health. They received it but kept quiet. I wish they could

respond to a bigger town like Kalongo to give us a health centre III.

Finally, as I conclude, Agago North deserves a constituency health centre IV. This is the time the ministry should help us. It is in the report of the committee, that is supposed to be implemented. I also request this to be included: CT scan to Lacor Hospital and Kitgum Hospital to be upgraded to Kitgum Regional Referral Hospital.

As we speak, there are now two subregions in Acholi Subregion; Western Acholi and Eastern Acholi. I thank you for the opportunity, and may God bless the Parliament and Uganda.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I am seeing the trend we are taking, we are generally reporting what is happening in our constituencies. I also have gaps in my constituency. If I was to give each one of you to report about the gaps in your constituencies, we would not have a constructive debate coming out of this. We are just looking for solutions. Hon. Ababiku —

3.01

MS JESCA ABABIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I have listened carefully to this report, and I would like to narrow my observation on the issue of the equipment.

I thank the Government for the efforts put in, but even where we have equipment, many of them are not functional. So, I recommend the Government to ensure that those equipments in our districts are functional.

Two, is on the issue of maternity wards and delivery rooms. I have raised this matter in the House severally, but no action has been taken. My women are delivering in grass-thatched rooms. This time there is flooding again in Adjumani District, I am so worried that if action is not taken immediately, what happened in Kiteezi is going to happen in Adjumani over mothers and children who are in hospital.

Mr Speaker, I have a concern on the issue of staffing. Critical positions are not filled. We are complaining about unemployment and underemployment. I request that the ministry takes this seriously on why people are not interested in serving in our region, especially in West Nile and Madi subregions. They look at the distance and this makes it difficult for our people to get their expectations.

I pray that Adjumani District Hospital be expanded to accommodate the population of refugees. That hospital is intended to accommodate only the citizens with a small population. Our population has now increased and the refugees have added on ours and therefore, many people are suffering. They are not getting services because we are failing to accommodate them. Thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Margaret Aleper, I had seen her behind there. Then Hon. Baatom –

3.04

MS MARGARET ALEPER (NRM, Woman Representative, Kotido): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also want to thank the committee for this good report. They have rightly observed what is taking place in our health facilities and hospitals for that matter.

Kotido General Hospital is just by name from the time it was upgraded from health centre IV to a general hospital. It still has the structures that were meant for a health centre IV. Kotido General Hospital has a very large catchment area, simply because the district and the constituencies do not have a health centre IV. So, the whole population goes to this general hospital.

Kotido General Hospital does not have a theatre. Even the available mini theatre is not commissioned for performing surgeries in the hospital. Usually, what happens is that critically ill patients who need referral, are referred to Matany Hospital, which is 75 kilometres away from Kotido. They incur high transport costs, which also becomes a very big burden to the patients.

Kotido General Hospital also does not have X-ray machines. Therefore, people still have to go to Kaabong, Matany and Abim hospitals to access these X-ray services. You can see how pathetic the situation of Kotido General Hospital is.

Coming to human resources, Kotido General Hospital is being served by workers that have been seconded from health centre IIIs, and volunteers. This hospital needs very urgent attention from the Government.

Lack of blood is still a serious situation that we are faced with.

Mr Speaker, we have five subcounties that do not have any health facilities, not even a health centre II. You can imagine how big the burden is faced by these communities.

Therefore, there is need to consider Kotido General Hospital for funding, to take care of the infrastructure, recruitment of the personnel, and the many services that the people of Kotido would get from this health facility or general hospital for that matter. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Aeku, I am reserving it for the four regions. Otherwise, I have been seeing you.

3.07

MR BEN BAATOM (NRM, Dodoth West County, Karenga): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I thank the committee for the good report and the fact that they were able to go to Karamoja when other committees chose not to go to Karamoja. I would like to address my concern to the Karamoja Infrastructure Development Programme under the Italian loan.

First of all, Mr Speaker, I thank you. When we brought up our complaint about the signing of the memorandum for this loan, you supported us very well in making sure that this loan was signed. The committee reports about this loan, but they did not go in depth to look at the scope of work that this loan was supposed to address.

When the UGIFT programme came in 2017 to address the upgrading of health centre IIs to health centre IIIs, Karamoja was not considered because of this.

Now, what is happening is that after the signing of the contract, the scope of work has reduced. We expected the committee to probably look in depth at what the scope of the Italian loan is doing in upgrading the health centres in Karamoja. If you look at the gap, it is only 52 subcounties out of 150 plus that have health centres III.

Now, when you look at the work that this loan is targeting in these health centres II, it was supposed to be infrastructure that covers upgrading of the health centres II to health centres III. However, what is happening is that in some health facilities, they have advertised for a general ward, but there are no maternity wards and OPDs. In others, they have advertised OPDs, there are no maternity wards and there are no general wards. Therefore, the scope has been reduced.

Mr Speaker, I implore the committee to look into this in detail and come back with a report on the gaps that this loan was meant to address, and what it has not done.

Finally, in Karenga, we have a health centre IV. Karenga District borders South Sudan and we receive a lot of patients from South Sudan, but we do not have a general hospital. Even the subcounties in Kitgum District that border Karenga come to Karenga to receive health support.

We implore the Ministry of Health to look at upgrading Karenga Health Centre IV into a hospital. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Committee on Health, you are instructed to study the performance of that loan. And that is the problem when projects are delayed. We approved that loan in 2017. I was on the Committee on National Economy that approved it. Now the moment you delay, costs keep going up. Money loses value. Out of nothing, you find that you

have already lost around 50 per cent of the money. How do you fill that gap? Committee, please take on that matter and report back to the House within one month.

I had allowed Hon. Moses Ogwal and Dr Ayume. Honourable colleagues, I am receiving many chits from you, but none is advising me on where I can buy time. All of you are only asking me for an opportunity to speak. If you could direct me to a shop where I can get time so that I allow all of you to speak, then I would be –(Laughter)

3.11

MR GOLI OGWAL (NRM, Dokolo North County, Dokolo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would like to address myself to the report on areas which they have mentioned.

First, is the infrastructure area, which was missing. I would like to mention that in Dokolo, we have health centre IIIs which have been built, but they do not have electricity to run things which are required to run under a health centre III. I want to mention five of them which are; Amwoma Health Centre III, Atabu Health Centre III, Tetugo Health Centre III, Okwalanguwenor Abalang Health Centre III, and then Igar Health Centre III. These are beautiful, but without electricity to support what we require.

The second issue is about human resources. Last year we supported a camp that operated 170 people in Dokolo Health Centre IV. However, the problem now is that they cannot do any single major operation, and yet the facilities are there. The reason they gave me is that they do not have a surgeon to make the recommendation which is required. Therefore, I would request that we look at such human resources who are very key so that we handle.

Lastly, we also have a problem in our health centre IV. When our loved ones pass on, they are taken to Lira Mortuary Centre. I request that Dokolo Health Centre IV should at least have a mortuary. (Interjection) Hon. Okot is saying that it is a fridge. Do you want to give me information? Thank you.

3.14

DR CHARLES AYUME (NRM, Koboko Municipality, Koboko): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Good job to the chairperson and his team - the committee - for that report.

I would like to draw my attention to the issue of the ICU. Mr Speaker, you have seen how far Northern Uganda is from the Central, where most of the functional Intensive Care Units are. If you look at Moroto, Lira, Gulu and Arua regional referral hospitals, these are very far places and we all know what an ICU does.

What we have in place are not ICUs. The equipment is there, but we have high-dependency units. A few months ago, we lost a patient in Karamoja, and in my opinion, as a doctor, we should not have lost that lady. We had to transport her all the way from Moroto, Soroti, Mbale, and Jinja, regional hospitals, without functional ICUs until Mulago. She was still alive by God's grace, but she eventually passed on. Therefore, these are the things we need to be addressing ourselves to.

The other one is dialysis. The health committee two years ago set up dialysis in Mbarara, Mbale and Lira, and the plan was to eventually roll out, but I think because of funding this financial year, it was captured as an unfunded priority. As a matter of urgency, we need to have dialysis at regional level hospitals.

Adjumani General Hospital, like the woman MP said, is operating in a very dilapidated structure, and it needs urgent attention, at least the maternity unit.

Mr Speaker, as I conclude, I am happy that the Committee on Public Service will address the issues of recruitment, but some of these health centres IV, like Pajule, have medical officers who have not been formalised into service, and they want to leave. When you ask the district local government, there is local government politics involved.

Honourable members, we need to also discern the fact that part of the health system, the biggest bulk, is in the local government.

Therefore, recruitment is a function of the District Service Commission.

The contractor of the seven-story building in Gulu is being taken to court because of Shs 3 billion that has not been paid out by the Government. As a matter of urgency, can we please find this money for both Arua Regional Hospital and Gulu Regional Referral Hospitals, for their staff complexes. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Santa Okot, Dr Eunice Apio, and Hon. Margaret Lamwaka –

3.17

MS SANTA OKOT (PPP, Aruu North County, Pader): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

I join my colleagues to thank the committee for the good report. However, I would like the chairperson of the committee to include the following.

When I heard you read out the areas affected by the Nodding Disease Syndrome, you left the main area with the disease - that is the districts in East Acholi. These districts are; Kitgum, Lamwo, Pader, Omoro, and Gulu. Pader is the district with the highest number. We have over 5,000 children affected by the nodding disease. Pader District has about 10 subcounties affected by this disease. So, I request that you include them on your list.

Secondly, when the President visited Atanga Subcounty to assess the Nodding Disease Syndrome issue, he made promises. One, he said he was going to give iron sheets to all the families affected by Nodding Disease Syndrome. This was because some of the children, because of mental disturbance, kept on burning their parents' houses.

The other promise he made is that Atanga Health Centre III should be elevated to a Health Centre IV, to cater for the children suffering from Nodding Disease Syndrome. I know the policy is that every county should have one health centre IV, but this is going to be a special case.

We thank the President because he gave one ambulance in the name of these children.

Mr Speaker, sometime back in May, the Acholi Parliamentary Group moved around all the five districts, to do an assessment of these children affected by Nodding Disease. When we met the parents, they came out with the following requests:

- i. The parents want to know what made their children get Nodding Disease. This is because it affected them when they were in the camps, and after. The Ministry of Health has got the report, but they want to get it on the ground.
- ii. The parents requested that the two care centres, one in Omoro and another in Kitgum Tumango, which were constructed by a certain white lady in collaboration with the Government, should be revamped because they have collapsed. If they are opened, they can take their children there during the day so that they can do some economic activities.
- iii. The Government, through the Office of the Prime Minister, sends food to these children. However, they sometimes send food once every six months. Their request is that the Government pays them money quarterly, so that when the season for food is on, they buy and stock it instead of waiting for the five kilogrammes of posho, and 10 kilogrammes of beans. Those are the few issues I wanted to inform you about the children with Nodding Disease Syndrome. Maybe –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS SANTA OKOT: Information.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable, that is not how we use the microphone here. You do not pass it on. Dr Eunice Apio.

Honourable colleagues, I will just pick three more people from the northern region. I have received many chits. I am on the side of the

Opposition now. I have already finished. I am picking from each party. I have already picked UPC. Yes, honourable.

3.21

DR EUNICE APIO (UPC, Oyam County North, Oyam): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am grateful for being taken out of the *Katebe* by you, because I have been struggling to catch the eye of the presiding officer for the last three days. I will go ahead.

There are three things that I would like to highlight, Mr Speaker. The first is curative services abroad. Yesterday, the public heard from the presiding officer that the Minister of Health was going to leave abruptly to clear a patient for travel abroad. The whole night, I received a number of calls from people from my constituency, who have similar cases, and they were wondering if such a service - which some of them know can go up to half a trillion shillings in the country every year - can be open to the general public.

One of them has a four-month-old baby, Jasmine, from Oyam. Baby Jasmine was referred to India, by Mulago, for treatment. Like other cases that were earlier referred, Jasmine's parents are waiting in vain. They are waiting for their baby to die. I would like this case to be taken up and explained to the public. Is this funding that is available every year for curative services abroad open to ordinary Ugandans or not?

Two, we have an ailing health system in Oyam. We have sung about this for years, Mr Speaker. Oyam District has a population of more than 500,000 people, and one health centre IV, which we have begged the leaders to upgrade to a hospital. We need at least one general hospital, and another health centre IV, to serve the people who currently have to travel to Gulu and other districts, to access such services, which is really expensive.

We have other issues in the district. One, we have an inadequate Wage Bill amounting to about Shs 1.6 billion this year, and we hope that it is taken up, so that we have enough staff

across all of the health centres. We also have two subcounties without health centre IIIs, and we hope that this is taken care of expeditiously.

Finally, about 10 of the health centres in Oyam County North are currently not connected to the national electricity grid. As my honourable colleague from Dokolo North stated, this is affecting services across the board when it comes to access to health services.

I also appeal to the ministry directly, since they are here, that we have soaring numbers of maternal mortality in the district. I did not hear that in the report, and I would like the committee, if possible, to link some of these services and facilities they are talking about to actual practical statistics of performances, when it comes to health indicators. I would like that to be sorted out. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Margaret Lamwaka – Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), agree on one Member or I choose for you. For Democratic Party (DP), I will choose Hon. Okello.

3.26

MS MARGARET LAMWAKA (Independent, Chua East County, Kitgum): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank you for setting your eye on me so that I can at least say a word or two. Kitgum District has a general hospital which handles more than two or three districts. Referrals from Kaabong, Karenga, Lamwo districts and South Sudan always come to Kitgum District. We have been requesting, several times, for Kitgum District to be upgraded to a referral hospital, so that we are able to treat all the patients who come from these areas.

Kitgum Hospital, being a general hospital that was built in 1957, down the road, it does not have a cold room or a mortuary where we could keep the dead bodies or unknown people, who normally get accidents. In 2019, Shs 1.7 billion was projected for the cold room, but to date, as I speak, the technocrats from the ministry keep on coming to survey and they go back. I do not know when the cold room will be constructed.

Another issue affecting Kitgum District is the appointment of the staff. Well aware that some clinical officers upgraded to doctors and some doctors upgraded to masters and they are now consultants, the challenge that we are facing now, even when there is deployment of interns, is that Kitgum District is not receiving the interns, simply because there is nobody, according to them, who can supervise these interns.

My prayer is, why can't the Ministry of Public Service open up recruitment, especially for doctors? If we are thinking of the health and education of Uganda, we should think of recruiting doctors and making sure that our health centres and hospitals are equipped.

Finally, most of our subcounties do not have health centres III, as it had been alluded to by my colleagues. More so, we neighbour Lamwo District and Development Response to Displacement Impacts Projects (DRDIP), which has some infrastructure like secondary schools.

My prayer is, DRDIP should take up Kitgum District, one of the health centres or Kitgum Hospital and build at least a maternity or children's ward to help us contain those patients who normally come and lie on the ground without mattresses or a mat. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nelson Okello –

3.30

MR NELSON OKELLO (UPC, Maruzi North County, Apac): Thank you, Mr Speaker –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, please, I picked DP.

MR NELSON OKELLO: Thank you, but I am Nelson Okello. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, sorry, I meant Hon. Okello from DP. I had already picked a Member from UPC. UPC is everywhere;

you are even in DP. (*Laughter*) I am sorry, honourable.

3.31

MR GEOFFREY OKELLO (DP, Nwoya East County, Nwoya): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My name is Okello Geoffrey Charles. I am the Member of Parliament for Nwoya East County. Let me join my colleagues to thank the presenters and the committee for bringing us up to speed with health issues in Northern Uganda.

Issue number one that I thought they could have recommended would have been feedback from the ministry on policy matters that are under implementation. This includes the phasing out of all health centre IIs to upgrade them to health centre IIIs.

Two, there are specific health centre IIIs that were supposed to have been upgraded by now to health centre IVs, and we need feedback from the ministry, so that we do not debate the same thing again, without mentioning the one in my constituency.

The other general issue is also an ambulance for every constituency. This is a policy matter that should just be implemented and we only need feedback so that it spares us.

There is one general problem across Uganda, not just Northern Uganda; the mismatch between equipment and personnel. Just next to us here, the Government of Uganda has invested a lot of money in establishing a cancer treatment centre for Northern Uganda here in Gulu. The information we have is that the equipment that is here is adequate to serve Northern Uganda, but the personnel are missing. The ministry needs to assure us that they are focusing on trying to harmonise between equipment and personnel.

There are several health centres that are lacking electricity in order to do so much. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should work with the Ministry of Health and we have it on record of Parliament and the Government, so that we do not spend a lot of time.

Finally, in my constituency, there is a problem of coded health centres that should be receiving drugs but they do not receive them. Why are they coded? Can we have a policy paper on that from the minister responsible? Thank you very much. Welcome to Northern Uganda.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I can see this is a very critical item, which I think would be unfair to conclude without giving real adequate time. My thinking is that we could adopt the report for now, then I require the minister to bring a comprehensive response in two weeks. Then, we reopen the debate based on the comprehensive responses. I think it could be – no, honourable, I know the tricks of shortcuts. There is a specific issue for Northern Uganda that I want to give space now.

3.34

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to be on record that yesterday, the Minister of Health, represented by the Minister of State in charge of primary health care, Hon. Margaret Muhanga, was here and was meant to be here today. However, because of an urgent call to Kampala, she was permitted by the Speaker and the Government Chief Whip delegated me, together with Dr Omona - me being the emeritus - to respond, where possible, to matters raised pertaining to health and allow the minister to go and handle issues in Kampala.

Mr Speaker, indeed yesterday there were issues raised on health and I responded to them –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, please –

DR MORIKU: I just want to tell those who were –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, when I say comprehensive, it means I need a substantive Minister for Health. But when I say respond, any minister can represent, so that we carry on the debate.

DR MORIKU: Mr Speaker, I was saying that the issues of yesterday could also be combined with today's, so that it is comprehensively responded to by the sector minister. And with your guidance, the minister will bring a comprehensive report in regard to that. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I am trying to avoid a situation as if discussing issues of northern Uganda is ending today. No, we have just started. So, on the 17th, we shall start with this one.

We have an option of either suspending the debate and resume on the 17th of September 2024, or we adopt the report and the minister gives a comprehensive response, then we discuss from an informed point of view. Hon. Mushemeza –

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Since I came, this is my first time to speak and I am rising on a point of procedure.

Since we came, we have been identifying what we want to be done, but nobody has raised the issue of income, where the money is going to come from.

For example, we could have a commitment from the Government whether they will bring a supplementary budget and well knowing that that supplementary budget will also make some other areas, which were appropriated, to be suppressed because there is scarcity of resources.

Are we proceeding very well to continue bringing in the shopping lists without addressing the issue of income? Where will the money for all these things we are talking about come from?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Mushemeza. This is exactly in line with the issue, which the President alluded to yesterday. Honourable colleagues present their issues and when the Government comes with a budget, we shall see how best we shall handle. The debate

is suspended on this matter, we shall resume on 17th September, 2024.

Honourable colleagues, there is an urgent matter, which I felt that since we are in Northern Uganda, we could at least come out after handling it. Hon. Anthony Akol brought the issue to do with the National Customary Land Registry. I think it is an issue we can handle here. So, let us allow that motion.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION
OF PARLIAMENT URGING THE
GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH A
NATIONAL CUSTOMARY LAND
REGISTRY

3.39

MR ANTHONY AKOL (FDC, Kilak North County, Amuru): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We and the people of Northern Uganda were worried about this particular motion.

The motion for a resolution of Parliament urging Government to establish a national customary land registry. We move under Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

“WHEREAS Article 237 (3) of the Constitution provides that land ownership in Uganda shall be under the customary, freehold, mailo and leasehold tenure systems;

AND WHEREAS the Land Act, CAP. 236, describes customary land tenure as a system of land tenure regulated by the customary rules which are limited in their operation to the particular description or class of persons whose incidence includes applicability to a specific area of land and a specific description or class of persons and recognises communal ownership and use of land, among others;

AWARE that Section 4 of the Land Act, CAP. 236 provides for the certificate of customary ownership of land, which according to Section 7 of the same Act, is issued by a recorder upon approval by the District Land Board;

FURTHER AWARE that under Section 69 (2) of the Land Act, CAP. 236, the recorder

is the custodian of the records of customary ownership of land and is required to deposit a copy of Certificate of Customary Ownership of Land with the District Land Board;

NOTING that according to Section 69(3) of the Land Act, CAP. 236, a recorder is a Subcounty Chief in the case of a rural area, a Town Clerk, in a case of a gazetted urban area or an Assistant Town Clerk in the case of a division of a city;

FURTHER noting that the mailo, freehold, and leasehold land tenure system have a national land registration system provided for under the Registration of Title Act, CAP. 240;

CONCERNED that there is no national customary land register and as a result, the subregions of Acholi, Lango, Teso, West Nile, and Karamoja, which are predominantly under the customary land tenure system, face challenges of legal verification of land ownership and are hence prone to incident of land grabbing and protracted conflict which compromises the right to property and endangers the livelihood of the indigenous communities;

CONVINCED that in order to address the challenges associated with the current registration of customary land ownership, there is a need to establish a national customary register;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it is resolved that Parliament urges the Government to establish a National Customary Land Registry in order to provide for a central registration and information center for customary land ownership."

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded? It is seconded by Hon. Gilbert Olanya, Hon. Geoffrey Okello, Hon. Nelson Okello, Hon. Santa, Hon. Peter Okot, Hon. Balmoi, Hon. Aogon, Hon. Abrahams, Hon. Felix Okot-Ogong, Minister Omona, Hon. Wokorach, Hon. Aza, Hon. Richard Anywar, Hon. David Lagen and by the whole House.

You have all supported the motion. Honourable, kindly speak to your motion and you are the only one who will speak on this.

MR AKOL: Mr Speaker, under the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Article 237, there are four tenure systems which are at the same level.

Unfortunately, since 1995 to date, the other tenure system has a national registry but the customary land ownership has been rendered vulnerable. And because of that, the owners of the customary land ownership have been forced to transform their land tenant system to freehold and leasehold. This contravenes what is in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

The customary land owners are prone to conflicts and their land has been rendered very cheap. They cannot even access loans using their security of land because the registry is not there.

Mr Speaker, this motion is actually based on the fact that these are Ugandans who need to be protected and since you do not have a lot of time, I request for support from the Members of Parliament. I beg to move. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I put the question that a motion for resolution of Parliament urging the Government to establish the National Customary Land Registry be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Motion adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is very straightforward. Thank you, honourable member. Honourable colleagues, the items that have not been considered will be considered in the next session of Parliament. We have tried to run a marathon today, but the Order Paper is so big and I see some level of dissatisfaction if we continue debating – rushing – without giving Members adequate time.

So, we rather carry the items forward so that we give them adequate time, instead of appearing as if northern Uganda is going somewhere and we will not be able to see it in future.

Hon. Omona, the minister for northern Uganda? (*Member rose*) Hon. Okot, what is your procedural matter, as Hon. Omona comes?

MR BONIFACE OKOT: Mr Speaker, my procedural matter is to draw your attention to Rule 95 of the Rules of Procedure, which is on Ex-Officio Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I noted that at the time of voting on the last motion, you made mention of Hon. Dr Omona, who is an Ex-Officio Member of Parliament, who by provision of Rule 95 is not supposed to vote. Are we proceeding right?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Did we carry out any vote in the House, honourable members? So, that is why you did not stand up – you thought we were voting! (*Laughter*) Ex-Officio Members are allowed to second, but they are not allowed to vote. Hon. Omona –

MR BONIFACE OKOT: Much obliged, Mr Speaker.

3.47

THE MINISTER OF STATE, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER (NORTHERN UGANDA) (Dr Kenneth Omona): Mr Speaker, I take this great opportunity to thank you. I also thank you, Members, for your patience and deliberations during this very historic and auspicious occasion, when Parliament sits in the region of northern Uganda, particularly on Kaunda Grounds in Gulu City.

Mr Speaker, I thank you, again, for giving a lot of attention to the matters pertaining to this region. I know very well that time has not been enough and, also, that we do not have to ignore the rest of the country as we debate matters of northern Uganda.

However, I am very confident and happy that much as not everything about northern Uganda

has been exhaustively discussed here, at least, a substantial number of issues have been raised here and they have brought to light an emphasis on matters of northern Uganda.

I was told that for these last three days, everywhere in northern Uganda here, people were either glued to the TV channels or listening to radio, paying great attention to the debates of the matters of Uganda and, particularly, northern Uganda. I thank, very much, the people of northern Uganda, for also giving attention and listening to the matters concerning their region.

A lot has been said here, but like you have heard, many issues in northern Uganda here are historical. Therefore, I implore and call upon the leaders of northern Uganda – elected, appointed, opinion and religious leaders to take it very seriously to guide the people, especially on matters of wealth creation. Wealth creation is a personal effort.

Here in northern Uganda, particularly here in Gulu, we have started calling the campaign for wealth creation as “*giri giri*”. *Giri giri* is an Acholi expression, meaning “it is yours” – what is yours is personal. It is a personal effort. I call upon all the leaders in northern Uganda to take it very seriously.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, I also call upon the leaders of northern Uganda that since many of your issues here are historical, please, tell your children about your past; tell your children about your history. Pleasant or bitter, good or bad, your society and your children must know your past. This is very important; it will guide your future.

Mr Speaker, I cannot thank you enough, but I call upon all the people of northern Uganda, especially those who have been watching and those who have been following on radios and other channels, to take it seriously that this has been an opportunity to highlight the issues of northern Uganda. I hope it will also help you to follow up on matters of your country in all your areas; communities and workplaces so that you help the Government and your leaders

in monitoring and debating matters of your society.

Mr Speaker, all said and done, all that has been debated or said here must fall on the positive and fertile energies to produce good outcomes.

I would like to emphasise the issue of history and our stories because it is from that, that we must find forgiveness so that we focus our energy towards socio-economic transformation.

Borrowing from one American poet, Walt Whitman, I want to say to the people of northern Uganda that: get up to your feet, dust off your knees and bottoms, and keep your faces towards the sunshine and the shadows will fall behind you.

I thank you very much for your kind attention. God bless you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you so much, Hon. Omona. Thank you to the people of northern Uganda for the warm reception. It has been an awesome experience. The hospitality – the people on the streets and all that; they all welcomed us.

I am going to call someone, who is not from northern Uganda, to give a vote of thanks on behalf of the rest of the Members. Hon. Aeku?

In the meantime, as he comes in front here, for the issues which were not covered in the reports, I could not bring them on now, when we have not completed receiving the reports. So, we shall complete that process from Kampala. We will do a memorandum, which we shall hand over to the Government.

3.52

MR PATRICK AEKU (NRM, Soroti County, Soroti District): Thank you, Mr Speaker –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can tell us the experience because I know the time you have been sleeping. *(Laughter)*

MRAEKU: Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to thank the people of northern Uganda. We

have been here, but some of us do not want to leave because this area has fresh air.

I have not polished my shoes ever since I came from Kampala. *(Laughter)* So, I would like to thank the people of northern Uganda for the hospitality. The food has been very good. The hotels have been very exceptional. You sleep and rest well.

Mr Speaker, even the garbage collection is very good; there are no landfills to collapse here. The experience we have had in northern Uganda, for these few days, shows that these people are good people, and we should appreciate them. *(Applause)* If only one could think like me, I would even move a motion and we leave Kampala to be a commercial city and we make Gulu a business city. *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, as I conclude on thanking the people of northern Uganda, even at night, we have been peaceful. We have been walking and moving around. These people are friendly. None of us is injured. There is no case registered. They are hospitable.

Indeed, if we are looking for tourist attraction areas, also, let us enhance northern Uganda. Tourists like good roads. Tourists like good hotels. Tourists like good food. We have put on weight, you can see, Mr Speaker. This is not my original size, but I am sure because of being in Gulu City, I am now a better person.

Finally, I congratulate all Members of Parliament from Northern Uganda for being hospitable. Some of us did not have cars and they were able to provide and we could move around because we could not move with our coasters. I thank my colleagues also for the hospitable reception they have given us. I wish everybody a safe journey. Those who are still around, the holiday is still on; we are still in Gulu and then we shall return officially on Monday. I beg to submit. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable colleague. We all share your message. Honourable colleagues, in a special way and on behalf of the leadership

of Parliament, I thank you for your time, especially the colleagues who were the heads of associations in the region. We also had our coordinators on the ground, especially Hon. Mapenduzi and Hon. Anthony Akol. You guys did a fantastic job.

House is adjourned to 17 September 2024 at 2.00 p.m.

(The House rose at 3.56 p.m. and adjourned until Tuesday, 17 September 2024 at 2.00 p.m.)