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**Monday, 24 September 2020**

*Parliament met at 3.24 P.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.*

PRAYERS

*(The Speaker, Ms Rebecca Kadaga, in the Chair.)*

*The House was called to order.*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I welcome you to this afternoon’s sitting. I do not have much to communicate, except to say that we are looking a bit thin on the ground but I hope Members will come.

In addition, as I indicated yesterday, our last sitting will be on 01 October 2020 and therefore, all the urgent issues must be handled expeditiously.

There are just two matters of national concern. Can I invite hon. Aol? Not here. Hon. Cecilia Ogwal.

3.26

**MS CECILIA OGWAL (FDC, Woman Representative, Dokolo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance and I want to use the institution of Parliament to appeal to the Government for mass testing for COVID-19 due to the following issues:

Firstly, there is a sharp rise in infections across the country. Every day that we wake up, the figures are changing upwards in terms of new infections and deaths.

The Minister of Health is reported as having stated that even the medical workers are getting scared because there is a general rise in infections among medical workers as well.

You are aware that the Government has now decided to reopen schools. We have heard that before the schools reopen, there is mandatory testing of teachers. However, they are not mindful of the fact that even the students and pupils must be tested before the schools reopen.

We have also heard that Government has decided to reopen the airport, which means that we are now allowing tourists to come into the country. All these activities, which are related to tourism, will also soon get started.

In view of this and what we anticipate to happen in the country in the very near future and in view of the fact that across the country, people are not taking Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which have been prescribed by the Ministry of Health seriously - I have just come from my constituency but people are not taking this seriously.

Madam Speaker, it is important for you to also note that the masks that were ordered for the general population have not arrived in Dokolo. Let it be recorded that Dokolo has not received any mask, which the Government promised. Therefore, my people are affected by the floods and they are not protected in anyway.

In view of the difficulties in implementing the SOPs and in view of the plans that the Government has, I am making an appeal that the Government must come up with a cheap option for mass testing of COVID-19.

It would be better for each of us to take it as a responsibility to walk to the nearest health centre and be tested rather than just sampling. We will never be able to record the exact number of the people infected because we do not have the figures.

People who are being tested now are people who are directly associated with somebody who has been found to be infected and yet, there could be many other infected people in the community that have not been tested.

Therefore, if we are taking COVID-19 seriously and if we are trying to avoid going into the disasters that we have seen happening in other countries, it is very important that the Government be implored to come up with a cheap mechanism for mass testing of COVID-19. I beg to appeal.

**THE SPEAKER**: Can I ask the senior minister to say something?

3.31

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (PLANNING)(Mr David Bahati):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank hon. Ogwal for raising this important issue of mass testing but also generally raising the point, which all of us know about, that the COVID-19 cases and deaths are rising and there is need for vigilance as a preventive measure.

We had a discussion yesterday on what more we can do to prevent COVID-19. In addition, the issue of testing is one of the ways that the National COVID-19 Task Force is looking at.

However, as you know, mass testing requires resources in order to acquire the reagents and the kits that are necessary. But also, the availability of these test kits is an issue.

Therefore, at the moment, Government continues to do what we can to do the testing. However, to say that we are going to test every Ugandan is something that is not possible at the moment because even if the resources were available in terms of finances, we cannot get all the required test kits because the world is stretched.

However, we will continue to do the testing that we are doing and encourage all of us to abide by the SOPs; social distancing, wearing masks when in public and washing hands before touching your nose, mouth and the eyes. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Now, honourable minister, I do not know whether it will not be appropriate for the members of the National COVID-19 Task Force to get out of Kampala. Let them go to the districts and speak this message on radios. Maybe, the local people are not getting the message. I think they need to hear some additional voices on this issue, because the task force is here in Kampala.

**MR BAHATI:** Madam Speaker, one of the issues that we also discussed, which is going to continue to be supported, was the issue of risk communication to the public. Even in areas where we have distributed masks, people are not wearing them properly.

I agree with you that there is need for continued communication and that is one of the issues being discussed and it will be handled by the Ministry of Health. We have committed ourselves to look for the resources to boost risk communication for COVID-19, to prevent what is happening in the country.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Let us move to item 3.

3.35

**MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo)**: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for that response. However, the issue of testing and masks should be taken seriously. Tororo District, particularly the constituency I represent, was privileged to be among the first areas that received the masks. Unfortunately, up to date, very many people have not received these masks and yet, the intention of Government was to facilitate the border people by ensuring all of them have masks. Like you have rightly said, we need the National Task Force to verify whether there has been value for money, in regard to the masks that have been supplied to the people.

Similarly, some of the masks that we were given are so big that some ladies have turned them into bras. This is very serious. The masks are very big and others are very small to the extent that some people cannot now tell how a mask looks like.

On testing, we are now challenged. Drivers from Malaba to Kampala and earn Shs 70,000 are challenged to pay Shs 250,000 to be tested for COVID-19. The requirement to be tested has to be reconsidered by letting Ugandans benefit either from the Government support or just allow our people to get into this situation much as it is getting very bad. Madam Speaker, this has to be taken very seriously.

3.36

**MR GODFREY MACHO (NRM, Busia Municipality, Busia):** Madam Speaker, it is not business as usual at the border. I do not know why Uganda cannot benchmark Kenya. As I speak, every Kenyan citizen at the border is being tested for COVID-19 free of charge. On the side of Uganda, they are conditioning us to pay Shs 240,000. According to the poverty level of the people in Eastern Uganda, Busia in particular, Shs 240,000 is capital that can help someone start a small scale business.

Therefore, I request the Government to make lives of our people comfortable so they can carry out cross border trade. Kindly, let Government test our people free of charge. Otherwise, if that is not done, some of us who have relatives in Kenya are going to find it hard to either visit them or them visiting us in Uganda. It will also make life hard for those who depend on cross border trade.

Lastly, COVID-19 is now a game strictly in Kampala. When you go to the constituencies, you do not hear any information about COVID-19. I would even challenge - when did the minister last visit our frontline districts like Busia? Nobody has ever visited us yet, people need to know the information *– (Interruption)*

**MS KAMATEEKA:** Madam Speaker, information has come to this Floor that the COVID-19 cases are increasing all over the country. This week, we registered four cases in Mitooma District. We should be trying to sensitise our people to ensure they protect themselves more against this deadly disease. Is the hon. Macho, therefore, in order to mislead Ugandans, who are listening by saying that COVID-19 is a game only in Kampala and that it is not anywhere else in the country?

**THE SPEAKER:** No, honourable members, I think he said that the perception of the population is that COVID-19 is a Kampala issue and that that is what the population thinks.

**MR MACHO:** Madam Speaker, as I conclude, I think my sister, hon. Kamateeka, is still thinking about NRM campaigns and that is why she did not listen to me very well.

Anyhow, the minister said that Government is trying to look for money to sensitise Ugandans about COVID-19. Many times, we keep asking for accountability of the COVID-19 donations so that we know how the money was spent and whether the balance can be used to sensitise people on how to keep themselves safe, on the infections and effects of COVID-19. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR GILBERT OLANYA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The information I would like to give to my colleague is that when a staff of one of the health centres in my district tested positive for COVID-19, we asked the ministry to test all the medical staff in that health centre and the surrounding places. To our dismay, the ministry sent information to Amuru saying they did not have test kits for COVID-19. All those medical officers are still within the health centres, no testing has taken place and we do not know what is going on.

The issue of mass testing is paramount. Currently, we have very many contacts and contacts of contacts but it seems we have no capacity to do mass testing, yet, we were informed that we had very many donations and money from well-wishers as well as donors. We do not know where that money is.

Recently, we were told that the money was stolen. We are not in the know by who and how. It seems we are taking our country for granted. What was given to help in the fight against COVID-19 is nowhere to be seen.

Finally, even the ambulances – we have been crying for an ambulance in Amuru District and at the border but up to now, we have not received any from Government. Sometime back, very many ambulances were donated to the country. The Government paraded very many strong double cabin vehicles. Unfortunately, those cars have disappeared and we do not know the people who are using them. We need to be very serious on the mass testing of our people in order to save the lives of Ugandans. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Can I invite the Leader of the Opposition to say something?

3.42

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ms Betty Aol):** Madam Speaker, there is a logistics hub to be built in Gulu District in a place we call Layibi Go Down near the railway station.

This project will displace over 400 households. A notice was given to the affected persons in July 2019 that they would be compensated. Valuation was done and the compensation was to come from European Union. Their last day was supposed to be 21 March, 2020. However, these people have been evicted. Some of them have left, having been evicted without the compensation that was agreed upon. The valuation was done individually, ranging from Shs 250,000 to Shs 6,000,000.

I want the Minister of Works and Transport, who seems not to be here, but perhaps the Prime Minister will explain to us why this compensation is not being done.

Can the Rt Hon. Prime Minister or the representative tell us whether in the spirit of consideration, these families, which are being evicted can be given something small? Some of them want to go to court. Please, give them something from your stores in case you have those disaster management items instead of just sending them empty handed.

The displacement is big. We may have this logistics hub but let the agreement be followed. Can the minister explain to us? Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** We will ask the Minister of Works and Transport to come and update the country on the issue of compensation to the people living along the railway line in Gulu. This should be done before 01 October 2020.

BILLS

FIRST READING

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2020

3.46

**THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Mr Raphael Magyezi):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We are still doing some consultations on one of the two technical issues, which require to be taken back to cabinet on Monday. It is my humble request that you allow us to present the Bill on Tuesday next week.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay. Can we hear from the Chairperson of the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs?

3.47

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (Mr Jacob Oboth):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yesterday, this House directed and referred the matters related to various aspects of our electoral process. I want to report that we have just been in a meeting with the Minister of Local Government, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and the Electoral Commission on the following matters; - I think that is why the minister could not proceed with the first reading of the Bill.

On the issue of the change of names, we had a very lengthy discussion and we realised that there is need to legally protect the women who are married and adopted the names of their husbands. They should not be vulnerable.

The law as it is may bring absurdity and it would make it seem criminal for a woman who adopts the husband’s name and uses it to register in the national voters’ register or NIRA and then, the academic papers are different. We have implored the ministers in charge; that is, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, hon. Kafuuzi and the Minister of Local Government, to go and look at it and come back with appropriate amendments that would qualify and make the demands less for the women who have adopted the husbands’ names. We believe that this House will be able – Madam Speaker, if we would direct the ministers, in that regard, to come back here with appropriate amendments of the Registration of Persons Act, 2015.

The second issue is of the women’s representation in the council. Article 182(b) was cited by the Attorney-General. Then, the committee cited 102(d), which gives this Parliament the mandate to review the composition of the council.

The general debate is that whereas we can have women in Parliament as they are represented, it is different at the local Government level when processing the budgeting. Gender mainstreaming must be realised from the grass-root level. We are overburdening the women to give them two to three for sub counties.

We, therefore, request that this House directs the relevant minister to come back with appropriate amendments that would reflect the progressive nature of affirmative action. We cannot close our eyes pretending that the situation is the same as it was in 1995. The reason 182(d) was put there is the same reason Article 78 is there for us to review the composition of this House and we have just done the review when we brought in the elderly representation.

The other aspect is of the name of the local Government. Whereas the age limit – and it so happened that the same minister who brought the age limit motion for the presidential and LC V candidates, now finds himself in the Ministry of Local Government with a number of young people who are supposed to be chairpersons of LC III, of town councils, sub counties and divisions and they are not there.

Madam speaker, there would not be any other relevant minister than the same minister to go back and complete the age limit issue, which he started. Therefore, we request that you direct the relevant ministers to handle those three aspects so that we proceed with time. I beg to report.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable chairperson, there is item seven on the Order Paper, with regard to the issue of the name. Do we take it that your verbal report will suffice for this matter?

**MR OBOTH:** Yes, Madam Speaker, because the clerk was still trying to make the report but it really is not any different from this. Therefore, for this item seven, you can adopt this verbal communication that I have made to constitute the report of the committee.

3.52

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ms Betty Aol):** Madam Speaker, I want to make a rejoinder with regard to the people with disabilities at the local council level and the same will probably come to the elderly people, more so for the cities. The cities have only two divisions. That means that the electorate of the cities at that higher level going to the city councilors will only have ten voters and yet, each one of them who will have to go and nominate is required to have at least seven. One proposer, one seconder and five other people to back him up.

Now, where do they get the rest? Don’t you think that at some point, it will become a challenge and all of them will fail to nominate to –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, that matter is different. I would like us to conclude on this one of the age of the women councillors and change of name.

Honourable members, the minister –

**MR PATRICK NSAMBA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise on a matter of clarification from the chairperson. I heard him making serious decisions, which are very proper and which I agree with. However, I never heard him putting into consideration the fact that nominations for local Governments will be ending next week.

It very important, as the minister comes, that he should also build confidence in us, that whatever we are discussing is going to be for the benefit of the people who are interested in participating in these elections. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the issues raised this afternoon or rather since yesterday - the issue of the change of name – is a vital issue for purposes of representation. The issue of the councillors for effective representation is very important and urgent; the issue of the age of the leaders; the age to contest for chairmanship of the sub county, town councils and divisions are all equally important.

We urge the minister responsible to work expeditiously during this weekend and ensure that on Tuesday, we are able to handle this matter. It is important for the elections and time is of essence. Thank you very much.

3.55

**MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira):** Madam Speaker, additionally, I thought it is very unfair for the Minister of Local Government to come to this House and seek an amendment, when this very House passed a law and it is with them and they have not reported officially to us.

All the issues that we are questioning here were duly captured in the amendment, which we passed in this House. What is the fate of the last amendment we made to the Local Government Act, before we even talk about bringing another amendment? Is it signed? What is the problem with it?

Madam Speaker, the minister should clarify.

**THE SPEAKER:** Minister of Local Government-

**MR MAGYEZI:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I beg to inform the House that His Excellency, the President assented to the law and signed it on 17 August 2020. That is why we need to now seek an amendment on that law.

However, we will ensure that on Tuesday, copies of the approved law are in each Member’s pigeon hole. I thank you for that question.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MR JONATHAN ODUR:** Madam Speaker, in that case, the Electoral Commission cannot then purport to deny the aspirants who want to contest for the chairperson LC III and for the chairperson of the town councils, on the basis of an amendment that is going to come, which is anticipation. The law must be implemented as it is.

As it is now, if the President has assented to it, then all those who are 18 and above and are registered should be nominated.

Secondly, we had asked that women be represented from all the electoral areas. As it is now, they should –*(Mr Oboth rose\_)*I will take information from the chairperson of the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs who processed the age limit, together with the ministers –*(Laughter)*- so that he can help –*(Interruption)*

**MR OBOTH:** You are on record for opposing it but now you are for it. *(Laughter)* The issue of age should not be a restriction anywhere in the world and I have no regrets about that.

Madam Speaker, what my honourable colleague is talking about; we had officials from the Electoral Commission. There was an error of omission that whereas the upper age limit was removed and the lower limit was adjusted for presidential and LCV chairpersons; when we were processing the Bill, this is when the issue of qualifications came, there was a mismatch.

Therefore, the Minister of Local Government and Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs have to come back to reflect that amendment. They had actually proposed to delete Section 111(4)(c) but we retained it.

The position is that the Electoral Commission can only use the law as it is. That is why you would agree with the two ministers that they come back here with a comprehensive amendment.

On the issue of hon. Patrick Nsamba on nominations, we agreed with the Electoral Commission. They said the nomination is open up to 1 October 2020 and the issue of nomination is not cast in stone. It is not a matter that is established by law, meaning that they could make some necessary changes if there is any delay.

Since the two ministers have undertaken to come back here on Tuesday, we shall still be within the framework. I beg that we agree with the ministers to proceed.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I do not know whether a judicial notice cannot be taken over the constitutional amendment. This would allow intending candidates to register as we process the law because we amended it. We said, “from 18, you are able to be President.” Why then can’t you be a chairman of the district?

**MR JONATHAN ODUR:** Madam Speaker, what the chairperson of the committee is telling us will mislead the country. The procedure for nomination is that once only one person is nominated for an area, the officer from the Electoral Commission is supposed to declare that person duly elected from that moment.

If nomination closes on 1 October, it is incumbent upon the district returning officers to immediately declare where there is only one person nominated. Once we say that it is not cast in stone and yet, we have the provision of the law that will declare those councillors duly elected, then we cannot come back here and say we are going to open nominations.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can the minister responsible ask for enlargement of time? Can you ask for enlargement of time in relation to these young people?

4.01

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi):** Madam Speaker, we are going to have a meeting tomorrow morning with the Electoral Commission. We shall see how to report back.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much.

**MS BETTY AOL:** Thank you very much. I would like this for the legal minds to know as they continue to work on the names and the age limit and everything for local Governments and also Parliament, as well as all the intending leaders at all levels.

For all the cities, there are only two divisions, meaning those candidates who are for city councils will only have ten electorates and yet, for one person to be elected, the person needs seven. It becomes very difficult mathematics for people to nominate.

Sometimes, out of the ten, if they are scattered, they will not be able to nominate anybody in that position. It is either people with disabilities or even the elderly especially for those people who have electoral colleges.

I want you to also go back and try to look into it, analyse it and come out with a possible solution for the people. I have already been asked by some of my electorates in Gulu, who say they were getting stuck because out of the ten people, if there are four, then they are going to scatter and none will be able to qualify to nominate. What do you say about this?

Honourable Minister of Local Government, this is your area. Thank you.

**JOHNSON MUYANJA:** In areas where we have one woman councillor who contested in primary elections to represent two sub counties, what is going to happen? Political parties should also be notified. In some of our constituencies, you find one male councillor representing a sub county but one female councillor represents two sub counties. They will have already gone through the hectic primary elections. That should also be noted and political parties should organise additional party primary elections. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Let the minister handle it with the Electoral Commission - the issue of enlargement of time for all the sectors where there are some deficiencies.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE PRELIMINARY REPORT OF ESCAPE OF PRISONERS FROM MOROTO PRISON

**THE SPEAKER:** The Minister of Internal Affairs is not here.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON ACTION TAKEN REPORT ON COMPENSATION OF KANUNGU ORPHANS WHOSE PARENTS PERISHED IN THE INFAMOUS KIBWETERE INFERNO IN MARCH 2000

**MR MACHO:** Madam Speaker, security is one of the key objectives of the National Resistance Movement. Whereas everybody in this country knows that we had a prison break, information has gone out to the whole country that the prisoners escaped with guns. Some of them escaped with COVID-19 and they are back in the population. The minister has kept silent on this matter and Ugandans in the Karamoja sub region are wondering what will happen next.

I do not know whether we are proceeding well when such a very important matter takes place in the country and the Minister of Internal Affairs keeps quiet to an extent that he cannot give a statement in Parliament.

I do not know whether we are proceeding well with guns in the Karamoja community when everybody knows the history of cattle rustling in that sub region. If we have prisoners infected with COVID-19 and they have run and disappeared in the population, I do not know whether we are proceeding well.

4.07

**THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to apologise on behalf of my senior colleague, because yesterday, he came here ready with that statement. We were, however, coming from COVID-19 testing and he told me that he had got a very bad reaction from the way the sample was taken from his nose. He gave me two copies of the statement. I do not know whether it is possibly the reason he has not turned up today. He had requested me to make that presentation.

If it pleases you, my office is just a walking distance. I can go and pick that statement and present it to Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Do you want to go to your office?

**MR KAFUUZI:** Yes.

**THE SPEAKER:** I have a copy here. Are you going to present it on his behalf?

**MR KAFUUZI:** Yes, I will present it. Thank you.

**MS BETTY AOL:** Madam Speaker, sometimes, it is as if we do not share the Order Paper because many times, the ministers are not here whereas the Government Chief Whip is here. Is this how we are going to proceed? It is not only the Minister of Internal Affairs who is absent but most ministers are never here. Can the Government Chief Whip explain whether these ministers do not get the Order Paper? If the ministers get the Order Paper, they should take responsibility of either delegating their colleagues or coming personally to make clarification to us. This is not how we are going to govern the country. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, please, proceed. The matter was on the Order Paper yesterday. It is there again today. Hon. Kafuuzi says he is representing his colleague. Please, present the statement.

**MR KAFUUZI:** Most obliged.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please, let us receive the statement. We have already called the item. Proceed, honourable minister.

**MR KAFUUZI:** Most obliged, Madam Speaker.

This is a statement on the preliminary report of escape of prisoners from Moroto Prison.

Introduction

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to brief you on the mass escape of prisoners from Moroto Prison on 16 September 2020 at approximately 16.00 hours.

Let me clearly point out that this is a preliminary report because investigations are on-going as the situation is still developing.

The Incident

On 16 September 2020, at 4.15 p.m., a massive escape occurred through the main gate of Moroto Prison. This occurred when the kitchen party was entering in from supper and preparing for final lock-up. Please, note that the kitchen is outside the prison. Eight officers had been deployed in *Boma,* the inside court of the prisons, with four sentries to guard the prison.

A group of inmates grabbed the gatekeeper before he could lock the inner gate. They overpowered the guards, broke the locking system of the main gate, raided the armoury and broke out of the prison.

Out of 687 prisoners at the time, 224 escaped. One prisoner was recaptured and one was shot dead. Police and the Army were called in for support. The prisoners escaped with 14 guns, 16 magazines and 480 rounds of ammunitions.

The situation now

Madam Speaker, you will recall that in March 2020, when the country was locked down in prevention and control of COVID-19, Uganda Prisons Service remained open for admission of suspects from courts. As a COVID-19 control and preventive measure, Uganda Prisons Service instituted the following strategies:

1. Established 83 isolation facilities for new admissions, Moroto Prison inclusive;
2. Encamped staff in the prisons to prevent staff taking in COVID-19 to prisoners;
3. Established treatment centres for COVID-19 patients/prisoners;
4. Locked down all prison barracks;
5. Suspended all prisoners' visitations, among others.

Secondly, incidents of cattle rustling resumed in Karamoja sub region. The Army embarked on a disarmament exercise, which resulted to many arrests of Karamojong warriors, who were sent to Moroto isolation prison. Because of COVID-19, these prisoners could not be taken to other prisons for fear of spreading the virus. Otherwise, the normal practice is institutional transfers.

In the month of August 2020, Moroto Prison was hit by cholera, which affected both prisoners and staff. On 10 September 2020, 138 prisoners and seven staff were identified with COVID-19 and samples taken from all the staff and prisoners for additional tests. This caused stress and panic amongst staff and after six months of encampment in the prison.

Out of the 224 prisoners that escaped, 16 prisoners have so far been recaptured and seven of them killed in a fire exchange with a combined force of the UPDF, Uganda Police and Uganda Prisons. This leaves a total of 206 prisoners still at large as of Tuesday, 22 September 2020.

I have a table that shows the category of cases for those who escaped such as robbery, defilement and desertion. There is a list and I do not think I need to go through it.

Causes of mass escape

The following observations were made following the incident:

1. The weak infrastructure and poor infrastructure design and low capacity. The capacity of the prison is 197 prisoners compared to 687 prisoners who were in the prison at the time of escape. This is 3.5 times its official capacity.
2. The effect of cholera and COVID-19 on staff morale after prisoners and staff tested positive;
3. Prisoners and staff were hit by cholera, as they recovered from COVID-19;
4. 138 prisoners and seven staff tested positive. This affected staff morale and caused panic as staff continued to wait for their COVID-19 test results with a lot of anxiety;
5. The COVID-19 SOPs distance staff and administration from prisoners and this affects communication between prisoners and staff on key security information and intelligence.
6. Staffing position

After turning Moroto Prison into an admission centre during COVID-19 pandemic for all prisoners in the Karamoja region, the prisoners’ population increased without increasing staffing levels. 229 staffs are required against the available 86 at the time of escape.

1. The long pre-trial remand periods where some inmates have stayed for over five years on remand is one of the causes.

Action taken

Police and Army were called in to reinforce the Prisons’ staff.

1. The Prison authorities dispatched 15 staff of Safety and Security Unit (SSU) headed by Assistant Commissioner of Prisons in Charge of Safety and Security Operations to join the team pursuing the escapees.
2. Extra guns and ammunitions were provided to enhance security of the prison.
3. There has been the involvement of local leaders, which has continued to help locate some of the escapees.

Way forward

1. There is going to be infrastructure remodeling including double wall fencing with sentries or towers, CCTV cameras, razor wire and installation of hydrants for all high security prisons. These should be complete in the next three months.
2. There is going to be increase staff deployment to match the security requirements to maintain prisoners in all isolation centres with increased admissions. This calls for continuous recruitment and training.
3. Where staff have tested COVID-19 positive, the station management are to be assisted with the following:
4. Additional staff,
5. Psycho-social support programme. The Commissioner General of Prisons has been to the station to initiate the psychosocial support programme for the Staff.
6. There will be strengthened prisons intelligence system through restructuring, deployment, training and funding. The Director General of the Internal Security Organisation (DGISO) has been requested for technical support in this respect.
7. There will be provision for additional guns and ammunitions, heightened security while addressing COVID-19 and staff shall be compelled to remain security alert at all times.
8. The pursuit of the escapees and the stolen guns and ammunitions is continuing and a bounty has been placed on the 14 stolen guns and escapees.

Conclusion

Madam Speaker, it is very unfortunate this incident occurred. As I have indicated, this is a preliminary report. The situation is still evolving. We are continuing to pursue the escapees.

However, I would like to appeal to all Ugandans not to give sanctuary to these escapees. Instead, immediately report them to the nearest police or other security agencies. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Will you be able to take some questions?

4.21

**MS STELLA ATYANGA (NRM, Woman Representative, Moroto):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. This Moroto Prison break is the most unfortunate happening that is likely to lead to increased security situation, not only in Moroto but Karamoja at large if the situation is not handled well.

I would also like to thank the minister for taking the responsibility to help his colleague in presenting this preliminary report. Honourable minister, I would like to ask a few questions. In the report that has just been read, there is a way forward that has been pointed out to get rid of what is suspected to have caused the prison break.

In the report, you have only stated the timeline for item no.1 in the way forward and the six other items have no timeline. When will the ministry have this planned action done, COVID-19 management being the most urgent - looking at the numbers of positive cases in the prison? This is important because it is one of the causes that triggered fear and led to the fleeing of the prisoners. So, it is important that you take it on urgently by employing a short time response.

I am also informed that one of the issues suspected to have contributed to the prison break is the call off of the High Court Sessions due to COVID-19 causing delays in justice for the inmates. This led to the grief of the inmates and is suspected to have led to the disastrous action they took.

I would like to know from the minister whether he is aware of this as one of the issues that could have been attributed to the prison break. What plans do we have to reactivate the High Court sessions so that the cases of these inmates are handled? This is in order for them to have hope that their cases will be handled as expected.

Honourable minister, this is the preliminary report. I wonder when the final report will come out since the timeline for the way forward is not stated. It is important that you put a timeline for when the final report will come out. Thank you.

4.24

**MR GEOFFREY MACHO (NRM, Busia Municipality, Busia):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his report. Whereas the honourable member from that region has a given very good submission, the minister’s submission talked about the poor morale of the staff of the Uganda Prisons Service, which was as a result of the Cholera disease and COVID-19 plus making Moroto Prison a centre for COVID-19 treatment for all the inmates.

However, I would like to thank the Commissioner General that at least the lifestyle in prison has improved a lot in terms of infrastructure development. However, there is need for more human resource.

We note that, still, within the human resource, most people do not have morale to work in prisons. I, therefore, request that we let the prisons department be given priority by the Minister of Internal Affairs in terms of staff development, remuneration, morale and motivation.

I would like to request is that the stake of Shs 500,000 that was put aside for finding the prisoners and for the recovery of guns – is too little to motivate somebody in the Karamoja Sub region to handover a prisoner. I am not a gun trafficker but I have been reading on the internet about the cost of a gun from a factory; you cannot hand over a criminal at that price with the poverty level in that area.

I, therefore, advise Government through you, honourable minister, that let more money be availed for the search for the prisoners that escaped because they are a serious danger and problem. Your report was also full of challenges, so, you should look for way forwards for the department of prisons in this country.

We need to evaluate this department so that it can be helped to move to the level of the Uganda Police Force and the Uganda People’s Defence Force. This is a serious matter to this country and I believe the Minister of Internal Affairs should continue updating the country of what is going on and how people in that area can safeguard themselves against the guns in the communities and the sick inmates, who are in the community.

I believe this can become a successful story if we have joint security operations of these people because this prison is near Kenya. When these people cross to Kenya without coordination of security, it will be very difficult to get them. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

4.27

**MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso):** I would like to thank you, Madam Speaker. I am raising these issues in the hope that the minister – the mandate to represent his colleague to read the statement extends to answering questions. Of course, the assumption is that he has sufficient knowledge about the sector.

Madam Speaker, if the inmates had not gone with guns, I would believe all the theories that they were running from COVID-19 and that they simply wanted to escape. The fact that they went with guns complicates the matter.

What the minister will need to explain is – because of the history of the area, with many people holding guns – whether in your own view the security at that prison facility was enough for people with that sort of history. My assumption is that the 14 guns were with prisons officers who were disarmed –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, I think you are now speaking about areas of investigations.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, whenever they are done, we will be glad to know whether there is enough security at a prison located in that area without history.

The second issue is the conditions in prisons. I have been a resident of Luzira Prison when I was arrested during political meetings and charged with being a public nuisance. The time I was there, it is just because of the force - prisons are not meant to be hell but most of them are. The feeding is very bad. Luzira, itself was meant for 3000 inmates but there are over 10,000.

Can the minister tell us if there are measures to decongest prisons in Uganda? Are there measures to improve the conditions because most of the people in prisons are people on remand and are awaiting sentence. Some of them may actually be acquitted but are punished during the period they are there. I do not want to think that the conditions may have been one of the reasons but we may use this opportunity to get the answers on some issues; the feeding, the conditions and the congestion in prison.

Can the minister now holding the portfolio of Internal Affairs tell us what these measures to improve the areas that I have mentioned are? I would like to thank you, Madam Speaker.

4.31

**MR PATRICK NSAMBA OSHABE (NRM, Kassanda County North, Kassanda):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I find that we are in a difficult situation. The person who presented this statement, on behalf of the other minister, does not seem to have sufficient knowledge on the matters beforehand. That is why I really desired that we have the minister in the docket to answer to them.

He has indicated quite a few things that are of concern to me. The preliminary report still states the same way it reported on day one; even after almost a week now since the prison break. They reported that one person was shot and another one was killed. I am surprised that even up to now, the report seems to be the same.

After a week, a functional Government should really have reported on how many have been captured back but we are here with the same information as it came out on day one.

Madam Speaker, the statement also highlights the deplorable conditions within the prison that could have facilitated the escape. The bigger question is; what is the situation of other prisons? Are we going to see more prison breaks across the country?

Madam Speaker, probably out of this meeting, we should task the Minister for Internal Affairs to come to Parliament and explain the state of our prisons across the country so that we get to know those that need to be supported and probably those where we expect similar situations.

We have the Gombolola Internal Security Officer *(*GISO*),* Parish Intelligence Security Officer *(*PISO*).* We can highlight so many security details at every place in this country; although they have been focused at handling politics, where there is a political meeting however small it is, they will be aware. How could they fail at least to have information even after a week? Here you are, indicating to us that probably they have been recruited, but that should be their normal way.

Madam Speaker, I have my fears that probably the mafia group in this country is at it. It cannot take a full week, if it is not a well-planned move by the mafias in this country, to have a prison break and up to now there is no clear information –*(Interruption)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Point of Order.

**MS RUTH NANKABIRWA:** Madam Speaker, the Members are concerned about the incident that happened in Moroto. The Member holding the Floor is insinuating improper motive to the minister and Government without coming properly with information that can help Government to make sure that we trace these prisoners.

We know very well that even the mighty Governments, when it comes to security attacks, they get surprised. In addition, I know that hon. Nsamba knows the efforts that this Government has done to make sure that the people of Uganda and the territory of Uganda is intact. Is he in order to mislead the country and also impute improper motive in the statement given by the minister?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I do not know whether he named any particular person as having been involved. I think he is just expressing surprise that so far, notwithstanding the structures of the State, these people have not been arrested. I think that is what he was talking about.

**MS OGWAL:** Madam Speaker, there have been series of disasters taking place in this country. Unless Parliament comes up to demand that an explanation be given, things remain as if nothing has happened.

Madam Speaker, the statement may be misplaced but we are getting suspicious that Government is not proactive. It does not respond quickly to serious disasters like breaking into prisons and capturing arms and arming people. Which is the next prison they are going to break in? Who are the people behind those break-ins?

Madam Speaker, the point of procedure is; can we have a Government that is sensitive, that will respond to emergencies and will come up with information without waiting for Parliament to beg and plead as if we do not have a Government?

**THE SPEAKER:** Please close.

**MR OSHABE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your wise ruling. I know hon. Ruth Nankabirwa rose because I talked about the mafias but she should have heard my concern. When the entire country is concerned about the matter but even the responsible minister is not in the House, why can’t we think that probably there is a plan of people who are working in certain crooked ways in this country? We need serious explanations and not the way we are handling this matter.

I would like the minister who is here to represent the Minister for Internal Affairs that this matter must be handled with the severity it deserves and not in a casual manner as it is being handled.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I just want to add something. When we were interviewing the Chief Justice and the Deputy Chief Justice, one of the things that came out is that there are delays in the hearings because the circuit covers about 20 districts and the Judge goes out for only one month. Therefore, they can only maybe do 10 cases.

Therefore, we wrote to the President, telling him that we must increase the number of Judges so that we have more circuits, increase the number of Magistrates because they are also not sufficient. I want Members, during this new budget, to support the Justice Sector by ensuring that we budget for more Judges, Magistrates and more facilities. That is what I would comment. Hon. Atyang said that part of the reason is the long stay on remand even without the COVID-19.

4.41

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ms Betty Aol):** Madam Speaker, at one time they said there are some cases that can be addressed through doing community work but most of these prisons are so congested. A prison that should hold 200 people holds about 1,000. In addition, sometimes, feeding is a problem, coupled with the COVID-19.

I remember visiting Luzira Prison and I found there political prisoners; and some did not know why they were there - you are taken there and forgotten. We need the minister to explain to us the congestion in the prisons.

Is there need to expand prison space because we have many people in the prisons? Why can’t we have the prisoners do some work for the country instead of just locking them up there? In addition, with this COVID-19, they should have taken action faster other than waiting for Parliament to come up and lament. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Let us hear from the minister. We need to finish this subject.

**MR JACKSON KAFUUZI:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I may not have much to answer in regard to the paper because I represented a colleague who is well grounded in the matters of Internal Affairs.

However, allow me to respond particularly to the issue raised by hon. Stella Atyang. She said that High Court sessions had been called off. I know for a fact that the Principal Judge was in Moroto about two weeks ago. If it pleases, Madam Speaker, you will allow time to consult with the Principal Judge to confirm or disapprove this fact and report back to the House.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, you do not have to go far; when the COVID-19 started, even the courts had to stop working. That is when they said only 10 lawyers in the country could work and that was after four months.

**MR KAFUUZI:** Okay, in conclusion, just like the paper said, it is a preliminary paper and the investigations are still ongoing. I believe at an appropriate time, the minister concerned will present a more comprehensive report to this House. I beg to submit. *(Interjection)*

**THE SPEAKER:** No, it is not wasting; I think it was also good for the Government to come. If they had not come, we would have said, “Why are you not bringing the paper?” However, they have brought it - small as it is but they have brought some information.

4.43

**MR JOSHUA ANYWARACH (Independent, Padyere County, Nebbi):** I thank you, Madam Speaker. When we went to Kotido for the burial of the wife to hon. Adome, we were with the Deputy Speaker. The issue in Karamoja is bigger than what our colleague is telling us. I think we will ask the indulgence of your Chair to address the issue of disarming the Karamojong when their neighbours in Kenya are armed.

These people are attacked every day; left, right and centre. In Nebbi, I have a prison, which is not even fenced but the prisoners have never taken off. By the time the prisoners get out of prison, with clarity that the armoury is there and they go for the guns - we need to investigate beyond what the minister is saying. He has misled us here that the guns, which were taken, were only 14; we have reliable information that they took 37 guns.

For once, we need to be honest. This is not a war situation, where the Army Spokesperson can doctor information and say two people were killed when actually 20 people were killed. Be honest so that we address the issue of Karamoja squarely. The insecurity in Karamoja will go higher and the arms dealing will go higher if you do not provide them with security. They are being robbed of their animals every day and they have no protection.

Madam Speaker, we ask you if you can engage even the President; the pace at which they were maintaining security by the time they disarmed the Karamojong would solve the problem, rather than beating around the bush and saying investigations are ongoing. You do not know how many guns have been taken and what security *–(Member timed out.)*

4.45

**MR RICHARD OSEKU (NRM, Kibale County, Pallisa):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to raise this concern because this might not be the last incident. We still have very many prisons which are vulnerable. Whereas the statement of the minister indicates that the duty to secure prisons is on the prison staff, that is not the case, Madam Speaker. Under the standard operating procedures for vital Government installations, there is supposed to be securing of installations like the prisons, which is not entirely the duty of the prison officers.

Now, in Moroto, you can see the category is highlighted by the statement. There are people who failed on their duties; they were armed people and this indicates that some of these people could have been soldiers, prison officers or policemen. This means that there is a bigger problem within the inmates; there must have been a good number of inmates who have the skills to break out and yet such a prison would only be –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, you are now going into the investigations. Those issues are part of the investigations.

**MR OSEKU:** When the minister comes back, he should really tell us whether there is proper provision to secure these vital Government installations to avoid any recurrence of such incidents. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** The issues of Karamoja have been noted. I think we shall engage the Head of State to see what more can be done for the area, especially on security.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON ACTION TAKEN REPORT ON COMPENSATION OF KANUNGU ORPHANS WHOSE PARENTS PERISHED IN THE INFAMOUS KIBWETERE INFERNO IN MARCH 2000

**THE SPEAKER:** Minister, do you have a statement on the Kibwetere incident? Do you have another statement for your colleague? No, okay.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTION OF 3RD MAY, 2018 ON PAYMENT OF MONIES OWED TO UGANDA-SOUTH SUDAN TRADERS

**THE SPEAKER:** He has gone.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE CLOSURE OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) SHELTERS IN KAMULI AND NAMUTUMBA DISTRICTS

**THE SPEAKER:** Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

4.48

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION** **(Ms Betty Aol):** Madam Speaker, the statement on item 4(III) is over a year now and for item 4(IV) nobody is there. Are we doing our work or we are over stressed with campaigns, among other things? I thought we should complete our work.

These ministers have been disappointing us; not only today, that the campaigns are ongoing but even before. When we volunteer to do work for Uganda; when we volunteer to go and request people to vote for us, it is important that we commit to the work that they have asked us to do. This is very unfortunate, especially for the traders of South Sudan who should be compensated. They are in tears and some of them can even die before their issues are cleared just because the ministers are relaxed and they do not want to do their work. This is very unfortunate. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay, the matters will be reflected again on the Order Paper on Tuesday. Item No.5.

LAYING OF PAPERS

THE TREASURY MEMORANDUM ON THE PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTIONS ON THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (CENTRAL GOVERNMENT) ON THE REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2015/2016

**THE SPEAKER:** The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Honourable members, this is just laying; is there no minister who can lay these papers? There are at least three ministers who can lay these papers.

4.50

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP** **(Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):** Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on Table the treasury memorandum on the Parliamentary resolution on the report of the Public Accounts Committee (Central Government) on the report of the Auditor-General for Financial Year 2015/2016, presented by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, it is sent to the Committee on Public Accounts (Central Government) for perusal and report back.

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT PHASE PROJECT (TRACE II) FOR THE 14 MONTHS PERIOD 01 JANUARY 2019 – 27FEBRUARY 2020

**THE SPEAKER:** Can I ask Commissioner Betty Aol to lay this document on the Table?

4.52

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION** **(Ms Betty Aol):** Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table the report the Auditor-General on the financial statements of the sustainable support phase project (Trace II) for the 14 months’ period 01 January 2019 to 27 February 2020. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the documents are sent to the Public Accounts Committee (Central Government) for perusal and report back.

MOTION SEEKING LEAVE OF PARLIAMENT TO INTRODUCE A PRIVATE MEMBER’S BILL ENTITLED, “THE NATIONAL LEGAL AID BILL”

4.53

**MR LYANDRO KOMAKECH (DP, Gulu Municipality, Gulu):** Madam Speaker, I hereby come back on this issue. You are aware that on 27 September 2018, I moved a motion in this House seeking leave to introduce a Private Member’s Bill regarding legal aid services. Unfortunately, the motion was never concluded for the reason that we had to harmonise the content in the Bill before introducing it.

I beg to report that we worked very well with the ministry and the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. This was to the extent that the minister directed two officers from the First Parliamentary Council to work with me and the seconder, and the Directorate of Legislative Services in the Parliamentary Commission. I beg to report that we worked so well; we moved to the four regions of this country and received very strong support.

Before I conclude, in our consultations, we recorded 80,000 petitioners, Ugandans, who would like this Bill to be made law. Here is this petition.

Madam Speaker, I request that I be helped to lift this and lay it on Table. These are the interests of 80,000 Ugandans; signed. For record purposes, I beg to lay the signatures of the 80,000 petitioners who are very interested in making sure that Parliament enacts a law termed, “The National Legal Aid Bill.”

What is remaining is about ensuring that we continue to work with the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and they have accepted that I proceed with this Bill. Since I presented the entire substance of this motion, today, I only pray that I be granted leave to proceed and come back to introduce this Bill.

**MR PATRICK NSAMBA OSHABE:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, hon. Lyandro Komakech, for working on the Bill. However, some of us who did not participate when he presented his motion deserve to hear him present that motion before this House so that we base on it to choose whether to grant him leave or not.

When he proceeds to ask for leave without laying a substantive motion, I find it challenging. Therefore, is he in order to continue asking for leave without giving the substantive motion? Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, you must have been in the House in September 2018 when he formerly moved that motion. It was after some discussion that the position was taken. He cannot move two motions on the same issue.

In the absence of any objection, I put the question that hon. Lyandro Komakech be given leave to present the Bill for the first reading.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

**THE SPEAKER:** I think we finished that. The chairperson said he had reported verbally. Let us go to the next item.

PRIME MINISTER’S TIME

**THE SPEAKER:** I don’t see the Prime Minister; go to item 9.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH ON THE PETITION OF THE FEDERATION OF UGANDA MEDICAL INTERNS CONCERNING TRAINING, SERVICE DELIVERY AND WELFARE OF UGANDA JUNIOR HEALTH WORKERS

4.59

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON HEALTH (Dr Michael Bukenya):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am here to present a report of the sectoral Committee on Health on the petition of the Federation of Uganda Medical Interns concerning training, service delivery and the welfare of Uganda junior health workers.

During the House Sitting of 01 October 2019, hon. Johnson Muyanja Ssenyonga, MP for Mukono South Constituency, presented a petition of the Federation of Uganda Medical Interns in accordance with rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament. The petition sought the intervention of Parliament in addressing challenges of training, service delivery and the welfare of the Uganda junior doctors and health workers.

Subsequently, the petition was referred to the Committee on Health for consideration. In accordance with Article 90(3)(a) and Rule 156(f) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, the committee wishes to report as follows.

I will be skipping a few paragraphs to put the report in summary form but for now, allow me to read a little bit of the background.

Background

Over the years, the number of medical interns has been growing gradually from about 200, in 2000, to about 1170, currently. This is as a result of the increase in the universities that produce doctors, dental surgeons, pharmacists and graduate nurses. The different categories are listed in the table on the page below.

Medical interns, unlike other categories of interns are frontline health workers world over and are regarded as public servants for the duration of their internship.

In Uganda, particularly, they play a very important role because of the shortage of health workers across all levels. The most recent World Health Organisation report shows that the doctor-patient ratio in Uganda is 1:24,000 despite the recommended 1:600

Given our local challenges, the growing number of interns should be harnessed in order for the country to achieve the desired targets and also fill the human resource gap in the health sector. The table is outlined below, as I mentioned earlier.

In the recent past, these categories of medical workers have had several strikes, arising from their working conditions, especially lack of proper supervision, lack of accommodation, poor remuneration, poor relationship with the Ministry of Health and poor working environment. To date, their issues have not been addressed conclusively.

Currently, a medical intern earns a gross salary or allowance of Shs 940,000 and after taxes, it goes to Shs 700,000 as net pay. That includes, Madam Speaker, payment for accommodation, feeding and transport from where they reside.

The most recent industrial action was on 6 November, 2017. In their petition, they had the following prayers:

1. That Government provides a salary scale of U4 to medical interns, as stated by the Uganda Public Service Standing Orders, Section B (2) for public servants holding a Bachelor’s degree and in line with the salary structure for Uganda Public Service for 2019/2020, particularly U4 for Mmed.l for intern doctors. That is specified in the detail of a gross of Shs 3,000,000 for the nurses, Shs 2.2 million.

Madam Speaker, I would like to add here that unlike the other interns who we see, these medical interns first graduate and then they do internship.

1. In their prayers, that Parliament appropriates a supplementary budget to have the required Shs 24.3 billion to meet the shortfall on their remuneration and
2. That the court injunction issued by hon. Justice Ssekaana Musa, restraining the Ministry of Health from implementing the rotation of medical interns from three to four disciplines, is set aside and the ruling be respected;
3. That all medical interns be given an induction, facilitated by the Ministry of Health before the start of the internship;
4. That more accommodation facilities be constructed at the internship centres to accommodate all interns and exempt interns from paying water and electricity bills;
5. That all internship centres be stocked with enough supplies, sundries like gloves and personal protective equipment;
6. That internship rotation issues for pharmacists be handled appropriately.

Madam Speaker, the methodology is outlined in (3), which I am not going to go through. I will go straight to (4), which is findings, observations and recommendations.

4.1 Welfare

4.11 Remuneration

In the Financial Year 2019/2020, Shs 11.43 billion was allocated to cater for medical interns. However, the number deployed then was 1,170 interns, which would require Shs 13.52 billion, given the scale then.

This figure, which has been fairly constant over the years, requires the Ministry of Health to redistribute the money to fit the numbers that are available for that particular year; meaning that each intern would take a gross of Shs 940,000. Therefore, there is no standard amount to be paid to these cadres.

The Committee on Health, in the Parliament Policy Statement Report of Financial Year 2019/2020, recommended that the gross pay for medical interns be raised to Shs 3,000,000, as had been advised by the President as starting pay for medical doctors.

Unfortunately, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development did not implement this. The starting salary scale of graduate nurses was recommended at Shs 2.2 million, which still Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development did not respond to.

Therefore, the committee recommended that in the short term, a supplementary budget of Shs 17 billion be provided to cater for the remuneration of the medical interns, based on their equivalent graduate scales.

In the medium term, effective Financial Year 2020/2021, allocation for medical interns’ allowance be raised from Shs 13.52 billion to Shs 35 billion.

4.12 Accommodation

The committee noted that despite the requirement for medical interns to either sleep or stay on-site or near their workplaces, the bigger numbers are not accommodated on site. Only 234 out of 1,170 are accommodated at their host facilities and these are mainly in the missionary hospitals, not Government hospitals.

The committee visited some interns working in Mulago National Referral Hospital and found them residing in single rooms in Katanga slums of Wandegeya. A consolidated net package of Shs 700,000 cannot cater for their accommodation, medical, feeding, transport and family demands.

Therefore, the committee recommended that:

1. Effective 2020/2021, all public medical interns in hosting facilities who lack accommodation should rent facilities near the hospitals and this should be reflected in their policy statements.
2. Government should implement a policy of constructing residences for health workers, including medical interns within their campuses.

4.2 Training and supervision

4.2.1 The Rotation Policy

The committee noted that on 5 October 2018, the Ministry of Health, in a letter signed by the Acting Director-General Health Services, introduced a new policy in the training programme for interns. The change required interns to rotate in two major and two minor disciplines for five months and one month respectively, which the supervisors thought would produce better doctors, as opposed to the previous ones.

The committee thought it was the mandate of the Ministry of Health and the the National Internship Committee to determine the course content and syllabus of training, since they assess the output.

The interns contend that the new rotation policy was introduced without their consultation and is unfavourable in terms of time allotted, especially for major disciplines. As a result, they had filed a case with the High Court under Miscellaneous Application No.814, arising from Miscellaneous Cause No. 835 of 20118, challenging the new policy.

On 25 January 2019, the court issued a temporary injunction, barring the Ministry of Health from implementing the rotation of medical interns from three months’ rotation in four disciplines to two major disciplines, as set out in the new policy.

The committee recommended that the Ministry of Health should engage the leadership of the medical interns, in order to come up with an amicable settlement, since this was before court.

4.2.2 Availability of Supervisors at Training Centres

The committee was made aware that medical interns are supervised by specialist doctors but they are not available in most of the Government hospitals. In Financial Year 20l7/2018, the Health Service Commission Annual Performance Report put 38 per cent and 37 per cent as staffing levels for all specialist positions at Mulago National Referral Hospital and the other regional referral hospitals respectively.

For graduate nurses and pharmacists, there are no supervisors at all in all facilities.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that:

1. The Ministry of Health should take all measures to recruit specialist doctors and pharmacists to carry out supervision.
2. Effective 2020/2021, internship centres without supervisors should be closed.

4.2.3 Equipment, Medicines and Supplies

The committee observed that most of the facilities which are regional referral hospitals lack diagnostic equipment even as simple as ultrasound as reported in Mbale Hospital. There is frequent stock out of lab supplies, sundries and medicines in all regional referral hospitals and the current provision of drugs only lasts as long as 60 per cent of the required time.

The committee recommends that:

1. The Ministry of Health should fast-track the programme of equipping regional referral hospitals which require diagnostic equipment.
2. The budget of National Medical Stores should be increased by at least Shs 100 billion to cater for the supplies’ deficit.

4.2.4. Policy

The committee noted that the Ministry of Health, despite demands from Parliament for the last three years, has failed to produce a National Internship Policy. This is confounded by the lack of a training policy in the Ministry of Health. This has ultimately led to uncoordinated, unsupervised, unmonitored and unregulated training in the sector.

The committee recommended that the Ministry of Health should produce an internship policy before the policy statement. The Ministry of Health should produce a training policy for the ministry before the next financial year.

The Relationship with the Ministry of Health:

Interns reported lack of trust and harassment from their supervisors in the Ministry of Health, and they reported that dissenting voices are transferred to hard-to-reach areas.

The committee noted that the Ministry of Health no longer conducts induction for interns at the beginning of the rotation. This would previously help supervisors to engage with the interns to discuss expectations during internship rotation.

The committee recommended that orientation should be mandatory at the beginning of internship, and that the internship policy should detail the boundaries, expectations and responsibilities of the interns and the national internship committee.

Planning:

The committee established that the Ministry of Health, despite availability of numbers from the different universities, does not take into consideration figures of the five-year forecast of the expectations of the numbers of interns. This has led to uncoordinated outcomes.

The Ministry of Health reports that training medical students is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Sports, and it is not their business.

The committee recommended that the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Sports should establish inter-sectoral collaboration for better planning.

Quality of Graduates from the Different Medical Schools in the Country

The committee received various complaints from stakeholders including the Ministry of Health, the Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners’ Council, the Uganda Medical Association Elders’ Forum, and the senior consultants. The quality of doctors being produced from the medical schools has gone down, and the Ministry of Education and Sports has failed to regulate the medical schools.

The committee could not, however, verify or confirm these claims. The committee recommended that all graduates of medical schools should undergo the same exit exams, which will help other medical schools to improve their standards. That is in reference to what UNEB and others do.

In conclusion, it is in the opinion of the committee that all concerns raised by the medical interns should be addressed to enhance professional training required for the medical personnel. Lack of proper supervision, lack of accommodation, poor remuneration, poor relationship with the Ministry of Health and poor working environment should also be addressed conclusively.

The report was signed by 10 Members and attached to it are annexes showing the petition, the court case and the summary of medical interns deployed all over the country and a copy of an intern’s appointment letter. I beg to submit, and allow me to lay on Table a copy of the report, and minutes of the committee meetings. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable chairperson and members of the Committee on Health for that work. Just to complement what the chairperson has said, we are meeting the Health Service Commission this week and one of the areas of dissatisfaction was the failure to harmonise the course content. There were some areas that they felt should be part of the course but they have no power to direct the Ministry of Education and Sports.

So, we ask the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Health and the Health Service Commission to work together to address some of the issues.

5.17

**MS CECILIA OGWAL (FDC, Woman Representative, Dokolo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You recall that we have discussed this matter so many times. I have had special interest in following up the issue of interns. Unfortunately, this afternoon, knowing very well that the matter was on the Order Paper, I do not see the Ministers for Health and Education and Sports in the House to coordinate all these things that may emerge from the report of the Committee on Health.

Madam Speaker, I do not know whether you are going to double your role as the leader of this House and also as the Leader of Government Business to inform the ministers that their matter is on the Order Paper, to make sure they are physically present in the House. At this rate, and aware that we have very little time left to clear very urgent matters, I do not know what you would expect Members of Parliament to do after receiving such an important matter on the Floor of Parliament. This is a very important matter. You are aware that interns do sustain services in the hospitals in our areas.

I am surprised that neither the Minister of Health nor the Minister of Education and Sports is here to listen to our discussions.

5.18

**MR JOHNSON MUYANJA (NRM, Mukono County South, Mukono):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the committee for the good work. By the time I submitted this petition on the Floor of Parliament, we had not yet got the problem of COVID-19. As we speak, these interns are now manning many health centres including COVID-19 centres. It is their humble request, again, that they are also considered in the recommendations of the committee.

Currently, when money is being given, the interns are left out. They are not considered whereas they are the ones in control of most health centres. Go to Mityana, you will find that the four doctors are all interns and some of them work day and night. They, however, are not considered during payments. They have not been given protective gears.

So, that is an additional request because by the time I brought the petition, we had not yet got the problem of COVID-19. Otherwise, the committee has done commendable work. The ministers should be here to consider the concerns instead of leaving the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to deal with this alone. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development will answer for resources but the Ministry of Health should also know the seriousness of the interns’ contributions since they contribute almost half of the services in our health centres and hospitals. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on the Floor of this House, we have advocated for protective gears and allowances for health workers. I believe that we cannot ignore the interns who are actually doing the work. So, I would like to ask a Member to move that small amendment so that we can take a vote. We shall take our resolution and bind the ministers.

5.20

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ms Betty Aol):** Madam Speaker, the committee, in their recommendations and also the petitioner, talked about 50 per cent of services given in the hospitals and health facilities; that they are done by interns. I think it is more than 50 per cent in some regional referral hospitals. You will find that it is the interns doing the work yet when it comes to payment, they almost get nothing.

So, my plea is that the recommendation given, which is mainly also about finances to health – The Health Sector has not yet smelt even 10 per cent of the national budget even though we signed a declaration that the sector should receive 15 per cent of our national budget.

Therefore, we should increase funding for the Health Sector. We know that without health, education and agriculture becomes completely impossible. Before the policy statement comes in place, I think it is important for the Ministry of Health – and those ministers who do not want to take up their responsibilities effectively; at least one of them should have been here to take this recommendation very much – that a policy should come in. And the confusion between the Ministry of Education and Sports and Ministry of Health should be ironed out so that work and services are better for our people of Uganda. Thank you.

**MS KAMATEEKA**: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank hon. Muyanja for the statement and the chairperson for the report. As it has been said, we have discussed these issues on the Floor. Is it therefore, possible that you could task the Minister of Health to make a response to the committee report and then if any issues are not addressed then we can have further debate.

However, for us now to continue debating in the absence of the ministers and on issues on which we have pronounced ourselves very many times, seems to be a futile exercise.

Therefore, the procedure I would like to raise is; is it procedurally correct for us to continue debating in the absence of the ministers? Would it rather not be better that we require that they respond to the report so that we know the position? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in order for us to take that decision, we must adopt the report and then task the minister. So let us hear one comment and then we can conclude.

5.24

**MR PENTAGON KAMUSIIME (NRM, Butemba County, Kyankwanzi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the chairperson of the Committee on Health for the good report. Indeed, this time of COVID-19 should have opened our eyes to make sure that we remunerate our interns very well. However, we also have a big qualified medical team languishing in the country without jobs yet we are crying that we do not have enough personnel to help us, especially during this time.

Then the other issue about health care is that when COVID-19 had just started, the country was put under lockdown with the intention of preparing the country in terms of resources, knowledge transmission so that we can be ready to meet any situation. As I speak now, I have not seen any form of preparation happening at health facilities especially health centres III and IV where our people first go.

Therefore, as the minister comes to respond to this, let us totally look at the health force and also preparedness for this country as we meet this challenge of increasing numbers of COVID-19. Otherwise I support the report and I call upon the members to adopt it with any amendments that might be. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can I ask the chairperson to move that small amendment concerning the protective gear for the interns before we adopt?

**DR BUKENYA:** It is captured.

**THE SPEAKER:** Is it there?

**DR BUKENYA:** Yeah, it is captured as one of the issues; personal protective equipment.

**THE SPEAKER:** And the allowances?

**DR BUKENYA:** Yes. Madam Speaker, I beg your indulgence. I do not know whether it should be part of this report.

Madam Speaker, His Excellency, the President has been on record in public saying that Parliament has frustrated him in increasing the pay of scientists. Over the last four years, the Committee on Health has specifically been recommending to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to increase the pay of scientists which resulted from a meeting the President had with medical workers in 2017; where he proposed that the smallest amount to be paid to a nurse should be a Shs 1 million and to a doctor should be Shs 5 million.

Madam Speaker, unfortunately, we have not got a positive response from Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. However, what comes from His Excellency is that Parliament is the one frustrating that.

Secondly, in issues of training, for instance, the regional referral hospitals do not have specialists because the Government does not fulfill the terms of their employment. The senior consultants, for instance, are entitled to a fueled chauffeur-driven vehicle, two guards and a house but they are not provided.

Even the recommendation that they should be paid as university lecturers is not fulfilled. All these things have been captured in our reports but the response is not coming from the Executive.

Therefore, I would like to pass that disclaimer that the responsibility is not with us but with the Executive especially in the presence of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development present. That was my addition.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in addition, when the members of the Cabinet are asked why they have not done something, they say, “It is the Speaker and Parliament.” That is what they say in the Cabinet where we are not.

Therefore, I put the question –

5.29

**MR JOSHUA ANYWARACH (Independent, Padyere County, Nebbi):** Madam Speaker, I listened to the chairperson; he should only bring us clarification on where a court ruling is involved; whether it is a mandate of Parliament to strike the court ruling or which one should be followed.

Secondly, the condition of placing interns to hospitals must be that there should be a doctor – as per the condition they have given. In the report, that condition that Government requires that there must have been a doctor of a certain qualification – for example, if Nebbi General Hospital does not have that kind of doctor, then no intern can be placed in such a facility.

I thought that that should have been captured in this report so that it becomes like bait, because wherever such qualification requirement is lacking, then the interns can never go to such facilities.

And, Madam Speaker, our districts have been making mistakes. You find a qualified general doctor and the council says, “We are now giving a pay; you go for capacity building.” And then they do masters and they become over-qualified for the general hospitals and move away to either regional or national referral hospitals.

Therefore, denying the district the opportunity to attract the interns – can the chairperson clarify on that and we see how we can amend and capture that so that the whole of Uganda can benefit from services of interns. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**DR BUKENYA:** Madam Speaker, the court ruling could have been overtaken by events but even the committee recommendation was an amicable settlement through discussion. Also 4.2.2 talks about the issue of supervisors adequately. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I put the question that this House adopts the report of the Committee on Health?

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*Report adopted.*

RESPONSE TO AN ISSUE RAISED ON THE NEED FOR CLARIFICATION ON THE PLEDGE BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT DURING HIS ADDRESS ON THE STATE OF THE NATION ON 6 JUNE 2020 TO SUPPORT PRIVATE SECTOR IN OFFSETTING THE COST OF UTILITIES

**THE SPEAKER:** Is there any information on this issue? No. This waits for the Prime Minister. Is the Minister for Relief and Disaster preparedness here? The Minister for Internal Affairs is not here, Minister for Defence and Veteran Affairs not here, Minister of Health absent, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic development, we have a series of questions on page five.

Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic development, we have a series of questions; are you able to answer any of them?

5.32

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (PLANNING) (Mr David Bahati):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. There are a number of questions which needed clarification from the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

The first one was the intention of Government to meet its debt obligations to National Water and Sewerage Corporation. We are meeting these obligations in a phased manner and we hope that by the end of this financial year, we shall have paid all the dues that are demanded from National Water and Sewerage Corporation.

The second question was the role of Government to issue Islamic banking. Islamic banking was first put in place in a legal framework and we have also issued regulations on how this can happen. Therefore, we continue to encourage the private sector to start Islamic financing because, beyond this, we do not see how else we can support Islamic banking. The law and regulations are in place; the environment is now clear for Islamic banking. We just want to continue attracting private investors to invest in this area.

**THE SPEAKER:** Is there no additional authority required after the regulations have come into force? Is there no additional authority required by the banks to commence?

**MR BAHATI:** Madam Speaker, I do not see any additional requirements apart from the law and the regulations.

The next one was on the circular from the permanent secretary stopping schools from utilising funds dispersed to them; this was to do with capitation grants. Madam Speaker, we are discussing this matter with His Excellency, the President and the Ministry of Education and Sports. We request that we report on this as soon as that discussion is concluded, probably next week.

There was a question raised by hon. Ouma on the status of subsidise on the life jackets. We intend to incorporate some of the measures that we think can help, especially regarding tax reliefs in the next financial year, which begins in December, when we bring the budget framework paper.

The next one was unfair import tax levied by Uganda Revenue Authority on textile materials. To the best of my knowledge, I think we sorted out this issue because there is nothing that URA can do beyond what this Parliament has approved. If there is no tax approved by this House, then, URA cannot impose that tax on anyone. When this issue was raised, we wrote to URA to ensure that this does not happen.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, I was with the URA people this week with these traders. They say that they are following instructions from the Ministry of Finance, planning and Economic Development. Unless they are instructed by the ministry, they will continue charging that tax. What has come out is that the tax is to protect local industries but the items being imported have nothing to do with the local industries; materials for jeans and so on are not manufactured here. Hence, there is a fundamental problem there.

I will be writing to you but I was with two of the officers from URA with the traders on Monday.

**MR BAHATI**: I can pledge to follow it up and probably inform this House on Tuesday but I do not see how we can impose a tax which is not approved by this House.

**THE SPEAKER:** We may have approved it because what they were complaining about was that they are being charged in kilos rather than in metres. That charge alone raised the cost to about eight times. It was passed but I think there was not enough attention paid to that issue. I am going to send you the papers.

**MR BAHATI**: Okay. I can report on this on Tuesday.

The sixth issue was the continued levy of property rates in Kampala, in spite of the negative effects of COVID. As you know, we made some proposals on amendment of some tax measures to take care of the effects of COVID. I think the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development has finalised the report. Once this report is discussed, adopted and the amendments are made, then, these are some of the things that we can address. This matter is with the House.

There is also an issue on the delayed fulfillment of Government undertaking to provide motorcycles to each of the two councillors representing people with disability at the district level. I do not know whether the Minister of Local Government has any information regarding this because the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development rarely supports what comes from different sectors. Now that the Minister of Local Government is here, he could probably make a comment on it.

The last one was raised by hon. Kenneth Lubogo on the exorbitant cost estimated at Shs 10 billion of renovating buildings housing the Uganda Mission in Brussels. We have not got information on this but the Auditor-General, who is an officer of this House, can be asked to look into this matter so that we know whether the cost was exaggerated or not. That would be the fair way of handling this matter rather than requesting the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to do so because this is not our mandate; to know whether the cost is exaggerated or not. Ours is to raise resources and do the allocation, as approved by this House.

Those were the questions, Madam Speaker. If the Minister of Local Government has anything to do with the motorcycles of the local people, he is better placed to answer local issues. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I will direct the Clerk to write to the Auditor-General on the issue of the alleged exorbitant cost of repairs of the Mission in Brussels so that he can give us a position.

5.40

**MR ELIJAH OKUPA (FDC, Kasilo County, Serere):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. On the issue of Brussels, I think it was last month or early this month where social media and the news were awash with the issue of the foreign officials of a Mission appropriating the balance of the money.

I think these two - because it is the same area - before we even get to the Auditor-General, which we shall do, the Minister of Foreign Affairs should make a statement on these matters; what has been brought out and that issue which came out about how people were discussing how to share the money on Zoom via video. It came and passed but we have not heard any statement from either the Prime Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I think the Minister of Foreign Affairs needs to come and give some highlights. Then, forward it to the Auditor-General to audit and he does it comprehensively because it is the same Mission.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, I think one was Brussels and the other was in Denmark. They are two different Missions. Still, we have not had an official account from the Government so the Minister of Foreign Affairs should come and update us on the situation about our staff at the Mission in Denmark and cost for the Mission in Brussels.

5.42

**THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMNET (Mr Raphael Magyezi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have two questions, the first one is on the motorcycles and bicycles of the local governments, and the other was from hon. Judith Franca on the ex-gratia and honoraria of councillors.

Madam Speaker, I hope honourable colleagues have seen in the papers including the one of today our advertisement on procurement of motorcycles. We are going to provide a motorcycle to each chairperson LC III- that is the LC not the party motorcycles. We are also going to provide a bicycle for each chairperson LC I. We have already started on the procurement process.

We do not have provision to provide transport facilities for councillors although there maybe special arrangement in Kampala or special attention to the persons with disabilities. I will pass this on to the minister so that they can handle it at their city level.

However, last time, I think the honourable member representing the persons with disability reminded us that in the procurement, we should include special provisions for chairpersons who may be having physical disability.

Regarding ex-gratia and honoraria and councillors’ allowances, you recall in July this year, I made a comprehensive statement on this matter. I even provided the rates and the entitlement of each level from the village to the district level in terms of ex-gratia, which is paid at the end of the year and the honoraria which comes in form of their accumulated allowances.

We have been clearing this on a case-by-case basis in touch with chief administrative officers. For the case of Agago, I can confirm that the ex-gratia, honoraria and allowances of the councillors at the village, parish and district have been cleared. We are in touch with ministry of finance to avail the necessary resources for the sub-county.

However, for the others, we have also identified the reasons on a district-by-district basis. Some of these relate to the process in which some of these administrative units are created. We are trying to work with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) so that we streamline this.

In some districts, a proposal comes from the village to split a village, it goes to the sub-county, then it is taken the district, and they approve it. When it stops at that level, we have not captured it at the national level.

The law requires that they get approval of the minister especially to make sure that I pass it on to the minister for finance for financing, the Electoral Commission for elections. However, some of our colleagues at the districts have been simply approving it at the district level and they stop there.

Now, when it comes to time to pay and the CAO receives the money only for the known councillors or chairperson, they run into that kind of problems. Therefore, I hope that this problem will be handled and stop. Once we know the actual number of councillors and LCs we have and we have told them that the law requires that when you are creating new administrative units, you seek the permission of the minister, especially for that purpose. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I thank the honourable member of Parliament for raising that issue.

5.46

**MS CECILIA OGWAL (FDC, Woman Representative, Dokolo):** Madam speaker, talking about the LCs, the minister has not covered the LCIs because having seen the bicycles given to NRM lower level mobilisers, now the LCs who are not necessarily NRM are now asking, when will theirs be available. Can the minister also clarify those LCs who are not necessarily in the ranks of NRM mobilisers, when will they get their bicycles?

And also, knowing that Shs 120,000 per year, tantamount to Shs 10,000 per month and knowing that we are in Covid environment, are you now thinking of increasing the remuneration of LCIs? Can you clarify so that we can go back to our electorates with some answers?

5.47

**MR KENNETH LUBOGO (NRM, Bulamogi County, Kaliro):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Honourable minister, you have talked about bicycles to be given to the chairpersons LCIs. You recall that not long ago, there was an attempt to distribute bicycles to LCIs and if I am not mistaken, half of the districts of this country received them.

I am wondering what checks you have put in place to ensure that there is no district to be left out and that all villages shall actually receive the bicycles.

Secondly, on the issue of creation of villages, I want the minister to clarify to us whether he plays a role, for example, say approving or disapproving them. A district like Kumi has less than 150 villages. It has two constituencies if I am not mistaken. My district in 2016 had 230 villages and today, it has 600 villages. Do you do any checks to see whether the numbers- there are now villages with 80 or 120 voters? Are you doing any checks on this? Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, in reference to item five, I wanted to redirect the Treasury Memorandum to the Auditor-General, so that he can establish whether the Government responded to our report and his report. I am removing it from COSASE.

5.49

**MS BETTY BAMUKWATSA (FDC, Woman Representative, Rukungiri):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like the minister to clarify on the LC executive. In this Parliament, we have always minded about the chairpersons only and yet that committee has more than one member.

The chairperson gets Shs 120,000 per year but other members are not getting anything same with the bicycles. This has created hatred and increased corruption among the committee members. Can the minister tell us the strategies he has for other members of the committee?

Furthermore, in the financial year that they claimed that they paid the LCIs and IIs there are districts and village chairpersons who have never received their money since the payment was effected. Thank you, for the statement but we need those clarifications, so that when they ask us, we have what to tell them.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any update, honourable minister?

**MR MAGYEZI:** Thank you, honourable colleagues, for those issues raised. First, the yellow bicycles and motorcycles, which were given by the NRM, are purely for the party. I have nothing to do with those as the Minister of Local Government. The ones of Local Government will not have that colour. They are for the chairperson LC I, II and the chairperson of the sub-county whether it is FDC, NRM or DP, among others, for us we look at service delivery.

Secondly, the amount of money we pay the LC 1 is very little. We pay them Shs 10,000 per month, paid once as ex-gratia Shs 120,000. The mistake some of our chief administrative officers have been making is to tax this money. We have told them, no, anybody doing that is doing it illegally; you cannot tax Shs 10,000 given to the chairperson LC 1.

It is little but they are many; these are 70,000. Even if you increased it by another Shs 10,000, that is Shs 7 billion, and it will have to come back to this Parliament. The bicycles will be for LC 1 chairpersons. We are putting our foot on ground to make sure that the procurement is very transparent and I do not see anybody who is going to say we only ordered for some. We have received funding for all LC 1, LC II and LC III chairpersons. We have assured them that they will come in the next three to four months because of the procurement process.

The creation of villages is really not a challenge to us in terms of elections because the Electoral Commission follows polling stations. In this case, they may combine the number of villages if they are small. Yes, the voting is the polling station, except for the primaries of parties. However, as far as the Electoral Commission is concerned, they use their polling stations; they may combine two villages or split a village depending on the population, which is there.

In terms of how they are created, it is really demand driven; it is the wishes of the people as given in the Constitution Article 79, and it comes from the sub county to the district. They normally look at those issues, where there are too many people in the village or situations of disagreements between one community and another, and you need peace and safety.

However, the role of the minister is not to say yes or no, but to make sure that this process is captured properly at the centre. This time, we have come out very clearly; the electoral process is already on course, we are not creating any new administrative units. I have seen requests for sub counties and town councils to be split, for parishes to be moved here and there, and we have taken a decision together with the Electoral Commission and said no, we are not going to do that because it will confuse the elections.

Hon. Bamukwatsa, it is true, the rest of the executive committee members of the village are not really catered for. These are nine people per village, they are 70,000 villages, and you will get about 630,000, and if you multiply by 10,000 each, it is really astronomical. We know that villages do collect some fees at their level, and they use it to enhance their services.

If it is to be looked into, I think again, it will have to come to Parliament; it is a very big item. In some cases, you said some LC1s have not been paid for one or two years. We have written to the chief administrative officers to give us this information, and where there is any problem, we have to step in.

Therefore, in case, you are aware honourable colleagues, and those who are watching us, if you are a chairperson LC 1 and you are not being paid ex-gratia then there is a problem and we need to trace and find out. Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development releases the funds according to the number of LC 1 chairpersons, we have per district. Therefore, where there is a problem like that sometimes, it is a localised problem, and we have to handle it with the accounting officer.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I do not see the other ministers. However, there is an item on the Order Paper. I do not know whether the Chairperson, Committee on Natural Resources is ready? Are you ready? Can we have the report on Murchison Falls?

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES ON GOVERNMENT’S PROPOSAL TO CONSTRUCT A HYDROPOWER GENERATION PLANT OVER MURCHISON FALLS

5.57

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES** **(Dr Keefa Kiwanuka):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to present the report on the proposed establishment of a hydropower plant at the Uhuru Falls in the Murchison Falls National Park.

I am sure the report has already been uploaded on our iPads, and I hope members can access it.

On 7 June, 2019, the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) issued notice of an intended application for a license for the establishment of a 360MW hydropower plant by Bonang Power and Energy Limited as part of a consortium. Bonang wanted to undertake a detailed feasibility study that would result into the issuance of a license for establishment a hydropower plant near Murchison Falls. Preliminary information indicated that:

(a) Cabinet had considered on the 26th August and rejected that proposal. This was following public outcry and negative response of a wide range of stakeholders.

(b) Cabinet had once again, considered that same proposal on the 28th of August and again, rejected it. Not sure how it happened again but it seems it was reopened again, on the 25th of – this is according to presentation by the Minister of State for Energy and Mineral Development to the committee. Cabinet once again, discussed the same proposal on the 25th November, and this time, agreed that they should reopen the discussion.

On the 2nd of December, Cabinet agreed to have a feasibility study done in order to have scientific evidence as a basis of a decision of whether to go ahead with the power project or not to.

On the 19th of the December, honourable Minister of State for Energy and Mineral Development made a presentation on the same issue to the plenary. Again, he argued that the feasibility study is needed to determine the impact of the project on tourism, ecology and feasibility study will be closely supervised to make sure that it does not go astray.

Now, Parliament was not satisfied with the presentation and that is how the matter was referred to the committee.

Madam Speaker, we now present our findings. Page four of the report is about the location. In his statement, the minister had argued or tried to create the impression that Uhuru Falls is very much different from Murchison Falls, and that they are very much further apart, and each can be developed independent of the other. He repeated the argument that had earlier been made, the need for scientific evidence as a basis for decision.

However, the committee found that the coordinates that were presented for Uhuru Falls are the same as the coordinates for Murchison Falls. And these are the same as the coordinates that were advertised by ERA on the 7th of June as part of inviting a public response to the application. And they are both within the national park.

The two points are only 219 metres apart. Actually, of much interest is that Uhuru was formed in 1962 as a result of an overflow of water from Murchison Falls. Therefore, they are not that much different.

We also concluded on the location, that actually Uhuru Falls cannot be developed independent of the Murchison Falls because the two are very closely interlinked. It will be of much interest to this Parliament, again, that in their application, Bonang referred to Uhuru, the project, as “Uhuru Project to be constructed at the Murchison Falls”.

We, therefore, conclude that the minister arguing that the two are different was somehow a misrepresentation of the facts.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, the committee also notes that there have been several studies done in the past. All these preliminary studies have warned that there would be significant impact and very high costs to the environment if any developments are pursued on the Murchison Falls. These studies, are referred to also, although differently, by Bonang in its application for this development.

One of the studies was done by Government, at the cost of US$ 30,000. Another is the Hydropower Master Plan Report which was completed in 1997. At that time, it had also proposed a hydropower plant on Murchison Falls, but as a result of that study, the idea was dropped.

Japan International Development Corporation also produced a master plan in 2011 for the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. Therein are particular sites which were identified. In its conclusion, however, the report dropped the Murchison Falls mainly on three grounds:

-One is that it has adverse environmental conditions; 26 of IUCN listed species.

-There is also something to do with the Ramsar Area. This is part of the convention of which Uganda is a signatory. This would be affected.

-Finally, the JICA report also noted a possible impact on tourism and possible impacts on Murchison Falls as well, impact on Safari Tours, boat riding and sports fishing.

The report, therefore, concludes that the idea of a dam is not recommended. It would be a high cost to the environment. There are several other sites that have been cited which can be developed and also that we can consider diversifying our energy mix. We can, for instance, think about solar, geothermal and wind energy.

Apart from those studies, there are also the issues that we should seriously consider, like the strategic importance of Murchison Falls as a national Park. Murchison Falls also, as a Ramsar site, as well as a site with important bird areas.

As a park, it is the most visited national park in the country offering a wide range of experiences which include game drives, nature walks and boat rides.

Madam Speaker, Murchison Park accounted for 31 per cent of the visitors to the 12 national parks that were assessed in 2018. It had over 100,000 visitors out of about 300,000 visitors that came in. It has rich species. It has several bird species - 556 to be specific. It also has several reptiles which cannot be found anywhere else. There are over 755 tree plants in Murchison Falls.

It is important to note that there is significant investment in accommodation in the area, presently valued at over Shs 550 million, providing over 700 jobs.

Construction of a dam here will, therefore, deprive Ugandans of several sources of livelihood. It will greatly injure the economy by injuring tourism.

There are also other issues which were noted by the committee. Apart from being a part of the Ramsar Convention of 1971, it is also a heritage site. As you may already know, Madam Speaker, it sometimes referred to as the Kabalega Falls.

It is a source of pride for the people of Bunyoro-Kitara. It has their sacred heritages. It connects Bunyoro and Acholi, and this has been recognised by a plaque which was laid there in November 2013 by the Omukama of Bunyoro.

It also has large footprints of energy and petroleum. Several hectares are now being disturbed by the oil discovery, and several of the oil pads are actually situated within the park. This will have a significant impact on the park and the water falls.

The Murchison Falls also has other things which are coming in now, like the oil airstrips, roads, waste management facilities, to mention but a few. All these actually have a heavy toll on everything going on there.

Most importantly, however, are the stakeholders’ views. This is on page 16 of the report.

In accordance with the Electricity Act, 1999, ERA invited stakeholders to make comments. ERA received an overwhelming 9,204 responses, some of them through formal submission, others through public hearings and others through the social media platforms.

Most notable, however, were the submissions from the Uganda Wildlife Authority, the National Environment Management Authority, Uganda Tourism Board, Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom, the Association of the Uganda Tour Operators, IUCN and Uganda Association of Impact Assessment.

And guess what? Out of all these, only one representation agreed with the proposal of establishing a hydropower plant on Murchison Falls. All the other 9,203 rejected the plan and strongly recommended that ERA rejects the proposal. Therefore, there has been an overwhelming objection to the project from the public, which I am sure should be respected.

The issue had also been decided on 01 October 2019 when ERA wrote to the CEO of Bonang, rejecting the proposal. It rejected the proposal on grounds of failure to meet the legal requirements, failure to meet the financial requirements, issues of environmental requirements, the threats which the project poses around further environmental degradation and climate change, contravention of international treaties like the Ramsar Convention and the Convention of Biological Diversity, and of course, the overwhelming public outcry calling for the project not to go ahead.

Therefore, the committee strongly recommends that this rejection should be upheld and that Parliament should stand with the independence of ERA as a regulatory agency. Of course, there are also issues of threats of climate change that this project would pose.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, the minister argued that the feasibility study would be the basis for a scientific decision as to whether to go ahead with the hydropower plant. However, the assumption at that time that the minister was basing his argument on was that Uhuru Falls and Murchison Falls are two different falls - probably the impression created at that time - and were miles apart.

The committee, however, notes that Uhuru and Murchison Falls are interdependent of each other and none can be developed independently of the other. Therefore, development on Uhuru Falls will significantly impact on Murchison Falls. Preliminary studies also have previously indicated, as I have cited, that developing the Uhuru project or anything on Uhuru Falls will come at a high cost to the environment.

I have drawn your attention to the strategic importance of Murchison Falls as a national park, as a Ramsar site, its economic significance as a historical site, and then the current large footprint of energy and petroleum, which is actually somehow impacting on it. I have also drawn your attention to the public outcry and rejection in over close to 10,000 responses that were submitted.

There are further recommendations in the report. However, in summary, we recommend strongly that Parliament stands in solidarity with the people of Uganda who rejected the proposal; and also stands in solidarity with ERA, our regulatory agency, in rejecting any further thoughts of a feasibility study or any further thoughts of developing a hydropower plant on Uhuru, which is the same as Murchison Falls. I beg to report, Madam Speaker.

Allow me, Madam Speaker, to lay on the Table the minutes, further documents that were received, and all other relevant documents that we have collected. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable chairperson and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, for that work. I will start with the honourable member for Buhaguzi.

6.15

**MR DANIEL MUHEIRWE (NRM, Buhaguzi County, Kikuube):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the committee and support the motion. I thank you for coming up with this report.

Madam Speaker, Bunyoro was blessed with oil, but we have been told that it has some adverse effects on the environment. To our surprise, however, most of our natural reserves that would help us control the adverse effects like air pollution are being depleted. We heard the other day, for example, that Bugoma Forest was being cleared by NEMA. I hear other plantations are being studied so that they can be established in different parts of Bugoma Forest and other forests in Bunyoro.

It was also surprising to hear that they wanted to establish a dam on Murchison Falls - actually, we call it Kabalega Falls. For your information, we have so many hydropower dams in Bunyoro but we do not see that electricity in our homes or in our trading centres. We just see it being transmitted to different places. Also, the cost of using that power is so high. We have heard of the different billing for factories. However, for us, the billing for even a small-scale factory is the same as the domestic electricity billing.

I thank the committee for defending our environment and I support the motion fully. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

6.17

**MR KENNETH LUBOGO (NRM, Bulamogi County, Kaliro):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Let me take this opportunity to appreciate my colleague, the chairperson of the committee, for such a wonderful report. I appreciate your work and the detail with which you considered this report. I would also like to appreciate ERA for having stood firm to reject this kind of proposal.

Madam Speaker, my colleague here talked earlier about the issue of the mafias and someone was not happy. However, a deserving question to ask would be: How did the minister fail to understand that the coordinates of Uhuru Falls are the same as the coordinates of Murchison Falls? I think it was deliberate and was intended to confuse us. They just wanted to mislead us that they are developing Uhuru and not Murchison Falls yet they knew right from the beginning; they could not have missed the fact that the coordinates read exactly the same.

Madam Speaker, we have got excess power production in this country. I think the power that will be produced from Karuma and Isimba is not going to be utilised for quite a long period of time because we do not have the capacity to consume that power for the foreseeable future. Now, one wonders why then we are rushing in to destroy another existing natural feature. Why would we think of destroying Murchison Falls now, when we cannot even use the power that is being produced in this country?

Finally, I think we need to consider tourism as a serious destiny for our country. This is an investment that will remain for all generations; we cannot simply go on destroying whatever is attracting people to our country. We know we have got oil, which is going to last for a short period of time. We know we can engage in industrialisation. However, most importantly, we cannot leave out the natural endowment of this country, which is attracting people to visit our country. Actually, if I am not mistaken, tourism is the highest foreign exchange earner for this country. I thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

6.20

**MR ELIJAH OKUPA (FDC, Kasilo County, Serere):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to also thank Dr Keefa Kiwanuka, together with the committee, for his report. I wish the Minister or State Minister for Energy was here because he would be able to tell us why he lied that the coordinates were different and yet what has been established shows that they are the same.

This is not just someone with an “equivalent” qualification; he is a professional engineer. How could he not know that the coordinates for Uhuru and Kabalega are different? This makes us think there was an ulterior motive with this project. No wonder, this had to go to Cabinet four times. What was that motivating factor for the minister to take this issue four times to the Cabinet?

We believe that the regulatory authority has all the professionals they need and they have given a position on this. Where was the minister getting his advice from? If the regulatory authority has said “no”, then this points to mafias at work. There is something they are up to.

The tourist attraction we have in that place reminds me of what I learned in environmental economics. In environmental economics, you are taught about non-exhaustible and exhaustible resources. This tourist attraction is a non-exhaustible resource, which Ugandans can use for life, not this dam. The committee has come up clearly to tell us that it contributes more than 30 per cent of the tourists that come to this country. Do we want to destroy that?

This is something that can increase year in year out. We should not be allowed to be hoodwinked by those mafia groups that want to make Ugandans lose the natural resources that they have. Some countries are fighting to create tourist attractions while we have been gifted by nature but we want to destroy what God has gifted this country.

Therefore, I would like to thank the committee. We must stand firm and reject this. We must call the minister to order and have him come here to explain why he lied that these were different things and yet they have the same coordinates.

I do not know why they are targeting Bunyoro area. There is also the issue of Bungoma Forest. I wish the committee could also take up this matter. This is a very serious matter, which is being messed up. Madam Speaker, you directed the ministers to come here, but they have been dodging. They are waiting for us to go for elections so that they can continue, because I have seen tractors destroying the forest. I think if the minister does not come, we should ask the committee to handle this matter. It looks like they are up to something.

I would like to thank the committee, once again, for their stand on this. We must stand with the committee, the people of Bunyoro and the people of Uganda to defend this natural resource we have. Thank you.

6.24

**MR GEOFFREY MACHO (NRM, Busia Municipality, Busia):** Madam Speaker, hon. Keefa, the chairperson of this committee, is the hero of my day. Dr Keefa and your committee, I would like to thank you very much. May God bless you and your generation. I am saying this because we have had chairpersons of committees who, because of their ambitions, betrayed the people of this country. You have, however, not done so. You are a hero, Dr Keefa and your committee.

Whenever I cross to Busoga sub-region, I cry when I do not see the waterfalls that I used to see at Bujagali. It really hurts me. I came to Kampala the first time when I was still a young boy during my Primary 7 vacation. I did not enjoy seeing the good buildings and roads in Kampala; they all left my memory but what stayed was the waterfalls at the Owen Falls Dam called Bujagali.

The mafias misadvised our government to intentionally destroy Bujagali Falls. The aim was to destroy the beauty of Busoga and eastern Uganda. As if that was not enough, they have again moved to Bunyoro with the same mission. As countries around the world are building manmade waterfalls, we are destroying God-made waterfalls. The minister with the best profession shamelessly writes a report – I do not know whether it is because of ambition – to destroy Murchison Falls.

I think in future, the people of Bunyoro should move a motion that we change this from Murchison Falls to Kabalega, so that the name of the great Kabalega stands again. I believe if these waterfalls are destroyed, the ghost of Kabalega will never forgive those people. Bujagali Falls still hurts me because it hit deep in my heart.

I believe there is a mission in Africa by the China rich gangs, working together with regimes, to get loans from our countries while destroying our heritage. This must stop. It is bad that this is what African governments do not want to hear leaders say. When we say this, they say we are fighting projects in Africa, which is not the case.

How do you really differentiate Uhuru Falls from Murchison Falls with such a distance? Even our naked grandfathers who were not industrialists or scientists could see this. Moreover, this is done while some ministers from Bunyoro are clapping. May their people judge them. This mission is going to end on Murchison Falls. Good enough, we have many Keefas in this country. May God create many Keefas in Parliament so that they save this country.

Last but not least, if you look at the advantages of the projects they want to build, they are fewer than the disadvantages. Right now, there is a big problem in Ethiopia because of the – (*Member timed out.*)

**THE SPEAKER:** One minute to conclude.

**MR MACHO:** Madam Speaker, there is a problem at the source of the Nile. The White Nile and Blue Nile have a problem because waterfalls were destroyed in Ethiopia during the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. I believe this is going to affect our continent forever. We shall not recover. This is how scientists started destroying our nature.

I, therefore, would like to summarise by saying that may these scientists who are misleading this country forgive us and leave the beauty of Uganda alone. Busoga was destroyed. Bujagali Falls were destroyed. The tourists who used to go there have now shifted. Instead of enjoying the water canoeing, people are now climbing mountains. This is a very big problem to all the families whose lives depended on the tourism at Bujagali Falls.

I condemn the minister. He must come here. Let us name him as the shame of the year for writing this report to mislead the country, which would destroy such waterfalls that God gave us. May the people who destroyed the Bujagali Falls be judged harshly by God. May God give the chairman of this committee another term as He will give me. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

6.30

**MS ELIZABETH KARUNGI (NRM, Woman Representative, Kanungu):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also would like to register my appreciation to the committee for this good work.

I would like to say that I got an opportunity to reach this site when I was serving on the Committee on Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities. It is really a very beautiful place and nobody would like to hear that it is no longer in place.

At the time we went there, we found very many tourists at the site. Like Members have said, that means money or income for our country. Therefore, those falls are the beauty of Uganda and the beauty and pride of Bunyoro, which we should all embrace.

Madam Speaker, if we support this and allow the hydropower dam to be constructed at that site, it would bring down tourism specifically. Everybody is aware that we are gaining a lot of money from tourism, so it is better for us to protect our site.

Again, it would be destroying nature. We have had many countries crying because of the effects of climate change and we have also started experiencing them in many different places. I remember in 2017, in Kanungu, it was terrible. Therefore, those are areas we need to protect for now.

I would like to commend the committee again. I thank you so much for looking at this issue. We all support you for the good of tourism in our country. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

6.32

**MS ROSE MUTONYI (NRM, Bubulo County West, Manafwa):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I support the stand of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, and I would like to thank the chairperson for the report.

I would also like to thank Government for having endeavoured so much to change the way things were in those days; we have somehow reduced on power outages. However, since they have done so much, they should stop looking at only waterfalls. At this time, Government should be looking at other sources of energy. We have a lot of wind in Uganda, for example; why don’t they start considering that instead of tampering with our natural resources?

Madam Speaker, in future, we may turn into something like South Africa, which does not have natural resources apart from the Oceans. If you go to South Africa, you find only private man-made lakes where they put ships and tourists visit to look at them. Why should we destroy our own nature and turn to man-made things?

When you go to South Africa, you find man-made waterfalls. They pump water from a river, then it goes up a hill and the water drops down through pipes. When you are viewing from afar, you may think that these are natural falls but as you get near the place, you see the pipes that pour out water. This is because they do not have natural waterfalls. Therefore, if people can go and watch those falls, why not ours?

Originally, people used to think that Bunyoro did not have natural resources, but now we have found oil. However, even the little nature that they have in form of waterfalls, the Government wants to destroy them.

I support the committee’s stand; we do not want to go into man-made things. We can have other man-made things but not when we have natural resources. We are endowed by nature; why don’t we get visitors to come and look at our endowment instead of creating man-made things?

Madam Speaker, I support the motion. We advise Government to look elsewhere for –*(Member timed out.)*

6.36

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ms Betty Aol):** Madam Speaker, thank you so much and I would like to thank the committee for the work well done.

Madam Speaker, NEMA should be at the centre of advising when people begin tampering with the natural resources that we have. I asked why we cannot have the supply of electricity directly from Karuma Dam to places in the north, especially Gulu. I was told that it will be just too much for the consumption of that small area. Maybe the minister will clarify on this when he comes to the Floor of Parliament.

Sometimes, we are told that we produce more than what we can consume and the excess goes to waste. Why should we keep on thinking about destroying our natural resources like Murchison Falls and Uhuru Falls, yet we have already destroyed more than enough? Instead, we should make sure that what we produce does not go to waste.

I was told that sometimes, the turbines are blocked because so much power is being produced by the country. Therefore, we need an explanation, let alone other alternative sources of energy like solar. I know that those alternatives are very expensive but hydropower should be properly utilised and we should never leave any of it to go to waste. I need clarification because I feel so hurt that we do not have enough and yet we are told that a lot goes to waste since we cannot consume all the power.

It is also too expensive. We need to reduce the cost of electricity for our people so that they can consume everything produced by our hydroelectric power dams, instead of thinking of creating more when we cannot consume all the power produced. Those days, we used to export electricity to some of our neighbouring countries but now, I do not know if we still export power. We were taught in geography, in primary and secondary school, that we were exporting electricity to some neighbouring countries.

Madam Speaker, I need clarification on excess power going to waste. Thank you.

6.39

**MR JACOB OPOLOT (Independent, Pallisa County, Pallisa):** Madam Speaker, for record purposes, I am Jacob Opolot and not hon. Odur. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I would like to start by delivering a message of appreciation from the family and relatives of the late hon. Alupo and Pallisa District at large, for your support and that of Parliament of Uganda towards the burial of our fallen colleague. Thank you very much for that.

Having done that, I would like to join you in commending the leadership and committee for a good report. I would like to pick up from what hon. Lubogo hinted on and also what the Leader of the Opposition has talked about.

I remember in the Ninth Parliament, I was on the Public Accounts Committee for five years but every year, there was an audit query over the expenses we were incurring to pay for power under the various small hydroelectricity projects that was not being utilised because it had not been evacuated. Government was paying heavily for that power, and I do not want to believe that by now we have evacuated all that power and are utilising it. Even then, when we still have the untapped capacity for the existing power dams, why would we eye Murchison Falls, which is already making a big contribution to this economy?

Madam Speaker, all this makes us think that some people have some selfish interests. I would not have any doubts about that because for one to close their eyes to the losses that we are already making by paying for power, which we are not evacuating - Instead of focusing on investing in infrastructure to evacuate that power so that we can distribute it countrywide, we are eyeing a very resourceful facility like Murchison Falls just because we think we can make a killing from that project. That is very unfortunate.

Madam Speaker, I wish that you could pick up the calls from this House that the minister comes and explains this and also accounts for the unutilised power that is being paid for by the taxpayer. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

6.43

**MR JOSHUA ANYWARACH (Independent, Padyere County, Nebbi):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you very much for standing with the committee as well. Committee chairperson, you have done a good job.

We had the thermal power generators in Arua and we paid a small amount for power. They then said that we need to do Nyagak Mini Hydropower Project, which is a 3.5-megawatts project. Nyagak was constructed and the amount we paid then for thermal power supply has doubled; we are paying more. When we were commissioning the project, His Highness the Aga Khan was present. The President said that this is the gentleman who helped us and we needed to pay back. Nyagak Hydropower Project uses Nyagak waters, which are free. This water is a blessing of the land. It comes from Congo and crosses through Alur-land. However, we are now paying more money for that power.

To add insult to the healing wound, the Government said it is constructing a hydropower dam of over 600 megawatts at Karuma. The pylons – the big poles that take power – have headed back to Kampala. On our side, they have stopped at Olwiyo. That is a collection point for power but they are going to export this power to South Sudan.

What is painful is that most recently, there was a launch of a power extension project to West Nile; a 100-million-dollar loan was procured for this. The power that is supposed to be extended to West Nile is supposed to be tapped from a hydropower dam in Lira. Corroborate this with the fact that in the National Development Plan III of Uganda, there is no plan to extend power to West Nile for five years and no road will be tarmacked in West Nile.

Therefore, the justification that we need more power by destroying this beautiful – I think no West Niler, northerner or anybody else in Uganda should support it. It completely has no basis.

Secondly, to construct that dam would mean that we go in for loans from Chinese. That is where the deal is. That is where they want to eat. To have the tourists come here to watch the waterfalls will not require us to borrow money from anywhere. All we need is to advertise about Uganda and inform them about the waterfalls and they will come freely and bring money here. Why should we go for construction?

Madam Speaker, technically, what hurts me is that where these waterfalls are situated is not even 10 kilometres from the current site of the dam at Karuma. What is the logic? If they thought that this other site was much better, why did they choose the current one? Something does not add up here.

What hurts me is that one of the ministers in charge of energy and mineral development is actually from our place. The connection between us and Bunyoro, right from the history of how we arrived at the park and helped to build kingdoms around, is very clear. We should love the Banyoro people more than anything else.

This is not just about a dam; it is about fighting a sub-region. Recently, they deleted Bunyoro from the history of Uganda and now they want to completely decimate the people of Bunyoro so that they do not benefit from anything. They took over all the forest land. Now, the Alur people in Bunyoro are suffering; they were killed so that their land could be taken away.

Madam Speaker, the same fight happened in Busoga. They killed Jinja Town deliberately. It was actually an industrial hub but they said that we can have industries anywhere and so on. Today, they are declaring it a city; a city specialised in what? We do not know.

There are things we cannot speak here but they are painful. This country belongs to all of us. To the mafias, who are planning for us left, right and centre, we are also watching you. If they make a mistake there, we will mobilise all Ugandans. We will even walk on foot and go to the site and protect it. There is a permanent rainbow there. If you go there, you will be surprised. It is constantly there; as long as the sun is out, you will see a rainbow. We used to fear rainbows *–(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Half a minute to conclude.

**MR ANYWARACH:** Madam Speaker, if you go to the site, you will see a free rainbow. The old myths say that a rainbow has a 12-horned head of a sheep and if you go close to it, it will eat you. When you go to those waterfalls, that whole myth is demystified. As long as the sun comes out with all the splashing water around, you will be able to see the rainbow throughout the day. The only difficult thing is that you cannot capture it on video. With all this beauty, I went there and asked myself how God did it.

You will see crocodiles downstream waiting to eat animals that fall down the waterfalls and hurt themselves or die. When you see those crocodiles waiting, you will marvel and say, “Wow! God did this for Uganda.”

Therefore, any move to convince Ugandans that we should construct a dam at that site is uncalled for; it is demonic and not Ugandan. We would like to thank the committee and the chairperson. God bless you; come back to Parliament.

6.43

**MR PENTAGON KAMUSIIME (NRM, Butemba County, Kyankwanzi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the chairperson and the members of the committee for being very vigilant.

Personally, I have been touched by hon. Macho’s submission about Bujagali. The other year, I decided to travel there with my children. I thought that the waterfalls were still there, so I wanted to show them what we saw when I was finishing senior 4. I was surprised when I reached there; they told me that even the tree that used to be somewhere on the banks was swallowed up by the water. There is nothing!

Madam Speaker, we all know about protection of our environment and mitigation of climate change but there is lack of substantial political will, believe it or not. Look at how we allocate land in wetlands to investors; it is as if the spirits that make money are located in wetlands. In Uganda, we rent out our forests to be cut and then some people plant trees, a majority of which do not even benefit the environment. That shows we are missing something. We speak but we are not walking the talk.

We need to take something from this report. One, we need to take stock of the natural tourist attractions that we have, including those waterfalls. As we look forward to sustainable development, we have to promote such attractions. Tourism brings in a lot of money. Therefore, if we go on destroying - The oil, of course, is going to bring many people to the Bunyoro Sub-region, so we hope that we will take some of them to our tourist attractions, including the waterfalls. If we destroy them now, there will be a problem.

In addition, power is not a problem. We have many sugar factories that produce power, although much of it is unutilised. Mayuge Sugar, for example, produces over 35 megawatts, Kaliro over 30 megawatts, and Kakira produces over 50 megawatts. They would want to sell all this power to the national grid. Therefore, I do not think it is true that we have a shortage of power that necessitates killing something natural that we, our children and great grandchildren would enjoy.

I would like to call upon this House put our foot down. First, we need to listen to the minister and to put something right so that we avoid greed. People want to enter deals because they feel they will get kickbacks. This is common knowledge in Uganda. However, it is killing everything.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I pray that the minister comes here to respond- *(Member timed out.)*

6.53

**MR RICHARD OSEKU (NRM, Kibale County, Pallisa**): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to reiterate my thanks to the chairperson and the members of the Committee on Natural Resources for the job well done.

I would like to speak to the public. They get sentimental many times, jump, and criticise Parliament over trivial things. This is the time to notice the value of Parliament in as far as protecting and guarding the resources of this country is concerned.

Madam Speaker, I think we have a very simple job to do here, because we are at the command of the Constitution. The Constitution clearly commands us to ensure that there is sustainable use of natural resources and this should be for generations. All the other laws made under the Constitution are to the same effect. Therefore, as Parliament, I think we have to put our foot down on this matter.

The report is very clear and it has given us a picture on the comparative advantage of tourism as an industry versus the case of simply developing hydropower stations. For this matter, I think it is very important that Uhuru and Murchison Falls have been identified clearly as the pillars behind the tourism industry around Bunyoro area and therefore, these should be protected.

Madam Speaker, this practice of every other day coming up with projects, dams here and there - there should be a rethink about these plans. As a country, I think there is need to carry out an energy needs assessment so that we know how much power we need as a country and how much we can develop from the hydro sector, so that we look towards alternative sources. Otherwise, putting the burden on our natural resources - water, which is not even enough - should be discouraged.

Madam Speaker, in the same vein, as a country, we need to carry out an audit of the power, which is generated in this country. This has been hinted on by some Members here. We should also see how it is used. For us every day to say that we are producing power, we want to invest in this dam and the other, is not going to help us. We need to know how much power is produced and how it is utilised.

For that matter, as a Parliament, I think it is important that we recommend a moratorium on the development of power stations on our rivers and lakes, so that we are able to meet the need to sustain the environment as the Constitution calls upon us to do. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

6.57

**MR JAMES BABA (NRM, Koboko County, Koboko):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is true that the population of this country is still largely living in darkness. Less than 30 per cent of Ugandans have access to electricity, which is very sad; 60 years after our independence, our people still live in darkness. Therefore, any effort to try to generate more power should be commended but it should not be done at any cost.

In this regard, I would like to thank the honourable Dr Keefa Kiwanuka, the Chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, and the members for a very emphatic report to say that this self-propelled study initiated by foreigners, not even our Government, must be put to rest once and for all. How can you come thrice still trying to push for the same thing? What motives are you up to? When Cabinet rejected it - Cabinet must also review its decision-making processes. How do you reject something twice and you still allow it to continue? This is terrible.

Actually, the first Chairman of Uganda Electricity Board, the late Erisa Kironde, in the 1950s, was a man of great foresight. He fought very hard to ensure Ripon Falls and Owen Falls were preserved but the colonialists overpowered him. He wanted power dams to be put underground using pipes and without destroying Ripon Falls and Owen Falls. They overpowered him and today we do not have Ripon Falls and Bujagali Falls downstream. They have been lost forever.

We cannot allow this to happen to Karuma. It is the jewel of tourism in the country. It does not only have the waterfalls; it has boat rides, game viewing, sport fishing and it attracts thousands of tourists every year, save for the COVID-19 period. This is a jewel for eternity.

Madam Speaker, I would like to suggest that Government now looks at new technologies to generate power using our water resources without destroying the triple heritage we have in Murchison National Park. I thank the committee for giving us this report. Let Government not attempt again to find other tricks of coming up to develop Uhuru or Murchison Falls as the plan has been. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Honourable members, I want to thank you for the contributions. Minister, do you want to say something?

7.00

**THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Mr Raphael Magyezi):** Thank you,Madam Speaker. These are the rare moments one enjoys being the Leader of Government Business and – *(Laughter)*

I have listened very carefully and I would like to thank this committee; they have done a good job. Sometimes, you should stay until the end. This was one of the best presentations I have heard today.

Madam Speaker, I have visited Murchison Falls National Park with my family. The beauty of Budongo Forest, the beauty of the waterfalls, and when you reach Paraa Safari Lodge, the cultural presentation by the group there – this place is unique. If it is true that there is somebody intending to destroy this beauty, then it is very unfortunate.

Arguments have been given, but I would like to pass over this message to our colleague, the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, so that we get some clear answers. Is it true, for example, that the minister gave wrong information regarding the location of these two waterfalls? Is it true that given all these disadvantages, the minister does not see the problem with this undertaking or proposal?

I think the fact that Government has once or twice said “wait a bit” means that there is a problem. However, I think sometimes, we have made some statements, which could be a little over board. Understandably, it is a bit annoying to see such a beautiful resource being tampered with. However, hon. Macho, I do not think that Government has a plan to destroy the beauty of any of the regions of this country. I do not also think that it is true that there is lack of political will for the environment; otherwise, this would have immediately passed and been given a nod.

Something that has hit me hard is when a colleague said that he has read the NDP III and has found that in the entire West Nile, Government is not going to undertake any road or electricity extension projects in the entire region for the next five years. This is something that I have taken note of; I really want to come back and say “No, there is this road and there is that electricity project”. If it is true, then that would be something to correct.

If there is anything that we should protect, I think it is that waterfalls and the park because of the revenue it is bringing in and the need to balance electricity generation with other economic activities. Therefore, this is a point that we must take up. I will certainly pass this message to the colleagues in Cabinet, and I want to believe that the minister will come here to give a response on some of these technical issues.

As I looked at the committee report, - honourable chair, you may need to clarify - did I see that it is only nine members out of 28 who signed the report? Hasn’t it fallen short of the mandatory one-third of the members of the committee who should sign a report? It is a small matter but I hope that the other members will not have reservations. I have looked at the detailed paper and it is signed by nine Members. This is a little on the lower side. *(Interjection)* – Oh, they are 10. My apologies for that *– (Interjection)-*

The honourable member is saying that Government will never bring it up again. I have made a commitment that I will tell the minister responsible to come immediately and give a response to the committee report. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable minister and Members. Again, I want to thank the chair and members of the Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources for this job.

I just want to say that the position of this House is that we stand with the Electricity Regulatory Authority, which took a decision to reject the application. We stand with the people of Uganda who have expressed their displeasure at any attempt to interfere with Murchison Falls and Uhuru Falls.

It is more annoying that Bonang Company does not even have a presence in Uganda. Can you imagine! They do not even have an address in Uganda and they are going to destroy Murchison Falls! It is really annoying.

Honourable minister, you are now our ambassador; inform the Cabinet that the people of Uganda have expressed their views on this issue and Murchison Falls should not be disturbed. Thank you very much, honourable members. The House is adjourned to Tuesday at 2.00 p.m.

*(The House rose at 7.06 p.m. and adjourned until Tuesday, 29 September 2020 at 2.00 p.m.)*