



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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THIRD SESSION - THIRD MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 17 APRIL 2024



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

THIRD SESSION - 26TH SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Wednesday, 17 April 2024

Parliament met at 10:00 a.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

(The Speaker, Ms Anita Among, in the Chair.)

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I welcome you to today's sitting. Yesterday, we deferred the consideration of Rationalisation of Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX) Bills to today. I urge Members to exhibit their usual commitment and comply with Rule 112(1) of the Rules of Procedure that requires them to attend all the House sittings, unless they have been given leave of absence.

As we draw to the close of the Third Session of the 11th Parliament, we need to offset all the pending business and take priority on the Bills. I, therefore, urge all the committee chairpersons to ensure that the Bills are completed and brought to the House for consideration.

I thank all of you for coming and wish you nice deliberations. Yes, Hon. Tebandeke?

10.03

MR CHARLES TEBANDEKE (NUP, Bbaale County, Kayunga): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate your efforts in seeing that this Parliament exhibits its performance, more so when it comes to the processing of Bills.

My worry is that we have processed a number of Bills and I have also seen that the Order Paper is full of a lot of Bills. However, even for the Bills that we process, assenting to them becomes a big challenge. Even when they have been assented to by the assenting authority, the failure by the ministers to come up with regulations affects their performance.

In reference to the Acts of Parliament Act, section -

THE SPEAKER: Which Acts of Parliament Act? We do not have that law.

MR TEBANDEKE: Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: First of all, Hon. Tebandeke, let us do what we ought to do. Let us do our job. Let us not take over some other responsibility which is not ours. Ours is legislation. Let us pass the Bills. Assent is on the Executive. The issue of bringing guidelines is also on them. We should not stop doing what we are supposed to do because the other people are not doing what they ought to do.

MR TEBANDEKE: Madam Speaker, as I appreciate that, kindly -

THE SPEAKER: I have already responded to you. Yes?

10.04

MR MUWADA NKUNYINGI (NUP, Kyadondo County East, Wakiso): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last year, Uganda's ambassador to Iran -

THE SPEAKER: Are you responding to my communication?

MR NKUNYINGI: Yes, Madam Speaker. In the face of the current tensions between Iran and Israel, we have several Ugandan nationals who are in that region –

THE SPEAKER: Is one of the Bills talking about that?

MR NKUNYINGI: Madam Speaker, they have not received the advice -

THE SPEAKER: Please, sit. Bring it as a substantive item tomorrow. Yes, Hon. Jonathan?

10.06

MR JONATHAN EBWALU (Independent, Soroti West Division, Soroti City): Madam Speaker, I thank you. The point here is on the attendance of Parliament, and for us to do our job as Members of Parliament.

We have been here all the time attacking the absence of ministers. Today, I see only two here. We do not see the Attorney-General. Before we go to the ministers, look at our side; the Opposition. We are not in Parliament. I think that is the question the Speaker is raising, that we must be in Parliament, attend the sessions and ensure that we do our part. When it goes to the President, it is another matter. Let us first do our part. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Panadol?

10.07

MR PETER MUGEMA (Independent, Iganga Municipality, Iganga): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Mine is on an assassination attempt on the life of my boss, the Leader of the Opposition (LOP). Yesterday, I heard him saying that his life was at stake; it is in danger. There could be assassination attempts. He is my close friend. I do not want to lose him. Maybe he can clarify on that.

THE SPEAKER: Who is your boss?

MR MUGEMA: LOP.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us not play to the gallery. I am seeing a lot of things. If there is an assassination plan, go and report it to the police. Who can assassinate a person? For what? Of what value are you? Let us not play to the gallery.

Anyway, if this was talked about in a bar, maybe some people had taken something. I am saying – for me, those are things that should not even come here, because we do not assassinate people. Nobody is of such value that we want to assassinate him. Stop playing to the gallery. Next item.

LAYING OF PAPERS

REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO THE 13TH EDITION OF THE EAST AFRICAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GAMES, 2023, KIGALI, RWANDA

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, yesterday I undertook to accord the Chairperson, Uganda Parliamentary Sports Club, Hon. Asuman Basalirwa, the MP of Bugiri Municipality, an opportunity to table the report of the Ugandan parliamentary delegation to the 13th edition of the East African Inter-Parliamentary Games, held in Kigali, Rwanda.

Hon. Basalirwa will present a report today and Hon. Francis Mwijukye will also be given time to present a report from the disciplinary committee on what happened in South Sudan. That will be after they have finished with the report – because he is a member of the disciplinary committee.

Yes, Hon. Basalirwa?

10.10

MR ASUMAN BASALIRWA (JEEMA, Bugiri Municipality, Bugiri): Madam Speaker, I thank you so much for the opportunity. Our technical team should have made this report available to the honourable colleagues in the morning, so that as I make

a presentation, which will be a summarised version, colleagues can be able to follow on their gadgets.

The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) started the inter-parliamentary games in 2009 as an annual activity of the regional parliaments and the member national legislatures. The games are important in fostering relations among member states, in line with Article 49(2)(a) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community.

EALA which coordinates the games organised the 13th edition of the inter-parliamentary games which were hosted by Parliament of Rwanda in Kigali from 8th to 19th December 2023, under the theme, “For a Progressive, Peaceful, and All-Inclusive East African Community.” I would like to emphasise here that every year, these games are held under a certain theme. For last year, the theme was, “For a progressive, peaceful and all-inclusive East African Community.”

The following parliaments of partner states participated in the 13th edition of these games. We had the East African Legislative Assembly, which is always the coordinator and organiser, the Parliament of Rwanda, which was the host, Parliament of Burundi, the National Assembly of Kenya, the National Assembly of Tanzania, the Transitional National Legislative Assembly of South Sudan, and the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda.

Unlike other previous editions, all the teams this time strictly comprised of Members of Parliament. The Bureau of Speakers, however, in their last meeting, tasked the Joint Planning Committee (JPC) with reviewing the decision after the tournament.

Madam Speaker, you recall that we had issues in Arusha. We also had issues in Juba regarding eligibility. Therefore, a decision was taken that moving forward, only MPs participate in these games. We hope that the decision will either be maintained or will be reviewed by you, the Bureau of Speakers.

I now turn to page 5, that is 4.1. Following a resolution of the 16th Bureau of Speakers of Parliaments, it provided that two Members of Parliament and staff should serve on the independent competitions and this very committee during the games, with the aim of managing the games and resolving disputes. I am glad, Madam Speaker, that you will be giving one of the members of this very committee an opportunity to throw some light on their assignments that you gave them as Bureau of Speakers.

I will go to page 6, particularly 5.0. I would like to emphasise that Team Uganda started preparations for the 13th edition of the inter-parliamentary games as early as January 2023. I also want to mention that for purposes of this edition, some of the disciplines have already begun training. In fact, some disciplines began training as early as January this year and are already engaged in some friendly competitions. I know basketball, and the captain, Hon. Mwine Mpaka is there, have been engaged in some competitions. I also know that in football, they have been engaged in some competitions. Already, preparations for this year’s edition, for some disciplines, have already begun – even volleyball. Although officially, we are yet to formally communicate.

After several training sessions and friendly matches, discipline coaches and captains, as directed by you, the patron, generated and submitted lists of their respective teams, comprising of only Members that were to represent Parliament of Uganda at the games. The selection was done based on competencies and needs identified by both the coaches and captains.

Again, I want to emphasise the fact that there is always a tendency by some honourable colleagues who come to the chairman or the manager seeking to be included in squads. That responsibility was assigned to the coaches. Therefore, if anybody wants to represent Team Uganda in any discipline, they must satisfy the coaches. Since these coaches have contracts of Parliament, when they do not perform, at least the Commission can take decisions against

them. Therefore, it is important for honourable colleagues to understand that you can only be included on the team to represent Parliament of Uganda only and only if your performance is to the satisfaction of the coaches in conjunction with the captains.

Madam Speaker, we would like to thank you and the Parliamentary Commission. This time around, uniforms and track suits were procured, distributed, and they were indeed up to quality. We were very smart. I think those who were in Kigali can attest to this. *(Applause)* We want to thank the Parliamentary Commission. I can see the commissioners here, Hon. Silwany, Hon. Afoyochan, and you, Madam Speaker, who is the Chairperson of the Commission. We are really very grateful that this time around the quality and smartness were up there.

Results

Most games and disciplines were played using the league format as resolved by the Bureau of Speakers and the Joint Planning Committee.

Athletics

Seven teams comprising of Members of Parliament from EALA, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda participated in the two-day athletics competition at Nyamata Stadium in Bugesera District, about 30 kilometres from the city of Kigali. This competition was held on Monday, 11 December 2023, and Saturday, 16 December 2023.

The races were 100 metres men and women, 4X100 women and men, 200 metres women and men, 400 metres women and men, 400X4 women and men, 800 metres women and men, 1,500 metres women and men, 1,600 metres walking race for women and men.

Individual results in athletics

I have the honour to report that the different races under the different categories were won as follows:

100 metres (women)

Overall, number one, the Hon. Achom Joan Alobo from Uganda won the Gold. *(Applause)* I saw her around. Yes. Thank you very much and thank you for representing us.

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations, Hon. Joan.

MR BASALIRWA: Number two, the Hon. Helen Auma Wandera from Uganda won silver in that category. The bronze went to another country. I want to emphasise that we were the best in that category, number one and number two.

100 metres (men)

Number one, Hon. Bernard Odoi Onen from Uganda won gold. Number two and three came from another country, so I will not mention them.

200 metres (women)

I only mention where we won. Number one, Hon. Joan Acom Alobo from Uganda, won gold. We want to thank you. Number two, Hon. Agnes Taka, my Woman MP, Bugiri, won silver. Bugiri continues to shine. *(Applause)*

200 metres (men)

Hon. Patrick Ochan from Uganda, won bronze. Sorry, he won gold.

THE SPEAKER: Why have you put bronze?

MR BASALIRWA: No, it is a typing error. It must be a typing error. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: What did he win?

MR BASALIRWA: It was definitely gold.

200 metres (women)

We took the third position this time round. Hon. Mugabi Susan from Buvuma, Uganda, earned us a bronze medal. We congratulate her. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations.

MR BASALIRWA: 400 metres for men, number one is Hon. Ssekitoleeko Robert from Uganda won a gold medal. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations.

MR BASALIRWA: Number two, is Hon. Odoi Bernard Onen, from Uganda who won a silver medal. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations, Hon. Odoi.

MR BASALIRWA: 800 metres for women; we took the second and third positions. In second position was Hon. Christine Akello, from Uganda who won a silver medal.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Christine Akello, please stand up. She is there. Congratulations. *(Applause)*

MR BASALIRWA: Hon. Auma Hellen Wandera, from Uganda won a bronze medal.

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations.

MR BASALIRWA: 800 metres for men, we took the third position. Hon. Acon Julius from Uganda won a bronze medal. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Medalist.

MR BASALIRWA: Yes. Madam Speaker, 1500 metres for women, we took the second and third positions. Hon. Christine Akello from Uganda won a gold medal. The first position won gold, and Hon. Hellen Wandera Auma from Uganda won a bronze medal in 1500 metres.

Madam Speaker, 1500 metres for men; Hon. Acon Julius from Uganda won a gold medal. *(Applause)*

1600 metres; this is a walking race, Madam Speaker. Women members of Parliament - Hon. Akello Christine from Uganda won a gold medal. She was the defending champion. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations.

MR BASALIRWA: Hon. Abeja Susan from Uganda, won a silver medal. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations.

MR BASALIRWA: Then for 1600 metres; walking race for men. Madam Speaker, we took the second and third positions. Hon. Ocan Patrick from Uganda won a silver medal and Hon. Teira John from Uganda won a bronze medal. *(Applause)*

Madam Speaker, the results for the respective team races, under each category, are shown below. We can look at the screens and get the summary.

Trophies

Madam Speaker, in the previous editions, athletics trophies have always been given to women athletics champions, the men's athletics champion and the overall athletics champion obtained after considering the performance of both men and women athletics teams.

The overall athletics champion was not one of the categories for award in this edition. Points were awarded for each category as per the number of participating teams, which was six as shown below.

Madam Speaker, I want to emphasise that in Athletics for women, Uganda was the overall winner with 18 medals in athletics for women. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR BASALIRWA: Madam Speaker, in athletics for men, Uganda was overall winner with a total of 18 medals. *(Applause)*

Madam Speaker, let us go to Tag-of-War on page 13. The teams comprising of members of Parliament participated in the two-day Tug-of-War competition, at Integrated Polytechnic Regional College (IPRC)Kicukiro, Kigali on Monday, 11th and 16 December 2023. The

team performance in Tug-of-War for each of the categories is shown as below.

The table indicates the scores but we want to emphasise that in that table as you can see, on page 14; Tug-of-War for women – the standings. The gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded as follows:

Madam Speaker, the second runner-up of bronze in Tug-of-War for women, was Team Uganda. *(Applause)*

Tug-of-war for men, on page 15

The points scored per team are as follows; in that table on page 15, we obtained four points and took the fourth position in that discipline of Tug-of-War.

Team performances for each of the categories, and for emphasis purposes, Madam Speaker, you as the Bureau of Speakers decided that Tug-of-War be one of the disciplines that will be played by colleagues with disabilities. That is the game specifically for colleagues in that category.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Lumumba promised to be here at 8:30 a.m. You are welcome. She has kept time!

10. 36

MINISTER, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER (GENERAL DUTIES) (Ms Justine Lumumba): Madam Speaker, I came early but I had to go and attend to an issue but *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.*

THE SPEAKER: Amen. *(Laughter)* Only Catholics can understand that.

MR BASALIRWA: It means apologies and a thousand apologies. We the Catholics know it well. *(Laughter)*

Madam Speaker, on page 16, the tables for Darts (Women) are indicated as follows: Number two on that table, Hon. Ababiku Jesca from Uganda emerged as number two in Darts. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR BASALIRWA: We had Darts for women with disabilities (in wheelchairs) and Hon. Kanushu Laura emerged as number two of all the participating teams in that category. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Congratulations, Hon. Kanushu.

MR BASALIRWA: Madam Speaker, Darts for men, Hon. Balimwezo Ronald Nsubuga from Uganda was number two overall. *(Applause)*

The first runner-up in that category was Hon. Mpindi Bumali, from Uganda who obtained a silver medal. *(Applause)*

Golf

On page 18, Golf for ladies

Madam Speaker, Golf attracted the participation of three ladies' teams namely; Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. The points scored by each team are indicated below.

Madam Speaker, gold, silver and bronze medals for Golf women category were awarded as follows;

The best ladies' team that won a gold medal is Team Uganda. *(Applause)*

Golf (Men)

Madam Speaker, the medals in that category of golf, were awarded as follows;

The best men's team that won gold is Team Uganda. *(Applause)*

Madam Speaker, I want to mention, specifically here, that the Rt. Hon. Deputy Speaker, Thomas Tayebwa played a key role as an international golfer in ensuring that we emerge number one in this category. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. He was actually the best golfer. Can't you clap for the Deputy Speaker? Congratulations. *(Applause)*

MR BASALIRWA: In this category, Madam Speaker, I want to mention that there is also what they call “Individual Performance Accolades” in terms of the longest drive. I want to mention that in terms of the longest drive in golf, Hon. Alioni Odria from Uganda was number one.

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations, Hon. Odria. *(Applause)*

MR BASALIRWA: Hon. Caroline Kamusiime from Team Uganda emerged as the best in longest drive for ladies was. *(Applause)*

Madam Speaker, in the category of points scored, the best golfer among the ladies, Hon. Judith Alyek from Team Uganda, got 78 points *–(Applause)–* and the overall winner in that category was Hon. Sylvia Nayebale from Team Uganda with 78 points. The nearest to the pin was Hon. Janepher Mbabazi from Team Uganda.

Basketball

Madam Speaker, five teams, namely Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, participated in the basketball women’s category. The scores of the matches played are shown below but I would like to emphasise the rankings for the different disciplines overall. When you look at page 22, the best in women’s basketball was Tanzania and Uganda was the first runner-up with silver. *(Applause)*

In basketball men, six teams performed or participated in this category. The scores are indicated in the table. For purposes of the report, I would like to go to page 22 and observe that for the men’s basketball category, Team Uganda emerged the winner with a gold medal. *(Applause)* We thank and congratulate them.

Volleyball

Madam Speaker, on page 23, five teams performed or participated in the women’s volleyball category and the scores are indicated in that table. For purposes of positions and

awards, I would like to refer you to page 24 and observe that for volleyball women overall, Team Uganda were champions with a gold medal. *(Applause)*

In volleyball men, six teams participated in the tournament. I would like to refer you to page 26 and observe that overall in that category, we were nowhere to be seen *–(Laughter)–* because bronze, silver and gold were taken by some other countries that I do not want to put on record.

Netball

Five teams participated in netball, including Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan and Uganda. The scores are indicated in the table on page 26. For purposes of awards, I would like to mention that in netball, Team Uganda was the first runner-up with silver. We would like to congratulate them. *(Applause)*

Football

Six teams participated in the football league, namely, EALA, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. We would like to emphasise, on page 28, the following awards. First of all, Madam Speaker, for purposes of football, the tables and points are very clear.

On page 29, we would like to emphasise that Team Uganda were an overall champion in football and won a gold medal. *(Applause)* Two records were made. Hon. Karim Masaba was the top scorer in that tournament with 15 goals. I saw him around *(Applause)* We would like to thank him.

Two, Team Uganda also set a new record for scoring the highest number of goals in a tournament, for purposes of football. Madam Speaker, for your information, the captain of our football team is Hon. Hassim Magogo. *(Applause)–* for purposes of emphasis and clarity, and avoidance of doubt. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations, Budiope East.

MR BASALIRWA: Madam Speaker, we would also like to mention that you are the patron of the Parliamentary Sports Club and Hon. Magogo is the captain of the Parliamentary Football Club.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Asuman is the permanent chairperson. *(Laughter)*

MR BASALIRWA: I am the chairman of the club. Madam Speaker, briefly, I would like us to walk through these challenges that were identified. The following challenges were identified –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Kasule has an issue.

MS LUMUMBA: Madam Speaker, I just became very happy when I saw people who are attached to the Kingdom of Busoga taking the lead in this. I felt proud. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: She is just happy for the *Kyabazinga* and *Inhebantu*.

MR BASALIRWA: I had not observed that, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Hon. Lumumba for mentioning it; I was actually not aware.

- (a) Failure of the JPC to divest itself of the mandate to run and manage the games was a challenge;
- (b) The walking race had officiating challenges because Rwanda had no trained umpires to officiate the walking race. We hope it will be better;
- (c) Non-adherence to the rules by some teams, causing inconvenience. Madam Speaker, at one time, Team South Sudan declined to play Team Uganda on account that Hon. Masaba and Hon. Paul Nsubuga were not MPs; and that they were too young to be MPs. *(Laughter)* In fact, they said Hon. Ogwang was not near Parliament. *(Laughter)* That game was actually called off. We showed them every document, but they said, “No”, and we had to play that game at the last minute;

(d) There were no resting benches for Persons with Disabilities who were participating in darts;

(e) The restriction of the tournament to only Members of Parliament affected some teams such as Rwanda and EALA, and they ended up withdrawing from the games;

(f) The costs for each golf player were significantly higher than what was planned for. This is an issue that needs to be addressed; and

(g) The long distances between the different venues was also another challenge that was highlighted.

Appreciation

Madam Speaker, as you have observed, Team Uganda performed exceptionally well. In fact, for the avoidance of doubt, Team Uganda was selected as the best overall team in that tournament. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you and congratulations, Team Uganda.

MR BASALIRWA: We, therefore, would like to thank you, Madam Speaker and patron of the club, the Parliamentary Commission and Clerk to Parliament for ensuring that Team Uganda travelled and took part in the games.

We also thank the Rt Hon. Deputy Speaker who successfully led the team to Kigali. He was not only a leader but strongly participated and competed in the different disciplines, cheering the different disciplines.

In fact, the Deputy Speaker would play golf and then go to all pitches to cheer the different teams that were playing. We would like to thank him very much; he was a very big inspiration during the tournament and remained our number-one fan.

We also would like, in a special way, to thank the Leader of Opposition Emeritus, Hon.

Mathias Mpuuga, who made it to Kigali and offered support and also found time to visit different teams. Each time we see our leaders, we are greatly inspired. We would like to appreciate them.

Lastly, the preparations and success of these games would not have been possible without the staff who formed part of the EALA Games Secretariat. These staff performed almost all the core activities; protocol, organisation and management. We thank them and we are greatly indebted to them.

Madam Speaker, in a special way, I thank and recognise the coaches who have been and continue coaching us. I am aware that some of them are here; Coach Tom Lwanga for football, Coach Sadiq Wasswa, the legendary *-(Applause)-* and other coaches *-(Interjection)-* Coach Bob, I am talking about those I am seeing; our doctor, Dr Tumwesigye, is over there.

We received apologies from the other coaches who are not here because somehow, the information was at short notice. Finally, in a special way, we thank the Members of Parliament for the teamwork and solidarity that was exhibited.

What used to happen in Kigali is that if there was a football game and other disciplines were not playing, everybody would be cheering the football team and if there was a basketball game and other people were not playing, they would be at the basketball courts. As well as for all the disciplines.

Honourable colleagues, we thank you for your solidarity and teamwork; it was that solidarity and teamwork that made us successful. Furthermore, I take the honour to present and lay on Table the different trophies that were won by the different disciplines for record purposes.

This was awarded to Team Uganda for their overall performance as athletics trophy winner for the women. I beg to lay. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Congratulations.

MR BASALIRWA: Madam Speaker, this was awarded to Team Uganda as the golf trophy for the best men. I beg to lay.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Congratulations.

MR BASALIRWA: This was awarded to Team Uganda as the football trophy, overall winner. I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Congratulations.

MR BASALIRWA: This was awarded to Team Uganda as the best basketball trophy winner, men. I beg to lay. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations.

MR BASALIRWA: This was awarded to Team Uganda as the best golf trophy, women.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Congratulations.

MR BASALIRWA: This is a volleyball trophy, women's winner. I beg to lay.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR BASALIRWA: Madam Speaker, this trophy is for the athletics winner, men. I beg to lay. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR BASALIRWA: I would also like to report that the individual medals were awarded and taken by the individual winners. I had requested the individual winners to come –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Julius Acon and Hon. Robert Ssekitoleeko, we congratulated you when you were away.

MR BASALIRWA: Madam Speaker, he is the captain. We had wanted these individual winners to come wearing their medals, but it was on short notice. However, we confirm that they received their medals and they have them. Maybe at an appropriate time, there will be a function where they will put on those medals.

As I conclude, there are two things; I am aware that some disciplines have begun training. We thank you, Madam Speaker, that now the coaches are staff of Parliament and they are engaged in training exercises. Please, we should begin early and I am sure the coaches are there.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I thank you together with the teams for your participation. Thank you, for God and my country. *(Applause.)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Chairman, Parliamentary Sports Club and Team Uganda for winning all the medals and trophies. We will take all the trophies and deposit them in the parliamentary documents and archives for reference; we will have all our trophies kept there. Nobody will take them away.

On a special note, I thank the team for the discipline that you had while in Kigali. I got a report that Uganda was the most disciplined team. I also thank the Deputy Speaker and the former Leader of the Opposition (LoP) who joined you in Kigali and made sure that you came back with the trophies and all the persons who participated for Team Uganda. *(Applause)*

I thank you and congratulations. We made a commitment because there was an increment of some days, we shall make good of it in these coming games; we will add those days you spent with my permission.

We thank you and we will continue appropriating money for these games. You know the games are for deepening, widening and tightening of the East African Community.

I am surprised – Hon. Osoru, why have you got out of this? You used to be a very good runner.

10.47

MS MOURINE OSORU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua City): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Due to my health reasons, I would not run because I had an operation. However, I promise this time round, you know me as usual. I will be among the gold medals and I will bring the medal for Team Uganda.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Chairman, Parliamentary Sports Club for leading the team, the players and the cheer masters. I also thank the Parliament of Uganda and most especially the President for accepting to give us the money for that activity. He could as well say, “We are not giving you the money,” but he accepted for us to be able to promote the East African Community. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The Government wants to say a word.

10.48

THE MINISTER, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER (GENERAL DUTIES) (Ms Kasule-Lumumba): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the National Resistance Movement Government, I congratulate you as Parliament of Uganda for the exemplary performance you put, and for marketing Uganda within East Africa and beyond. *(Applause.)*

Madam Speaker, in a special way, I would like to thank you and the leadership of Parliament, for promoting games in this institution because it is a unifying factor where we forget all our differences and pressures in constituencies and we put together efforts to make sure that we work as a team. We should keep that unifying spirit because it is important.

Lastly, when I heard the chairperson saying that some players were rejected because they looked not of age, and yet our age according to the Constitution is 18 years, let us take it positively because when you do exercise as you practise to be able to go and win, it means that people are improving on their health that they even look younger than their age.

We should take it as a serious issue and make sure more join to continue looking younger so that they remain healthy to serve Uganda better. Congratulations, once again. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Bahati has brought some messages to my attention. I am happy that I am not on social media because I do not want stress. There was something written on social media that yesterday, I barked at Hon.

Bahati as being one of the worst ministers – incapable of running the ministry of trade and that, that is why traders are striking. This is very false and malicious.

I instruct the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) to investigate this. I want to get the sponsors of this. Some people are monopolising the use of social media to destroy others. Hon. Bahati is one minister who is permanently here – a very active minister. *(Applause)* How can you attack such a minister?

I think there is a problem in this country. There is misuse of social media. How can you - I think you people need prayers. How can you start abusing social media to that extent? You say Hon. Bahati was attacked!

Hon. Bahati, we shall need a report on striking traders. Do you have the report now?

As we wait for the report to be uploaded, we will start on other Business. They are uploading the report and I want us to look at that report exhaustively.

Social media – leave those. I think that is where they earn from. I am going to bring people to book. I think they do not know whom they are dealing with. *(Laughter)* Next item.

MR ODUR: Madam Speaker, you have gone on record that you are not on social media. I am, and there is a handle attributed to your name. There is a social media handle on Twitter –

THE SPEAKER: Next item. Hon. Mpaka?

BILLS
SECOND READING

THE WAREHOUSE RECEIPT SYSTEM
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Trade, Industries and Cooperatives will move a motion to that effect. We have three Bills under the trade ministry and they are very small Bills.

Honourable members, can we agree that he moves a motion for all the three Bills, the committee chairperson gives us reports for all the Bills, we debate and, then, we go to the committee stage, one Bill at a time?

If it does not offend Hon. Jonathan.

MR ODUR: Madam Speaker, before we start debating these Bills, I wanted to implore your committee chairperson to give this House at least ample time to discuss the principles of rationalisation without looking at any particular Bill, because this is a major policy shift by the Government. If it pleases you, we could have an hour or two when the House can just deliberate on the principles of rationalisation, as defined by the Government.

If we do that and come to a conclusion that this is a policy shift acceptable to this House or if we oppose it, it would help us when we go to process the Bills and dispose of them even within very few minutes.

I implore you that before we even start looking at the individual Bills that have been laid, we, first, discuss the principles around this so that we do not regret it. If we exhaustively discuss, we shall not –

THE SPEAKER: Government? All boys from Amach. *(Laughter)*

10.57

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua): Hon. Odur and I share a constituency. If he decides to put a roadblock, I need a very brave and strong contingent to access my constituency – but that is for another day.

Madam Speaker, you recall that, at first, the Government delivered to Parliament the Bills, where Parliament decided that we unpack them. When the Ministry of Public Service was in charge of the omnibus Bill, we explained why the rationalisation.

The intended role of rationalisation is not to bring about unemployment, honourable

colleagues. The intended role of rationalisation is to make the Government ministries, departments and agencies more efficient, by bringing all entities together under ministries, departments and agencies of the Government – and this was explained.

On how it is going to be done, a clear example was Rural Electrification Agencies (REA). Of course, you know the transitional period led to some delays, but when the minister was here, he explained that all engineers who were under REA are now all incorporated under the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development.

The other cadres, for instance, accountants, who are normally nominated and posted by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, will go back. For the lawyers, they will go back to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and the Attorney-General's Chamber.

Those who may not meet the required qualifications for these particular jobs are the people whom the Government will plan to compensate.

However, in a nutshell, all these people who are going to be mainstreamed will be under the salaries of our mainstream civil service. That is the essence of rationalisation, in a nutshell.

Every minister will come to explain because there are Acts that will be repealed or amended for us to accommodate the shift.

Madam Speaker, in the circumstances, I would like to persuade my brother and neighbour, Hon. Odur that we allow ministries to proceed with the Bills that Parliament advised should be unpacked and we handle them one at a time.

However, I also want to agree with you because the way you have guided does not offend any rule for the minister to move that all Bills under this ministry be presented, we debate and move to Committee Stage and handle them one at a time. That would give us time to proceed very fast at the speed of this Parliament under your Chair.

Therefore, Hon. Odur, may I kindly persuade you, my neighbour, that we proceed as guided. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, when this issue of RAPEX came up, this House formed a select committee, which was chaired by none other than one of the elders in this House, that is, Hon. Nathan. Could we hear from Hon. Nathan Byanyima?

11.01

MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North County, Isingiro): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I agree with you that a nine-member committee was set up. We did a thorough job and we were convinced that rationalisation is a good policy shift but not for all the agencies that were brought to this House. *(Applause)*

We had thought that we would get time for this House to debate the report. Unfortunately, it was not. What I did –

THE SPEAKER: But we adopted as it was.

MR BYANYIMA: Yes, we adopted it. I requested the chairpersons, as they considered these individual Bills to look at the report so they can be guided by it. Incidentally, I can see a lot of pressure from the ministers to take the other position but I am comfortable that this House is honourable enough to take a decision by looking at each agency in its own merits and demerits.

I would like to say that we do not need to rush like we rushed during the divestiture of enterprises in this country. We are now going back. Therefore, I would like this House to look at these agencies critically to avoid – *(Applause)* – just like a stopgap somewhere where we shall not have services continuing to be delivered to the people – *(Interjections)* – like Rural Electrification Agency (REA) and many others.

THE SPEAKER: The Rural Electrification Agency was not a formation of this House.

MR BYANYIMA: The most important issue is that have some funds available so that the people you do not want to continue with your lean agencies can get their money and look for someone else for their life. Currently –

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, I advised that all the committees should look at the committee of Parliament's report, which I believe the chairpersons of committees have had a look at when they were considering the Bills. When you look at what we approved as Parliament, about 70 per cent were in agreement. There are some of these redundant agencies that need to be taken back to the ministry. However, there are those that this House will have to make a decision on. If you cannot make a decision by "Ayes", we shall vote.

MR ODUR: Madam Speaker, I have no intention of blocking any process here but there are four key elements not properly explained by Government that I thought this House should understand.

"Rationalisation" according to Government means "merger", "mainstreaming", "transfer" and also "winding up." Those are four key policy positions that must be explained so that when the House adopts and says we are mainstreaming; we actually understand what mainstreaming is. If they are saying they are going to merge – *(Interruption)*

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: Madam Speaker, these are not the first Bills we are going to repeal. If you may recall, we have already repealed some under the rationalisation perspective. Now, Hon. Odur is trying to reopen a general debate, which has been overtaken by the events. Are we proceeding very well?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we already handled the National Records and Archives Agency and National Information Technology Authority- Uganda (NITA-U), which this House rejected. We are now on a third Bill. I think let us move on. Where you

reject, like I have already heard people talk – Hon. Odur, thank you for accepting.

Honourable members, in the public gallery this morning, we have students from Kitara Students Association of Kampala International University, Kampala Campus. They are represented by Hon. Malende Shamim and Hon. Nyeko Derrick. You are most welcome. Please stand up. *(Applause)*

Also in the public gallery this morning, we have students from U-CAN International School Entebbe. They are represented by Hon. Naluyima Betty Ethel and Hon. Kakembo Michael. You are most welcome to Parliament. Please stand up. Join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)*

11.07

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bills entitled, "The Warehouse Receipt System (Amendment) Bill, 2024", "The Uganda Export Promotions Board Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024" and "The Free Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2024" be read a second time.

THE SPEAKER: Read for me the Bill; "The Warehouse Receipt System (Amendment) Bill, 2024" be read for the second time. I will put the question.

MR BAHATI: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled, "The Warehouse Receipt System (Amendment) Bill, 2024", be read the second time.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Is the Bill seconded? It is seconded by Hon. Silwany, Hon. Afoyochan, Professor, the Government Chief Whip. It is seconded by the whole House with the exception of Hon. Odur. *(Laughter)* Would you like to speak to your motion?

MR BAHATI: Madam Speaker, the rationale for moving this Bill is to rationalise Government agencies, and streamline our systems to bring efficiency and effectiveness in the operations

of Government. Warehouse receipt system by coming back to the ministry, will be increasing that efficiency that all of us are looking for. I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Can we go to the next one?

11.07

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled, “The Uganda Export Promotions Board Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024” be read a second time.

THE SPEAKER: Is the Bill seconded? Seconded by Hon. Peter, Hon. Solomon, Hon. Wandwasi, Hon. Isaac, Hon. Melsa – Hon. Oloru, are you seconding because I am seeing you on the phone? (*Laughter*) - by Member for Hoima, Hon. Kinobere, Hon. Richard, Member for Budaka, and Hon. Bhoka. Would you like to speak to it?

MR BAHATI: Madam Speaker and honourable colleagues, we set out a policy of import substitution and export promotion. We have an aim of increasing our exports from currently Shs 6 billion to Shs 10 billion in the next 10 years. For us to do this, we need to organise our export efforts. The reason for repealing this is to combine the Export Promotion Board with the Free Zones Board, which I am going to move in a few minutes, to increase our exports. I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Next -

11.09

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker. I beg that the Bill entitled, “The Free Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read the second time.

THE SPEAKER: Is the Bill seconded? Yes, it is seconded by the Government Chief Whip, Hon. Awas, Hon. Oloru, by the Minister of Health, Minister for Luwero Triangle, by the

Representative for the Elderly, Hon. Sanon, Hon. Member for Aruu, Member for Alebtong, Hon. Okot - Thank you. Would you like to speak to that Bill?

MR BAHATI: Madam Speaker, as I said a few minutes ago, we are merging the Uganda Export Promotions Board with the Free Zones Board to be able to increase our exports to organise our effort-

THE SPEAKER: I am withdrawing the Minister for Luwero Triangle from being a seconder because Ex-officials do not have voting powers. Go ahead.

MR BAHATI: When the two institutions are merged we believe that we will be streamlining the effort of promoting exports in our country. The free zones play an important role in building our export capacity, but we have been running two institutions, the Uganda Export Promotion Board and the Free Zones. So, the purpose for this mainstreaming is to combine the two institutions so that we work together on the synergies between the institutions to promote our exports.

I think once Parliament gives us this support that we need, we will be able to grow our exports in the next few years from Shs 6 billion to Shs 10 billion.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable chairperson, can you make a presentation of your reports?

11.13

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY (Mr Mwine Mpaka): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Report of the Sectoral Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on the Warehouse Receipt System (Amendment) Bill, 2024. I beg to lay-

THE SPEAKER: Which one are you starting with?

MR MWINE MPAKA: The Warehouse Receipt System - I beg to lay the minutes and report of the committee.

Madam Speaker, “The Warehouse Receipt System (Amendment) Bill, 2024” was read for the first time on Thursday, 4 April 2024 in accordance with Rule 129(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the 11th Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, and was referred to the Sectoral Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry for scrutiny.

The committee scrutinised the Bill in accordance with Rule 129(2) of the Rules of Procedure and hereby reports to this House in accordance with Rule 132 of the same rules.

Madam Speaker, I do not know if I need to read the background for the rationalisation because it is more or less the same for every Bill. Allow me to go to page 4.

4.0 Remedies Proposed in the Bill

The object of the Bill is to amend the Warehouse Receipt System Act, 2006:

- (a) To enable the mainstreaming and rationalisation of the functions of the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority into the ministry responsible for trade, thereby, inter alia, relieving the Government of financial drain on its resources and the burden of wasteful administration and expenditure;
- (b) To facilitate efficient and effective service delivery by clearly delineating the mandates and functions of Government Agencies and Departments in the performance of the functions of warehouse receipts, thereby avoiding duplication of mandates and functions;
- (c) To Promote coordinated administrative arrangements, policies and procedures for;
 - (i) Ensuring the efficient and successful management, financial accounting and budgetary discipline of Government Agencies and Departments;
 - (ii) Enabling the Government to play its role more efficiently (iii) Enforcing accountability.

And lastly,

- (d) To restructure and reorganise agencies and departments of Government by eliminating bloated structures and functional ambiguities.

Madam Speaker, allow me to go to the findings on page 6.

6.0 Findings, Observations of the Committee

Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority was established by an Act of Parliament, the Welfare System Act, 2006(3), which was assented to by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda on 24 May 2005.

Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority is a subvention of Vote 015, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Comparatives. Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority has been proposed to be mainstreamed with its mother ministry. Therefore, it is going to become a department under the ministry responsible for trade.

Section 4 of the Warehouse Receipt System Act, 2005 mandates the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority to carry out the following functions:

- a. To license warehouses;
- b. To license warehouse keepers;
- c. To license warehouse inspectors;
- d. To issue negotiable warehouse receipt books;
- e. To carry out and perform such other functions as are conferred or imposed on it by the Act or regulations made under this Act.

The recommended structure on F – they are now going to make it a Department of Warehouse Receipt System under the ministry. Notwithstanding Section 16 of the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority, on funds of the Authority, the Committee noted that the aforementioned sections 3, 4, 7, 12 and 14 bear significant wage and non-wage implications on the economy as the Government has no finances for the operations of the Authority. Below is the table of the Budget Performance

of the Warehouse Receipt System for the Financial Year 2019/2020 to 2022/2023.

From the above table, budget allocations to the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System have been increased over time from Shs 3.399 billion in the Financial Year 2019/2020 to Shs 15.067 billion, primarily on the wage Bill, Board expenses and the procurement of capital-related items like weigh bridges and construction of warehouses. The above annual budget allocation suggests withdrawal of funds from the Consolidated Fund.

Page 8, Notable Inefficiencies of the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority under the current governance structures

Despite the enactment of the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Act, 2006 which created the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority 15 years ago, the Authority has only licensed four warehouses. According to the committee, even where the targets are not clear and specific, this performance is under the current governance arrangement and could be rated as poor and below average.

The committee noted the following areas of concern relating to the operations of the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System:

- (1) Deliberately overstepping its mandate by acting as an implementer and a regulator at the same time. They are now constructing warehouses which is beyond their mandate;
- (2) Poor absorption of funds allocated, continued utilisation of funds in excess of parliamentary appropriations, and persistent carryover of funds across financial years without authorisation are indications of a poorly governed institution. For instance, at the end of Financial Year 2021/2022, the Authority did not transfer Shs 4.87 billion into the Consolidated Fund. Similarly, in the Financial Year 2022/2023 the authority did not transfer Shs 8.7 billion to the Consolidated Fund but instead utilised it

in the FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/2023 without authorisation.

The Auditor-General Reports, Financial Year 2020/2021 and Financial Year 2022/2023, the authority had Shs 8.78 billion as an unspent balance from the prior Financial Year 2021/2022, and that was subsequently included by management as part of the funds available for spending in the Financial Year 2022/2023 under review.

The above several financial irregularities, among others, are cited by the Auditor-General, such as inefficiencies of the board in providing supervision and oversight to the institution.

Madam Speaker and honourable members, by mainstreaming the warehouse receipt system, we are going to save Shs 12.427 billion.

From the foregoing, the committee makes the following observations:

1. That there would be no costs accruing to government as a result of mainstreaming the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority (UWRSA) into the ministry responsible for trade;
2. That the Bill addresses mischief and intends to improve market efficiency and mitigates risk because it will be easier for farmers and traders to access credit using their stored agricultural commodities as collateral, leading to more efficient allocation of resources in agricultural markets, reducing transactional costs and improving market liquidity.
3. The mainstreaming of the UWRSA into the ministry responsible for trade would attract further investment in the agriculture sector by providing assurances to financiers that there are mechanisms in place to mitigate risks associated with lending to farmers and traders-

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, kindly, come in, I need numbers before you go out. We are going for the second reading. Can I have all the Members in?

MR MWINE-MPAKA: Other Implications of Mainstreaming the roles and Functions of UWRSA into the Ministry responsible for Trade

During the meeting the committee held with the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives on the same, the Minister assured the committee that the functions of the UWRSA as enshrined in the Warehouse Receipt System Act, 2006 would be retained, but that these shall be executed under a specialised department tenable at the ministry responsible for trade under the supervision of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives.

In another meeting of the Committee, the Minister responsible for Public Service buttressed that the mainstreaming of the functions of the UWRSA into the ministry responsible for trade would require staff formerly under the service of UWRSA to apply for career opportunities that would be advertised internally in the ministry.

Therefore, they are going to give the current staff the priority.

The minister also informed the committee that the priority for consideration of applicants for career opportunities advertised internally would be given to the current staff of the UWRSA.

Recommendations of the Committee

The committee recommends that since the savings from the mainstreaming of the UWRSA significantly outweigh the costs, and in addition to efficiency gains, the Government should mainstream the roles and functions of the UWRSA into the ministry responsible for trade. I beg to submit.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, chairperson; Hon. Mpaka. Can we get the other reports also so that we can debate them concurrently?

MR MWINE MPAKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Report of the Sectoral Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on the Free Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

I think in the interest of time, I can go straight to the findings and observations. That is on page 6.

6.1 The Uganda Free Zones Authority (UFZA)

The Uganda Free Zones Authority (UFZA) is a regulatory agency established in line with the East African Community partner States' commitment to develop free zones for the purposes of accelerating development through creating an enabling environment for the production of export competitive goods as envisaged under Articles 75 and 76 of the Treaty and Articles 29, 31 and 32 of the East African Community Customs Union Protocol and Regulations thereof, Export Promotion Zones (EPZ) and Free and FP Ops. The roles of Free Zones are on pages 6 and 7. Allow me to go straight to the observations on page 10.

We are going to save Shs 9.533 billion by merging the Uganda Free Zones Authority with the Uganda Export Promotions Authority.

From the foregoing table on page 10, the committee notes that the total cost implication of the merger of Uganda Free Zones Authority and Uganda Export Promotions Board the government would make a net saving of up to Shs 9.533 billion during the Financial Year 2025/2026 and net saving expected to increase to Shs 10.446 billion in the Financial Year 2025/2026.

Observations of the Committee

The proposal by the Government to merge the Uganda Free Zones Authority and Uganda Export Promotion Board into a single entity called Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotions Authority under the supervision of the ministry responsible for trade is a positive move towards addressing the mischief of duplication of roles.

The committee now observes that the mandates and functions of the two agencies are complementary. The two agencies are both involved in fostering export development and promotion, and their reorganisation would improve response time and coordination and cohesion.

Implications of the merger

Staff structure

The committee observes that 16 staff of Uganda Free Zones Authority would be laid off and this would therefore attract Shs 0.913 billion as the one-off payment as terminal benefits in the Financial Year 2024/2025. The allocation of Shs 0.913 billion is an indication that the Government is willing and ready to gracefully terminate the services of the 16 staff of Uganda Free Zones Authority and this would limit unnecessary litigation on the same matter.

Issues Raised by Uganda Free Zones Authority in Objection to the Merger, and the Observations of the Committee

1. Uganda Free Zones Authority is a regulatory agency anchored in the Treaty for the establishment of the East African Protocol

The committee analysed the Treaty for Establishment of the East African Community and found that it does not list the Free Zones Authority or any such other organisation as an organ or institution of the community.

However, the committee notes that Articles 29 and 31 of the Protocol on Establishment of the East African Customs Union empowers each partner state to establish Export Processing Zones (EPZ) and Specialized Economic Zones (SEZ).

Export promotion zones and specialized economic zones across partner states focus on contributing to building strong export-led economic development through industrialisation.

The EPZ and SEZ provide a number of specific incentives for investors operating within them which include fiscal and non-fiscal incentives including corporate tax holidays, duty and VAT exemptions.

The EPZ and SEZ are governed under the East African Community Customs Union Regulations where Regulation 6 empowers member states of the East African Community to establish a competent authority to develop, coordinate and oversee operations within the export processing zones.

The regulation does not direct a partner state on the nature of authority to be established. The discretion is given to the partner state to determine how best the EPZ and SEZ are established, managed and run. In Uganda, these areas are referred to as free zones, while in Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi, they are called a Special Economic Zone. Therefore, the determination of the nature of the entity that manages and runs the EPZ and SEZ is left to the discretion of member states.

This means that the Government is free to establish any entity it deems that will operate and manage the SEZ and EPZ as it deems fit and therefore finds no merit in the above justification not to merge the Uganda Free Zones Authority with the Uganda Export Promotions Board.

2. That FREE ZONES should belong to the sector that deals with fiscal matters and not trade as proposed by the Bill.
3. That the substitution of the Minister of Finance for-because this Export Promotions Zones has been under the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development but is now going to the Ministry of Trade, Industries and Cooperatives. These were the arguments raised by Free Zones;

That the substitution of the Minister of Finance for, or with Minister of Trade in Clause 45(c) will transfer to the Minister of Trade fiscal responsibilities.

The committee summarises this argument moved against the merger to mean that Uganda Free Zones Authority cannot be transferred from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives.

The establishment and functioning of Government Agencies is a preserve of the Executive whose mandate is prescribed in Article 111(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda as follows: “The functions of the Cabinet shall be to determine, formulate and implement the policy of the Government and to perform such other functions as may be conferred by this Constitution or any other law.”

The transfer of Uganda Free Zones Authority is therefore an exercise of the Executive functions of the Government.

Furthermore, the committee has examined the purpose for and the functions of the Uganda Free Zones Authority as established in Articles 29 and 31 of the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Customs Union, the East African Community Customs Unions (Export Processing Zones) Regulations and the East African Customs Management Act, and is of the considered opinion that the Export Processing Zones (EPZ) and the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) are not a fiscal tool as alleged, but an industrialisation and export promotion measure aimed at building strong export-led economic development through industrialisation.

The East African Community Customs Union Regulations guide the functions of EPZ in Regulation 7 to include, among others, the promotion of forward and backward linkages of industries in the export processing zones of the partner states.

The functions of the Uganda Free Zones Authority fall within the arm bit of industrialisation, a matter that is managed by the ministry responsible for trade and industry.

The committee also had the benefit of pursuing similar laws in the East African Community

(EAC) and is of the considered opinion that similar bodies in Member states of the EAC are not supervised by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development but the ministry responsible for industrialisation. For instance, in Kenya, the Special Economic Zones are supervised by the Cabinet Secretary for the time being responsible for matters relating to industrialisation, which falls within the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives in Uganda. There are several other examples therein.

The committee has examined the arguments of Uganda Free Zones Authority not to be merged with Uganda Export Promotions Board, and is of the considered opinion that this argument does not have merit.

4. That the merger would vary the functions of the competent authority in disregard of Article 39(2) of the Customs Union Protocol which states that “Custom laws shall apply equally.”

The committee has examined the issue above and is of the considered opinion that this also does not have merit. It seems that the argument is that Clause 49 which proposes to amend Section 13 of the Uganda Free Zones Act to increase the functions of the Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotions Authority will infringe on Article 39 of the Customs Union.

The argument is premised on the view that the Free Zones Act is a fiscal legislation that is supposed to apply to all the East African countries uniformly.

The committee notes that Article 39(1) of the Customs Union Protocol as stated by the Uganda Free Zones Authority outlines the customs laws of the Union to include – they are there; a, b, c, d, e and f.

The committee further notes that the above list does not include the Free Zones Act of Uganda or any such legislation from the Member States of East Africa. This means that the Free Zones Act of Uganda is not envisaged to be among the customs laws of the East African Community since it is not listed in Article 39.

The committee understands that there is an argument being made that increase of the functions of the Uganda Free Zones Authority as proposed in clause 49 paragraph (b) is irregular, also holds no merit since Regulation 7 of the East African Community Customs Union Regulations only prescribes the principal functions of the competent authorities. This does not preclude the assignment of additional functions to the Authority.

Indeed, Regulation 7(1)(h) allows the assignment of additional functions to the competent authority. The regulation provides that the Authority may perform any other functions as may be incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the Customs Union or the exercise of their powers under these Regulations.

The committee therefore, finds that this provision allows the Government to assign it additional functions as proposed in the Bill.

5. That the proposed merger between Uganda Free Zones Authority and Uganda Export Promotion Board will present challenges of practical implementation, leading to misalignment with the East African Community Treaty, Protocols, Policies, Laws and Regulations to which Uganda is a signatory.
6. That merging Uganda Free Zones Authority and Uganda Export Promotions Board will further disrupt Uganda's engagement in the regional, continental and global Special Economic Zones ecosystem as a result of inconsistencies in the institutional framework
7. That further still, it will lead to the creation of an institution that is convoluted with inadequate role clarity and an identity crisis because there exist significant differences as a result of legal commitments Uganda has made at the East African Community level between the customs territory and gazetted customs areas outside the customs territory.

First, the committee finds that Articles 29 and 31 of the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Customs Union empowers each partner state to establish Export Processing Zones and Special Economic Zones. Uganda Free Zones Authority and Uganda Export Promotions Board can easily fall within the categories of bodies envisaged in Articles 29 and 31 of the Protocol since they are intended to build strong export-led economic development through industrialisation.

The committee also notes that Article 25 of the Customs Union Protocol empowers partner states to design and support export promotion schemes in the community for the purposes of accelerating development, promoting and facilitating export-oriented investments, producing export competitive goods, developing an enabling environment for export promotion schemes and attracting foreign direct investment. This means that the Uganda Export Promotions Board and Uganda Free Zones Authority are not mutually exclusive and can perform similar and complementary functions, hence the need to merge them into one body.

Madam Speaker, in the interest of time, the committee, therefore, finds merging the Export Promotion Board with the Free Zones Authority is permissible and the merger will not lead to the creation of an institution which is convoluted with inadequate role clarity and an identity crisis.

The committee, therefore, recommends that Uganda Free Zones Authority and the Uganda Export Promotions Board be merged into one entity called "the Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotions Authority" under the supervision of the ministry responsible for trade. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Committee chairperson, the last one.

11.36

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY (Mr Mwine Mpaka): Madam Speaker, the report of the Sectoral Committee on Tourism, Trade

and Industry on the Uganda Export Promotions Board Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024. In the interest of time, since we are merging it with the Uganda Free Zones Authority, allow me to go to the observations of the committee.

The committee observes that the proposed merger of the Export Promotions Board and Uganda Free Zones Authority will facilitate effective and efficient service delivery by clearly delineating the functions and mandates of the two agencies, thereby avoiding duplication of mandates, which is one of the objectives of the merger.

The committee further observes that the merger would reduce and eliminate bloated structures and functional ambiguities of the two agencies. The committee is also alive to the information that the estimated total cost of the Uganda Export Promotions Board (Repeal) Bill, 2024 will be Shs 0.289 billion in form of terminal benefits for staff to be laid off; and that this cost would be accommodated within the Medium Term Expenditure Term ceiling for the Ministry of Public Service.

The committee also observes that the net savings accruing out of the merger of the Uganda Export Promotions Board and the Uganda Free Zones Authority would be Shs 6.227 billion in the first year of the merger in the Financial Year 2024/2025, and this would increase to Shs 6.516 billion in the subsequent Financial Year 2025/2026 as in indicated in the table below. Madam Speaker, merging these two entities will save us Shs 6.516 billion in the long run.

Issues raised by the Uganda Export Promotion Board in objection to the merger and the observations of the committee.

The Uganda Export Promotions Board had one issue – the name of the new Authority. The Executive Director of the Uganda Export Promotions Board informed the committee that he had no objection to the merger of the Uganda Free Zones Authority and the Uganda Export Promotions Board into one single entity, but was only concerned about the proposed name of the new entity. I think this was just power

struggle. They wanted it to be called “Export Promotion” instead of “Uganda Free Zones.”

The committee finds no merit in this argument since this is simply nomenclature on the arrangement of the name of the proposed new entity.

The committee therefore, recommends that the Uganda Export Promotions Act, Cap 102 be repealed and merge the Export Promotions Board and Uganda Free Zones Authority into one entity called “the Uganda Free Zones and Export Promotions Authority” under the supervision of the ministry responsible for trade.

Madam Speaker, I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. We have heard from the three Bills. I will open the Bills to debate, if there is any clarification that you need to get from the committee chairperson. Yes, Hon. Enos? You speciFinancial Year which Bill you are contributing on.

11.39

MR ENOS ASIMWE (NRM, Kabula County, Lyantonde): Thank you, Madam Speaker. My concern is on the report on warehousing system -

THE SPEAKER: Warehouse receipt system?

MR ENOS ASIMWE: Yes. When you look at the report, they are talking about the methodology – I will start with the methodology. The committee never consulted the other stakeholders in the warehousing system. First and foremost, the warehousing system authority works with banks, farmers groups and warehouse owners. These were never consulted on the impact of having the authority back to the ministry.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, if we go to the principles of the Bill; look at the duplication. When we talk about the warehousing system, why was the Bill in place in the first place? Our target was to help farmers to store their goods, run to the banks if they needed support and the banks would finance them as they wait for the

warehousing authority or Government to get them off-takers.

Madam Speaker, there is no other entity that does that. So, I do not find any duplication. We are saying we should rationalise agencies that have duplication roles. There is no other entity that does that.

Third, when we go to the policy, the warehousing authority, which is also a subversion under the ministry for trade, is more of a regulator. It is not an implementer or anything else. It is regulating the industry of warehousing system. If we get a regulator and put them under the ministry, I think there will be a conflict. You cannot be the implementing ministry and regulator of the whole sector. I think it is not in good faith to rationalise this agency.

Forth, when we talk about the underperformance, the report is talking about the running of the agency not being - it was licensed in 2005, but up to now they have only licensed four warehouses. I do not think the committee did good research.

Actually, this agency has been in operation since 2018. From 2005 when the law was enacted until 2018, the ministry had given the mandate to Uganda Securities Exchange, which never materialised. So, for all the first 10 years or so, the agency was not in operation. It was the ministry directly dealing with Uganda Securities Exchange.

It was in 2018 when the actual authority was active and, of course, under the ministry. So, I think even the inefficiencies are because the ministry tried to run the warehousing system itself. The ministry failed and, eventually, followed the law and put the authority.

Therefore, it is premature for us to rationalise the Uganda receipting authority. I do not support the report and I do not support us rationalising the warehousing system authority for now. Thank you so much.

THE SPEAKER: Let the committee chairperson, first, respond.

MR MPAKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The honourable member states that it is not fair to judge the performance of Uganda's warehousing system, but we are the ones who supervise this authority. We have just told you that they have been doing activities outside their mandate. They are not supposed to be constructing warehouses or stores, but they have been doing it.

We have just told you that they are keeping money, even after the financial year has ended, on their accounts and appropriating for themselves. This is a clear indication that there is poor governance in this institution.

He also talked about us not consulting different stakeholders, including farmers. Madam Speaker, this is a Government policy shift. It is like a merger of Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) and you tell us you are going to invite all the farmers of this country, to do consultations. These Bills were gazetted, we had a select committee that interacted with the various stakeholders and we believe we have done efficient work, in as far as analysing the performance of the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority is concerned.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, one thing that Hon. Enos should know is that a very competent team here, headed by none other than Hon. Nathan, had a meeting and met stakeholders of all these institutions. As I said, we agree to a tune of 70 per cent, with what the Government is bringing. The rest that we are not in agreement over is where you need to put a lot of energy.

Yes, Member for Buzaaya?

11.46

MR MARTIN MUZAALE (NRM, Buzaaya County, Kamuli): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The committee chairperson -

THE SPEAKER: On some of these things that are direct, do not take a lot of your time.

MR MUZAALE: It is okay, Madam Speaker. When I heard the committee chairperson saying

that they have been giving these people money and they have not been using it well – and he has been the chairperson of the committee who has been presenting on ministerial statements on this Floor of Parliament – it perturbs my understanding.

THE SPEAKER: The committee chairperson?

MR MWINE MPAKA: Madam Speaker, the trade committee has never appropriated money to the warehouse receipt system to carry out activities beyond their mandate. However, they somehow get this money through supplementaries and other means, but not through the trade committee of this Parliament. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Shadow Attorney-General? Honourable members, let us not debate issues that - because appropriation is done by you and I. If people are getting money through other ways, do not blame the committee. That is one of the most competent committees.

11.47

MR WILFRED NIWAGABA (Independent, Ndoorwa County East, Kabale): I move a motion, Madam Speaker, that the House resolves and goes to committee stage.

THE SPEAKER: Move your motion.

MR NIWAGABA: Madam Speaker, I beg to move a motion that the House do desolve and goes to committee stage.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Is it seconded? *(Members rose_)* It is seconded by professor, Hon. Solo, Hon. Mbwatekamwa, Hon. Jonas, Hon. David, Hon. Hanifa – by the whole House. Thank you.

Honourable members, in terms of quorum, we have 131 physically and 60 virtually, meaning we have the quorum. I now put the question that The Warehouse Receipt System (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read for the second time.

(Question put and agreed to)

Motion, agreed to.

BILLS
COMMITTEE STAGE

THE WAREHOUSE RECEIPT SYSTEM
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: We are going to the next one first. The motion was for item 3. Honourable members, we have the Uganda Export Promotions Board Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024. Quorum still stands.

I now put the question that the Uganda Export Promotions Board Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024 be read for the second time.

(Question put and agreed to.)

THE SPEAKER: We have the Free Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2024. The quorum still stands. I put the question that the Free Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read for the second time.

(Question put and agreed to.)

BILLS
COMMITTEE STAGE

THE WAREHOUSE RECEIPT SYSTEM
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

Clause 1

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 1, agreed to.

Clause 2, agreed to.

Clause 3, agreed to.

Clause 4, agreed to.

Clause 5, agreed to.

Clause 6, agreed to.

Clause 7, agreed to.

Clause 8, agreed to.

Clause 9, agreed to.

Clause 10, agreed to.

Clause 11, agreed to.

Clause 12, agreed to.

Clause 13, agreed to.

Clause 14, agreed to.

Clause 15, agreed to.

Clause 16, agreed to.

Clause 17, agreed to.

Clause 18, agreed to.

Clause 19, agreed to.

Clause 20, agreed to.

Clause 21

MR MPAKA: Clause 21 is amended by inserting immediately after paragraph (b) the following: “(c) in subsection (2), by substituting the words “Section 33 of the Insurance Act”, the words “Section 45 of the Insurance Act, 2017”.

The justification is to make reference to the correct provisions of the law since at the time of the enactment of the Warehouse Receipts Systems Act, 2006, the relevant provision was Section 33 of the Insurance Act, Cap. 213. However, in 2017, Parliament repealed and replaced the Insurance Act, Cap. 213 with Insurance Act, 2017 –

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, I am going to record the people who are in this House and I will give the list to your

boss. We are dealing with the Bills. Hon. Obua, maybe you need to re-echo to your Members. I am not going to be a Presiding Officer as well as a whip. Members should be in the House.

One of your roles is to legislate. When you are doing legislation, you are passing Bills. When we are passing the Bills, we need quorum in the House. If we are not going to respect the issue of quorum, then do not come to Parliament. I want all the committees that are sitting to come to the House. *(Applause)*

MR OBUA: Madam Chairperson, earlier on, we thought that the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Budget Committee were sitting but we have now established that both were not. If there is any committee sitting, we shall definitely comply with your directive and have them in the House.

Honourable colleagues, I want to re-echo what I stated yesterday. Under Rule 112 of the Rules of Procedure, we are under obligation, and the rule uses the word “shall”, which means it is mandatory for all of us to be in the House. That is Rule 112. If you are not going to be in the House, you must be granted permission by the Rt Hon. Speaker, not even the whips.

It is only under exceptional circumstances under subrule (5) where a whip of a political party may inform the Speaker of a Member’s absence and the circumstances leading to such absence.

May I rally my honourable members of the National Resistance Movement - first of all, I want to thank those who are in the House. You can see that the side of the National Resistance Movement has very little space, implying that we have complied.

Madam Chairperson, I will inform my team to move to all the meeting rooms within the institution of Parliament to ensure that any committee that is currently meeting must respect the directive of the Chair. I beg to submit.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much. I only gave permission to Hon. Mohammed Kato, Hon. Margaret, who lost her parent, Hon. John Faith Magolo. Those are the ones I gave permission.

Honourable minister, clause 21 –

MR BAHATI: Madam Chairperson, I concur with the amendment by the chairperson of the committee.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Attorney-General? -

MR KAFUZI: I am in agreement.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I put the question that clause 21 be amended as proposed.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 21, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 22, agreed to.

Clause 23, agreed to.

Clause 24, agreed to.

Clause 25, agreed to.

Clause 26, agreed to.

Clause 27, agree to.

Clause 28, agreed to.

Clause 29, agreed to.

Clause 30, agreed to.

Clause 31, agreed to.

Clause 32, agreed to.

Clause 33, agreed to.

Clause 34, agreed to.

Clause 35, agreed to.

Clause 36, agreed to.

Clause 37, agreed to.

Clause 38, agreed to.

MR MWINE MPAKA: Clause 39-

THE CHAIRPERSON: Please, remember to clock in, when you are entering.

MR MWINE MPAKA: Clause 39 is substituted for the following;

- 1) section 75 of Act 14 of 2006 is amended by substituting for sub section 2, the following;
- 2) the minister may, by statutory instrument amend the third schedule to this Act.

The justification is that it is a consequential amendment given that the second schedule and the Board are repealed. Clause 40 of the Bill seeks to repeal the second schedule of the Act and therefore any reference to the second schedule would be inconsequential.

THE CHAIRPERSON: The minister.

MR BAHATI: I concur with this consequential amendment by the chairperson of the committee.

THE CHAIRPERSON: The Attorney-General.

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): I am in agreement.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I put the question that clause 39 be amended as proposed.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 39, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 40, agreed to.

Clause 41, agreed to.

The Title, agreed to.

BILLS
THIRD READING

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESUME

12.03

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that the House do resume and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I put the question that the House do resume and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

(Question put and agreed to.)

(The House resumed, the Speaker presiding.)

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF
THE WHOLE HOUSE

12.04

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of the whole House has considered the Bill entitled, "The Warehouse Receipts System (Amendment) Bill, 2024" and passed it with amendments.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE HOUSE

12.05

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the report from the Committee of the Whole House be adopted.

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that the report of the Committee of the Whole House be adopted by this august House.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE WAREHOUSE RECEIPT SYSTEM
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: My quorum of 191 Members still stands. Honourable minister -

12.11

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled, "The Warehouse Receipt System (Amendment) Bill, 2024" be read the third time and do pass.

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that the "The Warehouse Receipt System (Amendment) Bill, 2024" be read the third time and do pass.

(Question put and agreed to.)

A BILL FOR ACT ENTITLED, "THE
WAREHOUSE RECEIPT SYSTEM
(AMENDMENT) ACT, 2024"

THE SPEAKER: Title settled and the Bill passed. *(Applause)* Thank you and congratulations.

BILLS
COMMITTEE STAGE

THE FREE ZONES (AMENDMENT) BILL,
2024

Clause 1

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that Clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 1, agreed to.

Clause 2, agreed to.

Clause 3, agreed to.

Clause 4, agreed to.

Clause 5, agreed to.

Clause 6, agreed to.

Clause 7, agreed to.

Clause 8, agreed to.

Clause 9, agreed to.

Clause 10, agreed to.

Clause 11, agreed to.

Clause 12, agreed to.

Clause 13, agreed to.

The Title, agreed to.

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESUME

12.09

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that the House do resume and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that the House resumes and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

(Question put and agreed to.)

(The House resumed, the Speaker presiding.)

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister -

12.10

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of the whole House has considered the Bill entitled “The Free Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2024” and passed it without amendments.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister -

12.11

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the report from the Committee of the whole House be adopted.

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that the report of the Committee of the whole House be adopted by this House.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

BILLS THIRD READING

THE FREE ZONES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

12.11

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled “The Free Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read the third time and do pass.

THE SPEAKER: My quorum still stands at 191. I put the question that the Free Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read the third time and do pass.

(Question put and agreed to.)

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED “THE FREE ZONES (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Title settled and Bill passed. *(Applause)* Congratulations to the committee and the whole House. Thank you.

BILLS
COMMITTEE STAGE

THE UGANDA EXPORT PROMOTIONS
BOARD ACT (REPEAL) BILL, 2024

Clause 1

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 2, agreed to.

Clause 3, agreed to.

Clause 4, agreed to.

Clause 5, agreed to.

The Title, agreed to.

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESUME

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable minister -

12.13

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that the House do resume and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that the House resumes and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

(Question put and agreed to.)

(The House resumed, the Speaker presiding.)

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF
THE WHOLE HOUSE

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

12.14

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of the whole House has considered the Bill entitled “The Uganda Export Promotions Board Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024” and passed it without amendments.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE HOUSE

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

12.14

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the report from the Committee of the whole House be adopted.

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that the report of the Committee of the whole House be adopted by this House.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

BILLS
THIRD READING

THE UGANDA EXPORT PROMOTIONS
BOARD ACT (REPEAL) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

12.15

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled “The Uganda Export Promotions Board Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024” be read the third time and do pass.

THE SPEAKER: My quorum still stands at 191. I put the question that the Uganda Export Promotions Board Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024 be read the third time and do pass.

(Question put and agreed to.)

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED “THE
UGANDA EXPORT PROMOTIONS
BOARD ACT (REPEAL) BILL, 2024”

THE SPEAKER: Title settled and Bill passed. *(Applause)* Congratulations to the minister, committee members and Members of Parliament. Next item.

BILLS
SECOND READING

THE UGANDA WILDLIFE
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, can you move the motion to that effect?

12.17

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Col (Rtd) Tom Butime): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Uganda Wildlife (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read the second time.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, is the motion seconded? It is seconded by the Attorney-General, Elders’ Representative, Hon. Sanon, Hon. Alanyo, all Commissioners emeritus, Dr Christine, Hon. Aguti, Hon. Anifa, Hon. Emigu, Hon. Okot, Hon. Emmanuel, Hon. Mariam, Hon. Sauda, Hon. Eric, Hon. Margaret, Hon. Mbwatekamwa, Hon. Mpindi, Hon. Masaba, Hon. Solo, Hon. Rita- that tells you that I know all your names- *(Laughter)*- by the whole House. Would you like to speak to your motion?

COL (RTD) BUTIME: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The purpose of this Bill is to confer to the Uganda Wildlife Authority additional functions of the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre established by the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre Act, 2015, thereby relieving the Government of the financial drain on its resources and the burden of wasteful administration and expenditure by maintaining two agencies whose functions may be performed by one agency.

It is a merger and when you merge, one agency subsumes the other; that is the main purpose. I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, could you move a motion for the other Bill too?

BILLS
SECOND READING

THE UGANDA WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTRE
ACT (REPEAL) BILL, 2024

12.18

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Col (Rtd) Tom Butime): I beg to move that the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024, be read the second time.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Is it seconded? It is seconded by the Government Chief Whip and the whole House. This is a very direct Bill. You have already spoken to it. Okay.

COL (RTD) BUTIME: Madam Speaker, the Bill intends to repeal the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre Act, 2015, to enable the merger between the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre (UWEC) and the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) in order to give effect to the government policy for rationalisation of government agencies and public expenditure.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. It is a merger between UWEC and the Uganda Wildlife Authority. My son was asking me, “What is UWEC?” and I told him that it is the zoo where you always go. Can we have a brief report?

12.24

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY (Mr Mwine Mpaka): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to lay the report of the sectoral committee -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Enos Asiimwe, do you have a procedural matter? *(Laughter)*

MR ENOS ASIIMWE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My procedural matter is that we are now rationalising entities that were acting as regulators of most of these sectors. I would like the ministers in charge to guide us; once these agencies are rationalised or mainstreamed, what will happen to the sectors?

Who will be regulating; how can you be the implementer and then you become the regulator? Is it procedurally right to rationalise agencies that have been regulating some of those sectors?

THE SPEAKER: Okay, let us first listen to the report and then you answer? He is smuggling in the debate and I will close it. *Mzee*, answer. I am sorry, Hon. Butime, please answer. *(Laughter)*

COL (RTD) BUTIME: Madam Speaker, in this particular case, the roles of the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre and that of the Uganda Wildlife Authority are complementary. Therefore, merging them, one subsuming the other, is a mere consolidation but the roles remain the same. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Can we have a report?

COL (RTD) BUTIME: Madam Speaker, it is not the Uganda Wildlife Authority that regulates the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre or vice versa; they are completely different but the purpose is to merge. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us get the report. You are now legislating in anticipation. Honourable, I want you to read your rules, that you never debate in anticipation.

MR MPAKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to lay the report of the sectoral Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on;

- (i) The Uganda Wildlife (Amendment) Bill, 2024; and
- (ii) The Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024.

For the interest of time, allow me to go to page 6 of the report of the sectoral Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on the Uganda Wildlife (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Committee observations

1. The Government is going to save Shs 15.166 billion through this merger and incur a one-off total cost of only Shs 1.334 billion as terminal benefits to be paid to staff who will be affected upon the merger of Uganda Wildlife Conservation Centre with Uganda Wildlife Authority. The Government has already accommodated the aforementioned costs within the Medium Term Expenditure Framework ceiling for the Ministry of Public Service during the Financial Year 2024/2025.
2. That both Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and Uganda Wildlife Conservation Centre (UWEC) played key complementary roles and functions in the promotion and development of tourism, conservation of wildlife and related ecosystems whose roles and functions had associated risks of functional overlaps and duplication.
3. That the additional functions and roles conferred upon the Uganda Wildlife Authority would lead to a stronger institutional capacity in terms of reporting mechanisms and structures and improvement in financial management practices for wildlife conservation activities. The additional functions would also lead to improved communication, collaboration, enhanced monitoring and evaluation programmes, effectiveness and sustainability of wildlife conservation and education efforts in Uganda; and
4. That the Bill once enacted into law would enable centralised control over wildlife

conservation and education activities, putting in place standardised policies and procedures, clear chain of command, enhanced coordination and collaboration, lead to improved service delivery through providing unified conservation and education programmes, streamlining visitor services, enhancing conservation outreach, improving wildlife protection measures, optimising administrative expenses and processes, investing in infrastructure and technology, and promoting capacity building.

The committee recommends that the Uganda Wildlife Authority be amended to confer on the Uganda Wildlife Authority additional functions because of the merger with the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Centre in order to give effects to the government policy on Rationalization of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX) and for related purposes. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, committee chairperson. Next report –

MR MWINE MPAKA: Report of the sectoral Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024.

Madam Speaker, on page 6, as I said earlier, from the foregoing, the Government will generate net savings of about Shs 15.166 billion in the Financial Year 2024/2025. This will increase to Shs 16.6 billion in the Financial Year 2025/2026. The net savings generated outweigh a one-off expenditure on terminal benefits for laid-off staff amounting to Shs 1.334 billion.

The committee observes that the proposed merger will improve on efficiency as communication between the two agencies will be easier and monitoring and evaluation will be more sustainable.

Furthermore, the committee observes that the proposed merger will enable centralised control of our wildlife activities and putting in place standardised policies and procedures.

The committee also observes that the merger of the two agencies would facilitate effective and efficient service delivery by avoiding duplication of mandates and functions.

Recommendation of the committee

The committee recommends that the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre Act, 2015 be repealed to give effect to the Government policy on rationalisation of Government agencies and public expenditure and for related matters. I beg to submit.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Honourable members, you have heard the report. It is basically a merger between the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre and Uganda Wildlife Authority. It is as direct as it is. There is a motion from Hon. Isaac.

MR OTIMGIW: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just as you stated, this is a straightforward Bill. The duties remain the same: conservation. I would like to move that the House moves to the committee stage to consider this Bill. Thank you.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Seconded? (*Members rose*) It is seconded by Hon. Lamwaka – by everybody. It is a direct thing.

Honourable members, we will still take the same quorum of 191 Members. I put the question that the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024 be read for the second time.

(Question put and agreed to.)

BILLS COMMITTEE STAGE

THE UGANDA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTRE ACT (REPEAL) BILL, 2024

Clause 1

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

*(Question put and agreed to.)**Clause 1, agreed to.**Clause 2, agreed to.**Clause 3, agreed to.**Clause 4, agreed to.**Clause 5, agreed to.**Clause 6, agreed to.**The Title, agreed to.*

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESUME

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable minister?

12.31

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Col (Rtd) Tom Butime): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the House do resume and the Committee of the whole House reports there to.**THE CHAIRPERSON:** I put a question that the House does resume and the Committee of the whole House reports there to.*(Question put and agreed to.)**(The House resumed, the Speaker presiding.)*REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF
THE WHOLE HOUSE**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister?

12.32

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Col (Rtd) Tom Butime): Madam Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of the whole House has considered the Bill entitled “The Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024” and passed with without amendments. I beg to move.REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE HOUSE**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister?

12.32

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Col (Rtd) Tom Butime): I beg to move that the House adopts the report of the Committee of the whole House.**THE SPEAKER:** I put the question that the report of the Committee of the whole House be adopted by this honourable House.*(Question put and agreed to.)**Report, adopted.*BILLS
THIRD READINGTHE UGANDA WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTRE
ACT (REPEAL) BILL, 2024**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister?

12.33

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE, AND ANTIQUITIES (Col (Rtd) Tom Butime): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled “The Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024” be ready for the third time and do pass.**THE SPEAKER:** I put the question that the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre Act (Repeal) Bill, 2024 be read the third time and do pass.*(Question put and agreed to.)*

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, “THE UGANDA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTRE (REPEAL) ACT, 2024”

THE SPEAKER: Title settled and the Bill passed. Congratulations, honourable minister and the committee. *(Applause)*

MR SSENKYONYI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We did not, as we had thought, have a chance to debate the report of the nine-man team, led by Hon. Nathan Byanyima, so that we could generally address some of these issues. I thought I should make this quick comment, now that we have merged UWA and Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre.

THE SPEAKER: We have not yet merged.

MR SSENKYONYI: Well, we are moving in that direction. I want to emphasise and appeal to the Government because some of these individual entities have challenges of inefficiencies – as we have seen reported in the press – fraud and so on, and these are being handled by our accountability committees.

Merging the entity will not deal with inefficiencies for as long as we do not deal with human resources. We should have the right man or woman for the job and supervise them to make sure they are doing what is expected of them. Otherwise, we shall be merging problems. That is why I was saying a general discussion would have been good, but we have moved.

We need to deal with those situations. Otherwise, you will merge Problem A and Problem B and you have a bigger problem. I hope that the Government gets to be cognisant of those issues.

THE SPEAKER: Those are the issues that were raised, and they were answered in this House. So, it is repeating the same thing that was raised in this House. Those are the principles, where we said that as you do merge, we hope you are not taking a problem from - and the professor talked about this.

So, LOP is basically repeating what the professor said.

Yes, honourable shadow finance minister.

12.37

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): Madam Speaker, allow me to congratulate Col (Rtd) Tom Butime upon succeeding – you know the trouble we had at the beginning. Maybe for those of you who do not know, Col (Rtd) Butime, is one of the NRA soldiers who trained in Libya. *(Laughter)*

The one particular thing I want to use to give assurance to Parliament is that he is one of the few principled Ugandans. When they appointed him the Minister for Karamoja –

THE SPEAKER: And he refused.

MR SSEMUJJU: From that day, he has had my respect. *(Applause)* So, I am sure that once these things have been merged under his stewardship, he will do the job that we expect. So, I congratulate him, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, that is a very good complement for Hon. Tom Butime. Thank you for being principled. *(Applause)*

BILLS COMMITTEE STAGE

THE UGANDA WILDLIFE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

Clause 1

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 1, agreed to.

Clause 2, agreed to.

Clause 3, agreed to.

Clause 4, agreed to.

Clause 5, agreed to.

Clause 6, agreed to.

Clause 7, agreed to.

Clause 8, agreed to.

The Title, agreed to.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I put the question that the report of the Committee of the whole House be adopted by this honourable House.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

BILLS
THIRD READING

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESUME

12.40

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Col (Rtd) Tom Butime): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the House do resume and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that the House does resume and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

(Question put and agreed to.)

(The House resumed, the Speaker presiding.)

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF
THE WHOLE HOUSE

12.41

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Col (Rtd) Tom Butime): Madam Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of the whole House has considered the Bill entitled, "The Uganda Wildlife (Amendment) Bill, 2024 and passed it.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE HOUSE

12.42

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Col (Rtd) Tom Butime): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the House adopts the report of the Committee of the whole House.

THE UGANDA WILDLIFE
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

12.42

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Col. Tom Butime): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled, "Uganda Wildlife (Amendment) Bill, 2024" be read the third time and do pass.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. The quorum still stands at 191. I put the question that "The Uganda Wildlife (Amendment) Bill, 2024" be read the third time and do pass.

(Question put and agreed to.)

A BILL FOR AN ACT TITLED, "THE
UGANDA WILDLIFE (AMENDMENT)
ACT 2024"

THE SPEAKER: Title settled and the Bill passed. Congratulations, Hon. Butime, the committee and the whole House. *(Applause)*

BILLS
SECOND READING

THE UGANDA NATIONAL
METEOROLOGICAL AUTHORITY
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Is the committee chairperson here? Who are the members of the committee? Hon. Christine, can you - the report is uploaded. Do you have it? I can give you a copy. Members of the committee, do you have a minority report? So, are you in agreement

with the report? Honourable minister, can you move your motion?

12.45

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (Ms Beatrice Anywar): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled, “The Uganda National Meteorological Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read for the second time.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Is it seconded? Okay, it is seconded by Hon. Joyce, Member of Parliament for Mityana, Hon. Allan, Member of Parliament for Nakaseke and Member of Parliament for Butaleja. Hon. Amooti, Hon. Ferigo, Hon. Anywar, Hon. Atyang, Member of Parliament for Ntoroko, and Member of Parliament for Mbarara – I am mentioning those I have not been mentioning – Hon. Max, Member of Parliament for Bushenyi and the Member of Parliament for Kiruhura.

I have seen even the Member of Parliament for Kamuli, Hon. Kibalya also seconding, Hon. Magogo –(Laughter)– Member of Parliament for Aruu. Honourable members, what is wrong with Hon. Magogo *Ssalongo* seconding? (Laughter)

MS BEATRICE ANYWAR: Madam Speaker and honourable members, this Bill will enable the mainstreaming and rationalisation of agencies to save on the financial drain and wasteful expenditures.

It will also facilitate efficiency and effective service delivery, avoiding the duplication of the mandates and functions. Therefore, I beg that this Bill be supported. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. For these, let us look at them one by one. Let us first finish this, then go to tree planting. So, can you present a report, and please summarise it?

12.49

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (Dr Emmanuel Otaala): Thank you, Madam Speaker and colleagues -

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter.

MR BASALIRWA: Madam Speaker, according to Rule 130 of our Rules of Procedure, when a report is called and the chairperson is not present or the minister, the Speaker can designate any member of the committee to present it.

Madam Speaker, you designated Hon. Christine Kaaya to present the report because the chairperson was not around. Is it procedurally right for the chairperson now to come and hijack the process in contravention of Rule 130(2) of our Rules of Procedure?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, to the best of my knowledge, my chairperson of the committee is in the House. I can see him here. So, let him go ahead. He is going to summarise the report. Why are you causing violence in the House? (Laughter)

DR OTAALA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the wise ruling. I recognise that Hon. Asuman - since our times at Makerere University, has always been a calm person - I am surprised that -

THE SPEAKER: Is that part of the report? Can you summarise for us the report?

DR OTAALA: Madam Speaker, I beg to lay, on the Table, the report of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources on the National Meteorological Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2024. Together with the report, I am laying on the Table the minutes of the proceedings thereof. I beg to lay.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

DR OTAALA: Madam Speaker, as per your guidance, I am going to summarise the report. On page 3, we give the background of how this Bill came about; when it was laid on the Floor of Parliament.

On page 4, we present the object of the Bill. On the same page, Madam Speaker, we give details of the mandate of the Uganda National

Meteorological Authority and that goes up to page 6. On that same page, we also talk about the compliance of the Bill to the National Development Plan III.

On page 7, we lay out the methodology and the limitations that we faced as a committee.

Madam Speaker, allow me to now go to page 8, which is about committee analysis, observations and recommendations.

Madam Speaker, this part of the report will examine the proposed clauses of the Bill, their constitutionality and relevance in light of existing laws and policies on rationalisation, and the mischief they intend to cure. The examination is structured around the thematic areas outlined in the Bill.

8.1 Mainstreaming of the Functions of the Uganda National

Meteorological Authority into the Ministry Responsible for Matters Relating to Meteorology (Purpose of Amendment of Act 11 of 2012)

The purpose of amending the Uganda National Meteorological Authority Act, 2012 (Act 11 of 2012), as stated in clause 3, is to mainstream the functions of the Uganda National Meteorological Authority established under the Act into the ministry responsible for matters relating to meteorology.

Committee observations

1. That Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNAMA); its specialised nature - and we want to talk about this. The committee noted that the Uganda National Meteorological Authority was created by the UNAMA Act, of 2012 and commenced in January 2014. Prior to this, meteorological services were provided for under the first East African community until 1977, and thereafter the services moved to seven different ministries at different times.

These were as follows:

- (a) The Ministry of Finance (1977-1978);
- (b) The Ministry of Transport and Communication (1978- 1979);
- (c) The Ministry of Aviation and Communication (1979-1980);
- (d) The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (1992);
- (e) The Ministry of Environment Protection (1992-1995);
- (f) The Ministry of Lands, Water and Environment (1995-2010);
- (g) The Ministry of Water and Environment (2010-2015) and then back again now, according to the proposal. The proposal is seeking to have it back in the Ministry of Water and Environment.

The committee noted that meteorological data is highly specialised yet used to serve a multiplicity of purposes, which contributed to its being domiciled in several ministries before it landed in the Ministry of Water and Environment under the Department of Meteorology. It is, therefore, here that the functions of the Department of Meteorology transitioned to Uganda National Meteorological Authority after the passing of the Act, 2012.

The committee further noted that the Bill aims to facilitate efficient and effective service delivery by clearly delineating the mandates and functions of Government Agencies and Departments, thereby avoiding duplication of mandates and functions of Government Agencies and Departments.

The report that guided the rationalisation process indicates that the mandate of the Department of Meteorology under the Ministry of Water and Environment is duplicated by the Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA) regarding monitoring weather and climate conditions and tendering technical advice for safe and economic air navigation, agricultural planning, water resource management, and natural disaster management.

The committee, however, noted that no evidence of this duplication was adduced, and

the unique nature of the National Environment Management Authority's (NEMA) roles emphasised the need for UNMA to be an independent entity.

The committee noted that UNMA's roles are specialised and specific, not duplicated at the Ministry. It is, therefore, important to retain UNMA as an autonomous institution while the Ministry focuses on the development of policies.

2. Meteorology is an Essential Service

The committee observed that a service is considered essential if such a service -

THE CHAIRPERSON: There is a procedural matter.

MR SILWANY: Madam Speaker, I rise on a procedural matter, and I am constrained because Hon. Otaala Emmanuel is my brother from Tororo.

The procedural matter I am raising is on the basis that you guided the Chair of the committee to summarise because we have this report and read it. So, is it procedurally right for the chairperson to go against your guidance and begin reading the report, point by point and full stop yet we are waiting for the summarised version before we discuss it?

THE CHAIRPERSON: Let the chairperson finish presenting his report. Thank you.

DR OTAALA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the guidance. I was on point number two, where my committee stated that meteorology is an essential service - and allowed me to repeat that the committee observed that a service is considered essential if such a service is critical to preserving life, health, public safety, and basic societal functioning.

Meteorology is an essential service as per the Sixth Schedule of the Public Service Negotiating, Consultative, and Dispute Settlement Machinery Act, 2008.

The committee noted that UNMA as a national meteorological and hydrological service is key in all these areas. Meteorological services, whether direct or indirect or user-specific, are crucial in agriculture, aviation, construction, industries, disaster management, energy generation and supply, environmental protection, fisheries, forestry, health, tourism, manufacturing, military, as in defence, transport, sports, urban planning, banking and financial services, as water resource planning and management, among others, but specifically:

a) Contribution to Aviation

(i) It contributes enormously to aviation. UNMA issues forecasts to enable air navigation in and outside the country. For instance, in 2020 it issued 2,196 Terminal Aerodrome forecasts and 13,700 flight folders;

(ii) Tourism Sector: Weather and climate information provided by UNMA is crucial for tourists in planning travel on both land and air itineraries;

(iii) Agricultural Production: UNMA plays a vital role in combating food insecurity by providing essential weather and climate information to support agricultural production, thus contributing to national food security;

(iv) I beg to correct it, there is a mistake - water resource quality and availability. UNMA's continuous monitoring of weather elements helps in managing water resources, monitoring floods, and droughts, and ensuring the quality and availability of water resources in Uganda;

(v) Energy Sector Planning and Development: UNMA's provision of country-wide rainfall data, wind speed and direction, and solar radiation is indispensable for realising the energy potentials and master plan for the country contributing to effective energy sector planning and development;

(vi) Health: In the face of increasing climate variability and climate change, UNMA's

weather and climate monitoring is essential for early warning in the health sector, helping to address emerging health issues and mitigate the impacts of weather and climate-related epidemics such as malaria, typhoid, cholera, respiratory infections, and pandemics such as COVID-19; and

- (vii) Disaster Preparedness: UNMA's role is critical in establishing an effective early warning system to prepare and minimise the negative impacts of weather and climate-induced disasters in Uganda, including loss of lives, property, livelihoods, famine and water scarcity.

The committee therefore noted that given these cross-cutting functions and the failure to effectively accommodate UNMA in any single specific ministry in the past, UNMA's unique mandate cannot be efficiently executed under the Ministry of Water and Environment as proposed in the Bill.

3. International obligations

Allow me to talk about this, Madam Speaker and honourable member. The committee noted that weather, climate and water cycle have no national boundaries and thus require cooperation at a global scale for countries to develop and benefit from meteorology and operational hydrology applications.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) provides the framework for such international cooperation in meteorology for its 193 member states and territories. It has become a global trend that national meteorological and hydrological services transform into semi-autonomous government agencies.

This is to enable the provision of more efficient and effective services for disaster risk reduction and social economic development, environmental protection, as well as building resilience to adverse impacts of climate change.

Uganda, being a member of the WMO, had to comply, and the then Department of Meteorology metamorphosed into UNMA. I have attached that letter from the Secretary

General of the World Meteorological Organisation, dated 30 September 2021.

The committee further noted that regionally, Uganda is a partner state to the East African Treaty of 1999, which under Article 100 provides for meteorological services and inter alia calls on member states to harmonise policies for the provision of meteorological services.

It is in line with this that the Sectoral Council on Transport, Communication and Meteorology, which is one of the established organs of the EAC, as provided for in Article 9(1)(d) implored all National Meteorological Agencies within member states to become semi-autonomous. Uganda led the way. That resulted in UNMA.

This was re-echoed during the 18th meeting of the TCM, held in Bujumbura, Burundi, from 6 to 10 February 2023. It was reiterated that the republics of Burundi, Kenya and South Sudan should expedite the transformation of their meteorological departments to Meteorological Authorities as directed by the 16th Sectoral Council on Transport, Communications and Meteorology (TCM). The TCM report is attached. Therefore, rationalisation will weaken Uganda's National Meteorological Authority's (UNMA's) compliance with the regional standards for meteorological services.

The committee further noted that Uganda is a member of the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET) and therefore, is bound by resolutions of AMCOMET. The AMCOMET is a permanent forum where African ministers convene, every two years, to discuss policy matters related to the development of meteorology and its applications as well as its contribution to the socio-economic development in Africa.

The strategic pillar number one of AMCOMET requires each member state to formulate policies and provide the necessary legislation to ensure that National Meteorological Departments become autonomous or semi-autonomous and are adequately financed to fulfil their mandates.

4. Comparative analysis of meteorological agencies in Africa

The committee noted that the common trend has been for meteorological departments to transition to autonomous or semi-autonomous agencies and not vice-versa. Several African countries have followed suit namely:

i) South Africa

The South African Weather Service (SAWS) was established in accordance with the South African Weather Service Act, (Act No. 8 of 2001). The South African Weather Services is an agency of the Department of Environmental Affairs and is governed by a board.

ii) Ethiopia

The Government of Ethiopia officially established the National Meteorological Services Agency on December 31, 1980, under proclamation No. 201 of 1980.

iii) Nigeria

The Federal Government of Nigeria approved the setting up of the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) by an act of government on 21 May 2003. In 2022, the NiMet Establishment Act, of 2003 was repealed and replaced by the NiMet Establishment Act of 2022. The new Establishment Act grants the agency the sole authority to grant approvals and licenses for the establishment of meteorological stations and other related matters.

The other countries - Ghana, Tanzania, Rwanda, et cetera, I do not have to go into their details and our neighbour, Kenya. Kenya currently operates a Meteorological Department but is in the process of transitioning into a semi-autonomous agency.

The 12th meeting of the East African Community (EAC) Sectoral Council on Transport, Communications and Meteorology

(TCM) held on 21-24 September 2015, urged Kenya and Burundi, the only partner states that had not effected the transformation of their national meteorological services, to expedite their transformation from the main civil service to semi-autonomous government agencies.

To that effect, Kenya passed the Meteorology Bill, 2023, which provides for the establishment of the Kenya Meteorological Service Authority, regulation coordination, monitoring, management, provision and control of meteorological services for connected purposes.

THE SPEAKER: Point of procedure?

MR IDDI ISABIRYE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have a very busy Order Paper today, and you have continuously advised the committee chairperson to summarise the report. The point of procedure I am raising is whether we are proceeding well if the committee chairperson cannot summarise the report that we already have.

DR OTAALA: Madam Speaker, you guided me on this. Let me now summarise further.

5. Compliance with International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standards of ISO certification. UNMA has already acquired ISO certification; mainstreaming it would jeopardise this international certification that it has acquired.

6. Ability to become self-sustaining

The committee noted that UNMA has the potential to generate non-tax revenue from various sources for example, through the sale of various weather and climate-related products and services. UNMA projects to collect Shs 20 billion per year due to improved forecasts that will result from investments in radars and improvements in network stations across the country. In the long term, UNMA will be self-sufficient and can eventually be weaned off the Treasury. The projected revenue sources are as indicated in Table 1; you can see for yourselves what they are projecting to collect.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the committee recommends as follows:

- i) That the Uganda National Meteorological Authority be retained as a semi-autonomous entity and not mainstreamed into the ministry responsible for meteorology as proposed in the Bill;
- ii) That as a landlocked country, Uganda should focus more on developing its aviation industry rather than taking steps that might stagnate its aviation industrial development;
- iii) UNMA should generate more revenue that surpasses its current budget of Shs 18 billion by charging all user departments for its services just as other agencies like the National Water and Sewerage Corporation, National Forestry Authority (NFA), and other government agencies do.

Madam Speaker, I beg to submit. (*Applause*)

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. We are now opening the report to debate. Professor - honourable minister, you will come last. Hon. Ibrahim, Hon. Patrick -

1.15

PROF. ELIJAH MUSHEMEZA (Independent, Sheema County South, Sheema): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I stand here to oppose the recommendations of the committee on the following grounds –

THE SPEAKER: First of all, can I find out before you speak whether it has its own vote or gets a subvention from another ministry?

DR OTAALA: Madam Speaker, UNMA has a vote of its own. It is not a subvention.

THE SPEAKER: Which vote?

DR OTAALA: I need to check my records, but it is a vote - (*Laughter*)

THE SPEAKER: Get me the vote number.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the Bill, the Government argues that before 2012 Meteorology was a Department under the ministry and it performed the functions effectively.

Listening to the committee chairperson, as a scientist, I expected him to have provided evidence that after introducing an authority on the following variables, meteorology performed better than how it did as a department. I have not found that evidence.

Secondly, the committee chairperson argues that there will be income coming in, but he has not tabled currently how much money is being generated by the authority. He is just talking about what will happen in the future – the anticipation. Now, on those two grounds; lack of sufficient evidence to show –

THE SPEAKER: Quantitative –

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: Yes, quantitative evidence because he is a scientist; he is a doctor. So, I expect him to talk in terms of quantitative evidence. That there was a department and they introduced an authority. If you are to measure the impact, you look at the before and after effects. From department to authority, what is the impact in quantitative terms? There is no such evidence. We are only seeing the proposal that it will generate income when there is no evidence of the current income.

Based on those two reasons, I oppose the recommendation of the report and support the Government that this authority be rationalised.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister of state for roads?

1.19

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (WORKS) (Mr Musa Ecweru): Madam Speaker, just to build on what the professor has said, we are not abolishing meteorology, but we are only mainstreaming. The purpose of mainstreaming is to make the Government light and to reduce the cost of administration. Meteorology will be

a department in the ministry. It will perform all the activities that the authority has been performing.

The only positive thing is that we will have a cut on the cost of administration and deployed those resources to other very efficient parts of the work. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ibra?

1.20

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, in principle, we support a lean government. If we were the ones in charge of the Government, even the ministries should have remained about 30 or 40. However, under the National Resistance Movement (NRM), they are the size of a secondary school. *(Laughter)* I, therefore, support the motion by the Government to mainstream the meteorological services. *(Applause)*

I think the professor has made my point. I have listened to the report. The report assumes that they are doing away with meteorological services yet the Bill was only about transferring these services.

First, it was a very big mistake. Do you remember the debate we had here at the time the Government was creating the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA)? We were asking them: what will happen to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration?

It became a fashion – like many things under NRM – that every day you are creating an agency: every Bill comes with an agency!

What this Parliament should be concerned with is whether the old bureaucratic red tape of the Government has now been addressed, such that when these services are taken back to the ministries, they will allow the professionals to do the work.

But also there is the issue of remuneration – these agencies, apart from some individuals who

wanted to use them to enhance their payment, because of the pay, were able to attract top professionals from the market. We need to look at how much money you are now paying civil servants *vis-à-vis* those who are in agencies. Otherwise, you risk losing professionals who are currently being paid fairly. That is what the minister should be addressing.

The other example that the chairperson of the committee gives does not fit Uganda. All the countries he has mentioned – South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana – are democratic. They are not under the military like us. You can see military people here. Even in the Parliament, they come to listen to what you are saying. *(Laughter)* Traders are complaining about taxes, they are all over the town. So, you are giving the wrong examples. Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa are changing Presidents. They are not under life presidency –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, leave Hon. Ibra Ssemuju to finish his point.

MR SSEMUJJU: Do you want to say that Uganda is the same as Ghana? Then you -

THE SPEAKER: The most important thing that has been said is that we should go by the Government's position. The rest is – *(Laughter)* - but one thing is that we should also not have a dull House. *(Laughter)* When Hon. Ibra Ssemuju makes a joke, he is making the House lively. Why should you fault him? Hon. Ibra, you complete the submission.

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, for what I am saying, even if you want to Google right now, you will see that in Ghana they have changed presidents. In South Africa, they have done so. Even in Nigeria, they have. It is not a joke; it is real. These countries are not under military rule – you even have military generals in Parliament. They are not. This is not a joke.

All that I am saying – *(Interjections)* - I know it is painful, but you have to listen, unfortunately, honourable colleagues. *(Laughter)* That is the sad reality of Uganda.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members –

1.27

MR SSEMUJJU: Can I make my point, Madam Speaker?

MR PATRICK OSHABE (NUP, Kassanda County North, Kassanda): Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Have you not finished?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we need to finish this Bill, break off and come back for 10 other Bills.

MR SSEMUJJU: No, I was interrupted by -

THE SPEAKER: He is on procedure. You wait. Please complete your submission.

MR OSHABE: Thank you for the opportunity to say something about this. Madam Speaker, I would like to underscore the importance of meteorology in this country. Whereas the committee chairperson tried to show the movement of that service from ministry to ministry, he failed to show us the impact of the movement.

MR SSEMUJJU: You see, when you interrupt, I lose the flow of my thinking. I, now, must recreate it. *(Laughter)* Point number one, if you can allow – in one minute – Madam Speaker, I support the position of the Government because they are doing the right thing. I am only asking them for assurances on the number of points that I have made.

I am a farmer, Madam Speaker. Many times, we lose seeds. When it rains, we plant. After planting, we lose all the seeds because they never germinate. Why? It is because the Government cannot inform us appropriately about when to plant and when to do whatever we have to do.

Finally, I said: stop comparing cabbages and oranges – bringing examples of countries that are democratic, not run by military people and comparing them to Uganda which is run by military people, who must even come to Parliament, in uniform, as if they are – *(Laughter)*

We have problems with pesticides. The meteorology institutions are not doing enough to ensure that, we the farmers, are at least informed that around this time, this and this is going to happen, so we can behave like this.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ibrahim Ssemujju, those who come to Parliament in uniform are in the army uniforms, the rules allow. They are voted into Parliament and they are Members of Parliament.

I am happy they are talking about the aerodrome reports they are doing. Probably now UNMA is serving that sector more. However, as farmers, we are really not doing very well.

Secondly, when you talked about new presidents, but these people have continued rebranding – *[Mr Ssemujju: “Procedure, Madam Speaker.”] (Laughter)*

I know that moving UNMA from where it is back to the ministry is not going to help; it is going to serve one purpose just to ensure that the Government reduces expenditure. I am not very sure whether that is going to help the people who need meteorology services in this country.

MR SSEMUJJU: I simply wanted to bring to your attention, Madam Speaker, the rule that protects you by stopping you from debating. *(Laughter)*

I failed to understand the chairperson - he is refusing to move yet he is giving reasons, which are easy for some people like the professor to shoot them down. You would have shown us that the ministry cannot handle it because of reasons A,B,C,D. Inform us appropriately here to help us take a proper decision.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ibrahim Ssemujju, these people have continued rebranding a new president. We have always had a new president. Yes, Hon. Patrick.

1.29

DR LULUME BAYIGGA (DP, Buikwe County South, Buikwe): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to support the position of the committee. Some of these super-specialised agencies need to have heightened importance.

Previously, this department was not known. Now, we have an authority to relate to and to blame for non-performance. You take it back, it gets swamped up like it previously was. The chairman was not even given enough time. People were complaining all the time when he was making a presentation.

THE SPEAKER: Who was not given enough time? We gave the chairman enough time. If he failed to defend his report, that is not our business; we gave him enough time.

DR LULUME: Madam Speaker, he was interrupted severally. That is what I wanted to mean. What I am saying –

THE SPEAKER: Is having no cost-benefit analysis an interruption? Did it have a cost-benefit analysis? Did it have a quantitative analysis of what we would benefit or lose? Is that an interruption? Let us speak like legislators.

DR LULUME: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for that information. Anyhow, I am saying there are very important presentations related to what it is going to generate, which were hastened and not well analysed by Members.

Otherwise, I believe that an authority such as this which is even highlighted in the rest of the countries that have been mentioned, be it or not whether they are military or more democratic than ours – it is on that basis that such an authority has an importance that our country must also have. Otherwise, we are going to depend on information generated by other countries to guide our meteorological functions. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: LOP, can you allow your Member to speak first?

MR BASALIRWA: Thank you, Madam Speaker and the LOP. The impression being created, especially by my senior colleague, Dr Bayigga Lulume is that before the establishment of this authority, meteorological services in this country were being poorly handled. That is the impression being created.

The onus was on the chairperson and the committee – because this became an authority in 2012. That is when the law was passed. So, it is incumbent for us to understand, before 2012 and now, what are the fundamental differences in terms of performance? That would be the only justification. In the absence of that, this authority has to suffer the same fate as other authorities. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: What fate?

MR BASALIRWA: Of mainstreaming. It has to be mainstreamed. In other words, I am in support of the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, the old Bill.

1.32

MS CHRISTINE KAAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga): Madam Speaker, I would like to put forward that environmental services may not fetch money for our economy. These services are aids; they only give us a conducive environment for other sectors to perform well. Therefore, services by the meteorological authority may not accrue revenue to our coffers but aid other sectors.

Most importantly, when meteorological services –

THE SPEAKER: When you aid other sectors like agriculture, where Hon. Patrick even loses money, isn't that a loss?

MS KAAYA: That is why when we strengthen it, we want it to improve its services to all sectors including health and tourism.

The other point I wanted to bring forward is that when you swallow the specific services into one ministry, the ministry just directs the services of the meteorological authority to probably forecast on climate and weather alone. Other sectors will find it very difficult to dictate to the Ministry of Water and Environment to bring its customised information. For example, on aviation, on defence, on health and so on.

Madam Speaker, when this service is left in the centre; in the middle, all the different sectors will be able to seek customised information from this institution. That is why we feel that based on its contribution to other environmental services, we may have to first look at how it aids other sectors to perform other than swallowing it.

THE SPEAKER: As Hon. Basalirwa said, the committee should have given us an analysis of how it used to perform becoming an authority, *vis-à-vis* how it is performing now when it is an authority on its own. The report really is not – please sit - very convincing to an extent that – yes, LOP.

1.35

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Looking at the committee report, I am trying to see where the committee is coming from with certain concerns. Their big concern is that once this is sent to the ministry, will these services continue to operate?

There is an old English adage that once bitten –

THE SPEAKER: Check the questions. The first question is: when you take this - please –

MR SSENYONYI: The government is not helping matters by not availing some kind of commitment to help Members understand. I was going to quote an old English adage that, once bitten, twice shy.

Madam Chairperson, we saw what happened with REA. It was sent to the ministry and Members here were complaining, saying, “Look, you gave us a commitment that once it goes back to the ministry, the projects will not stop”. The projects stopped. Members here

were complaining and asking what the exact intention was.

The worry even with this –

THE SPEAKER: Actually, we did not send REA to the ministry because it was not by an Act of Parliament. They took their own thing.

MR SSENYONYI: That is true.

THE SPEAKER: What LOP wants to find out is how this is going to be. Won't it be like the REA case? This is what you need to answer.

MR SSENYONYI: That is the point. The concern of the committee is that this is a highly specialised entity and that it will get swallowed up on the other end and not much will happen, as was with the REA example that we are giving. We had thought that even though it was different in a sense, the project stalled.

Therefore, the concern is, Government, if this goes back to the ministry, what happens next? That is the bigger concern. The government is not helping matters by availing that kind of commitment so that people are sure. That is a big concern.

THE SPEAKER: The Government should give us a commitment to that. Yes, Hon. Paul Omara.

1.37

MR PAUL OMARA (Independent, Otuke County, Otuke): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am up to oppose the recommendation of the committee. The balkanisation of Government ministries was first of all, in itself, a big strategic mistake. We created big and parallel governments that consume a lot of money.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ssemujju, are you listening?

MR OMARA: Most of these agencies were driven and created by the donors because of their strategic interests. Now that we know that we have been spending so much money in

running these two governments, it is the right time for us to consider downsizing some of these entities.

The chairperson talked about Uganda being a signatory to various international agencies; one of the things he did not do was to demonstrate that if this agency is mainstreamed into the ministry, the Government of Uganda will fail to meet its international obligations.

What would be required, Madam Speaker is to basically pay our fees to these agencies; the line ministry will pay. Some of the requirements would be for us to have a person representing us in those agencies. There will be an individual from the ministry who will be representing us in those international organisations.

THE SPEAKER: What is your conclusion?

MR OMARA: My conclusion is that I support the position of the Government. These agencies should be mainstreamed into the Government. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Bwiire.

1.39

MR SANON BWIIRE (NRM, Bulamogi County, Kaliro): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I stand to oppose the report of the committee. It has been spiced very well to mobilise us as if when there is mainstreaming of the metrological roles, the whole thing will fade and die, which is not true. The Government is simply calling for mainstream for the better.

Secondly, the committee has not informed us of how much have we been spending on these agencies compared to how we are standing now. One of the main key issues why we are rationalising is the high cost that the Government is incurring on some of these agencies. Can I get clarification - I do not know whether the chairperson was told how much we are spending, or whether they cannot be convinced that the Government will save some money, which can be spent to resolve other issues which are vital for the country.

As I conclude, Madam Speaker, the formulated the Bill, it is clear that meteorological roles will continue being played and existing as it is being suggested by the committee. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Obua, I want you to give a confirmation and commitment on behalf of the Government. I want you to take the same thing to the Cabinet.

1.41.

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Denis Hamson Obua): Madam Speaker, I thank the committee and the Members, especially those who are supporting the Government Bill in its original form.

THE SPEAKER: Like Hon. Ssemujju.

MR OBUA: Yes, like my dear brother and my Member of Parliament, while I am within the Kampala metropolitan, Hon. Ssemujju Nganda.

The Government recognises the fact that the meteorological function is highly specialised. However, through this Bill, the Government wishes to affirm that we are proposing to mainstream the functions of the Uganda National Meteorological Authority into the ministry responsible for matters that are metrological in nature.

We shall even go ahead to restructure and reorganise the ministry in that the services currently being offered by this Authority, will continue but not under the auspices of the Authority but under the ministry responsible for meteorological matters in Uganda.

Therefore, honourable colleagues, there is no contradiction. Will it continue to operate? Yes, in that the functions currently executed by this Authority, will be executed through the line ministry, which we are going to restructure and reorganise.

Madam Speaker, we want to affirm that we are on the right trajectory. No one should be worried that the functions currently performed

by this Authority will be in vain. It shall continue but under the mainstream ministry. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you so much, the Government Chief Whip. Yes, Motion.

MR ENOSI ASIIMWE: Madam Speaker, I move that the question be put and a decision be made, under Rule 81. Thank you so much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you must know that the report was informative. The question I am putting is the question for the second reading of the report. If you agree, say, "Aye", meaning that we continue with the Bill. If you are not in agreement you say, "Nay".

Okay, I put the question about the Uganda National Meteorological Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2024 to be read for the second time.

(Question put and agreed to.)

BILLS
COMMITTEE STAGE

THE UGANDA NATIONAL
METEOROLOGICAL
AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE CHAIRPERSON: Our members, physically present are 142 and those attending virtually are 60, that is 202.

Clause 1

I put the question that clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

Clause 1, agreed to.

Clause 2, agreed to.

Clause 3, agreed to.

Clause 4, agreed to.

Clause 5, agreed to.

Clause 6, agreed to.

Clause 7, agreed to.

Clause 8, agreed to.

Clause 9, agreed to.

Clause 10, agreed to.

Clause 11, agreed to.

Clause 12, agreed to.

Clause 13, agreed to.

Clause 14, agreed to.

Clause 15, agreed to.

Clause 16, agreed to.

Clause 17, agreed to.

Clause 18, agreed to.

Clause 19, agreed to.

Clause 20, agreed to.

Clause 21, agreed to.

Clause 22, agreed to.

Clause 23, agreed to.

Clause 24, agreed to.

Clause 25, agreed to.

Clause 26, agreed to.

Clause 27, agreed to.

Clause 28, agreed to.

Clause 29, agreed to.

Clause 30, agreed to.

Clause 31, agreed to.

Clause 32, agreed to.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF
THE WHOLE HOUSE

Clause 33, agreed to.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, honourable minister.

Clause 34, agreed to.

1.54

Clause 35, agreed to.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (ENVIRONMENT) (Ms Beatrice Anywar): Madam Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of the whole House has considered the Bill entitled “The Uganda National Meteorological Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2024” and passed it without any amendments.

Clause 36, agreed to.

Clause 37, agreed to.

Clause 38, agreed to.

Clause 39, agreed to.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE HOUSE

Clause 40, agreed to.

Clause 41, agreed to.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, honourable minister.

Clause 42, agreed to.

1.55

Clause 43, agreed to.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (ENVIRONMENT) (Ms Beatrice Anywar): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the House adopts the report from the Committee of the whole House.

Clause 44, agreed to.

The Title, agreed to.

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESUME

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that the report of the Committee of the whole House be adopted by this House.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, honourable minister?

(Question put and agreed to.)

1.53

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (ENVIRONMENT) (Ms Beatrice Anywar): Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that the House do resume and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

Report adopted.

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that the House resumes and the Committee of the Whole House reports thereto.

BILLS
THIRD READING

THE UGANDA NATIONAL
METEOROLOGICAL AUTHORITY
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Yes, honourable minister.

(Question put and agreed to.)

1.56

(The House resumed, the Speaker presiding.)

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (ENVIRONMENT) (Ms Beatrice Anywar): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled “The Uganda National Meteorological Authority

(Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read the third time and do pass.

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that the Bill entitled “Uganda National Meteorological Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read for the third time and do pass.

(Question put and agreed to.)

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED,
“THE UGANDA NATIONAL
METEOROLOGICAL AUTHORITY
(AMENDMENT) ACT, 2024”

THE SPEAKER: Title settled and Bill passed. *(Applause)* Thank you. Honourable members, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have law students from the Islamic University in Uganda, Kampala Campus. They are represented by Hon. Shamim Malende and Hon. Muhammad Nsereko. Where are you?

Please stand up. You are most welcome; thank you for coming. Hon. Muhammad Nsereko, stand up and wave at your members.

1.57

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Central Division, Kampala): Thank you, Madam Speaker. *(Laughter)* Allow me to thank you, in a special way, for recognising these gallant young men and women who have turned up in this august House to observe the proceedings. May the good Lord bless you and in the future, you might become leaders. *Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.*

MR SSEMUJJU: Thank you. Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: First come.

MR SSEMUJJU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want the Government Chief Whip to address why the National Resistance Movement Members of Parliament have lost faith in the Government such that they bring here a Bill and say that when it goes to the ministry, there is a problem.

That is the reason they are opposed to rationalisation; they think that when agencies are taken back to the Government, it is trouble. Can you address Parliament on that?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation of Members and staff from the National Assembly of Namibia. We have Mrs Emilia Alwendo, the Deputy Director, Mr Risto Nakanyala, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and Ms Ester Shivute, Learning and Development Officer. You are most welcome. Welcome to Uganda, the Pearl of Africa, and the Parliament of Uganda. Thank you so much for coming. *(Applause)*

2.03

MR WILRED NIWAGABA (Independent, Ndoorwa County East, Kabale): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have noticed that most of these Bills we are passing should have come as repeal Bills instead of amendment Bills. In this particular one we have just passed, you will realise that there is only one clause; the saving clause.

We cannot legislate to transfer functions from a body created by Parliament to a ministry that is not created by an Act of Parliament. I would like to invite the Attorney-General, in the near future, that once these Bills have been assented to, he should subject them to law revision so that they are deleted from the law books –

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

MR NIWAGABA: Most of what we are considering should have been repeal Bills and not amendments when you only keep one clause.

THE SPEAKER: After they have been assented to, you will bring the miscellaneous revisions and we have them deleted from the law books.

MR NIWAGABA: Exactly.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. *(Applause)* Let us look at the Uganda National Commission

for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). We will look at the National Forestry Authority (NFA) when we come back from lunch.

Before we do that, Honourable Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, I see that you want to lay some documents, but these will be substantive items on the Order Paper. I do not want to amend the Order Paper in the middle of the sitting to sneak in - especially when it comes to a supplementary. Please bear with me. We shall include it in tomorrow's Order Paper. Thank you.

BILLS SECOND READING

THE UGANDA NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, move a motion. Honourable members, we will handle the National Forest Authority (NFA) after lunch. For a Bill that is very sensitive, where we do not agree, I will ask people to raise their hands so that we know that it is true that you have rejected it. Yes, honourable minister?

2.07

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled Uganda –

THE SPEAKER: (*Mr Ssemujju rose*) Do you want your answer?

MR SSEMUJJU: I have another very serious procedural issue. As Hon. Obua prepares, our rules require that the minister who has signed on the Bill presents the Bill. For this particular one, the one who has signed on it is Janet Museveni – that is the Bill we have. (*Interjection*) No, I am reading it the way it is written on the Bill – that is in your head. I am reading the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: She is Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni.

MR SSEMUJJU: She has not written “Hon. Janet –

THE SPEAKER: Out of respect, she is a honourable member. It costs you nothing.

MR SSEMUJJU: Absolutely. Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni Tibahaburwa. (*Laughter*)

So, Madam Speaker, until this rule is suspended, we cannot proceed with another minister who has not signed the Bill, coming here to present a Bill. This is what the rules say.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, “*Rule 130. Second Reading*”

(1) *Subject to this rule, the Vice-President, Minister or other Member in charge of a Bill shall move that the “Bill be read a Second Time” and may speak to the Motion.”*

Hon. Moriku is a minister in the Ministry of Education and Sports. (*Mr Ssemujju rose*) If you so wish, I am suspending rule 130. Hon. Moriku, now read the Bill. It is not entrenched.

MR SSEMUJJU: Yes, Madam Speaker, if you can allow, maybe the Government people are not helping the Presiding Officer because the rules –

THE SPEAKER: I do not need to be helped.

MR SSEMUJJU: They need to move a motion to suspend the rule, which they are now leaving to you, to suffer.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Moriku is a minister for education. Hon. Ibra – I know how Hon. Ibra wants the First Lady to be here. Okay. Move the motion to suspend the rule.

2.10

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua): Madam Speaker, I would wish to humbly request that before I comply with your directive, I first read verbatim the provision of rule 130(1).

“Rule 130. Second Reading

(1) *Subject to this rule, the Vice-President, Minister or other Member in charge of a Bill shall move that the “Bill be read a Second Time” and may speak to the Motion.”*

Hon. Moriku is a member of this House and a minister in the Ministry of Education and Sports. The Ministry of Education and Sports is the one in charge of this Bill.

Madam Speaker, I would beg that, probably, you guide me. I have no hesitation; I can move that the rule be suspended. However, in the literal interpretation of this rule, in my humble opinion, we are proceeding well.

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, the rule –

THE SPEAKER: Let me hear from the shadow Attorney-General.

2.12

THE SHADOW ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Wilfred Niwagaba): Well, Madam Speaker, I agree with your interpretation. You do not need to suspend this rule. Hon. Kaducu can present the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Actually, that is the Attorney-General.

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, let me be on record if you allow me. This rule is in respect of a minister presenting a Bill. In case it is a Private Member’s Bill, that is when it refers to a Member –

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of order.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: Madam Speaker, many times the Presiding Officers in this House have made it clear that no Member should access a microphone without the permission of the Presiding Officer. Is it in order for my friend, Hon. Ssemujju Nganda – *Al-hajj* – to access a microphone without your permission and divert the House and derail it from doing its work?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members –

MR NIWAGABA: I think that for purposes of clarity, especially to help my friend, Hon. Ssemujju, you may also need to look at rule 2 on the interpretation. The rules refer to “minister” to “... include a Prime Minister, a Deputy Prime Minister and a Minister of State.” *(Applause)* So, Hon. Kaducu, as a minister of state, is fit and proper to read this particular Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, shadow Attorney-General. Can you move a motion?

DR KADUCU: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your wise guidance. I beg to move that the Bill entitled, “Uganda National Commission for UNESCO 2024 (Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read for the second time.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Is the motion seconded? *(Members rose)* It is seconded by the whole House, with the exception of Hon. Odur – *(Laughter)* Thank you. Would you want to speak to your motion?

DR KADUCU: Madam Speaker, the policy and the principles behind this Bill are to give effect to the Government policy for rationalisation of Government agencies –

THE SPEAKER: We are not hearing you, Ma’am.

DR KADUCU: Madam Speaker, the policy and the principles behind the Bill are to give effect to the Government policy for rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure, which was adopted by the Cabinet on 22 February 2021.

There were defects in the existing law. The Bill states the defects in the existing law as follows:

The Constitution establishes a definitive number of Government agencies, including constitutional commissions, authorities, boards, local councils and other statutory bodies. These were established to perform certain specific constitutional functions.

Over the years, however, there has been proliferation of agencies established by the Acts of Parliament, Executive Orders and administrative arrangements. Whereas most of the agencies are necessary due to the critical nature of the functions they perform, Government has established that a certain limited number of agencies were established without due consideration to the aspects of institutional harmony, functionality, duplications, overlaps and affordability.

Government has also established that some agencies have served the purpose for which they were established. The mandate of a few other agencies have been overtaken by events. Such agencies need to be rationalised.

More importantly, the proliferation of agencies has created mandate overlaps and jurisdictional ambiguities among the agencies. Additionally, the high cost of administering the agencies has drained the National Treasury at the expense of effective service delivery. This has overstretched the capacity of Government – (*Hon. Ssemujju rose*) - Madam Speaker, with all those, I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Can we now hear a summary from the committee chairperson – yes, Hon. Ibrahim.

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, you have invited the Minister of Education and Sports to move Parliament to consider a specific Bill. She has brought notes prepared by Hon. Muruli Mukasa, responsible for the whole rationalisation. She has not uttered a single word about the Bill before Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: No, she talked about the objects of the Bill.

MR SSEMUJJU: No, she says the “rationalisation” - things that Hon. Muruli Mukasa said here. When I was helping her such that she addresses the Bill she has brought here, she took off. (*Laughter*) The procedural issue I am raising is whether actually there is a motion.

THE SPEAKER: There is a motion in place and it was seconded.

2.20

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SPORTS (Mr John Twesigye): Madam Speaker, allow me to present a report on the Committee on Education and Sports on the Ugandan National Commission for UNESCO (Amendment) Bill, 2024. Allow me to lay on the Table a copy of the report and the minutes.

THE SPEAKER: Please, lay.

MR TWESIGYE: Madam Speaker, allow me not to go into so much detail but to look at the observations of the committee.

The committee observed that the structure of the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO does not implement the current Uganda National Commission for UNESCO Act, 2014. For instance, whereas the Act provided for the National Commission for UNESCO to be a body corporate with a Board, a Board was appointed for one term and it was never renewed.

During the committee interaction with the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, it stated that the staff of the Commission are public servants earning Government salary and recruited by the Education Service Commission. They further stated that the Commission is a department of the Ministry of Education and Sports and is housed within the ministry headquarters.

Following this brief background and after interaction with the ministry, the committee now recommends that the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO Act, 2014 is accordingly amended because several provisions have been redundant since its enactment.

The Committee on Education and Sports recommends that subject to these proposed amendments, the Bill therefore be passed. I beg to report.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, you have heard from the committee chairperson.

MR OKUPA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May the chairperson of the committee – I wish he could listen. [Mr John Twesigye: “*I am listening*”] I wish you could clarify to us who was responsible for renewing the Board and why it was not renewed. Otherwise, that is a weakness of someone who should have been monitoring. Why did it take all this long for us to realise that anomaly? You left it hanging by saying the Board was not renewed. Whose responsibility was it?

MR TWESIGYE: Madam Speaker, when this Bill was referred to the committee, we duly processed it and interacted with the Ministry of Education and Sports. It is the responsibility of the ministry to make sure the law is implemented, once Parliament enacts it. I propose that if further explanation is required, the honourable minister can explain.

2.23

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, in my career as an MP, this is the smallest report in the history of my being here. It gives the simplest explanation I have ever heard.

I hope that tomorrow, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development will not be here with a Bill to say Bank of Uganda should be rationalised because the one responsible for appointing the Governor has not appointed. I also hope that we will not have an amendment here of removing the police because there is no IGP.

As a committee of Parliament, you simply cannot present that as a justification for doing away with UNESCO - that the Board was not appointed. Did you want the Board to appoint itself? You are NRM, you know the level of performance of your Government; two years, no Governor. Now, no IGP.

THE SPEAKER: Is there no Governor? We have Dr Atingi-Ego.

MR SSEMUJJU: He is a Deputy Governor. That is his substantive appointment.

THE SPEAKER: The Bank of Uganda Act says in the absence of the Governor, the deputy automatically becomes the Governor. Why are you chasing away the doctor? Hon. Amero, speak. They want doctor to go away but where?

2.25

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (WORKS)

(Mr Musa Ecweru): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hon. Ssemujju should know that there is a man called Dr Atingi-Ego, a very competent person; a Ugandan –

THE SPEAKER: For IMF.

MR ECWERU: To say that he is not there, just maybe because you do not like his face, is very unfair. Madam Speaker, there is a Governor.

THE SPEAKER: And where he comes from.

MR SSEMUJJU: Maybe because of where you come from, you are excited about being deputies: deputy president, deputy - I am only saying he should be appointed Governor. *(Laughter)* If you are offended, I am sorry. My apology.

THE SPEAKER: No, honourable, they have a full Speaker. I am not a deputy.

MR SSEMUJJU: No, by his submission, you need to resign and go back to become a Deputy Speaker. Madam Speaker, we are considering a Bill -

THE SPEAKER: I do not resign because I was not appointed. I was voted in by 415 Members; all these Members you see here and my first vote was from Hon. Ssemujju Nganda *Hajj*.

MR SSEMUJJU: Because it was a secret ballot but for me, I voted Hon. Asuman Basalirwa. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: That was my proxy. Honourable members, let us finish UNESCO, go for lunch and come back for more serious Bills.

MR SSEMUJJU: I told you, Madam Speaker, that the Opposition supports a lean Government. In fact, I will support every agency that you bring here and want to take it back. I will support it, and I am eagerly waiting for the day you will bring a motion to reduce ministers, Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), even Members of Parliament and districts. So, I am your supporter; you do not need to recruit me, Hon.Obua, but at least give me a reason.

The minister was dwelling on a lecture given in a workshop. When the chairperson of the committee stood up, he gave one sentence; that there is no Board, therefore, you guys, remove UNESCO. I am only begging you, give me a reason to support you please.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister -

DR MORIKU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The reason the Board was not renewed at that time was because the system was operating effectively and there was no interruption at that time. As a result, we continued with no interruption until such a time. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Now you want a lean system to reduce many authorities and have a lean system. After rationalisation, we shall also move to Cabinet or whichever -

DR MORIKU: You are very right, Madam Speaker. The system was redundant, very true. Thank you.

2.29

MR WILFRED NIWAGABA (Independent, Ndoorwa County East, Kabale): Can I invite the honourable minister - instead of bringing this Bill as an (Amendment) Bill, we can have it as a repeal Bill. We just repeat this thing, close the debate and we go home.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Attorney-General, we had already agreed that since this is going to be taken back to the ministry, we are coming with a miscellaneous revision to remove all these Bills from the system.

I now put the question that the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read for the second time.

(Question put and agreed to.)

BILLS COMMITTEE STAGE

THE UGANDA NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR UNESCO (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

2.30

Clause 1

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SPORTS (Mr John Twesigye): Clause 1; Interpretation.

Clause 1 is amended by deleting the definition of “Commission”.

Justification

The definition of the word “Commission” in the clause is inconsistent with the same word in the principal Act.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Minister?

DR MORIKU: Madam Chairperson, I agree with the committee.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Niwagaba -

MR NIWAGABA: Madam Chairperson, we should have begun with - because we normally end with the interpretation clause. So, my view is we should have begun with clause 2.

Clause 2

MR JOHN TWESIGYE: Clause 2, Madam Chairperson, Objective.

Clause 2 is amended in 2(A) by inserting, immediately after the word “commissions”, the words “established by the Constitution”.

Justification

To avoid inconsistency arising from the use of the word “commission”, as the word is defined differently in the principal Act.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Minister?

DR MORIKU: Madam Chairperson, I agree with the committee.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Attorney-General - I thought you were removing “commissions”?

MR NIWAGABA: Madam Chairperson, there is no need to amend anything in this particular Bill because we are repealing. This is not a Bill that will be on our statute books so, there is nothing to amend. Let us go clause by clause, pass the Bill as it is, and we get back home.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, because you are taking the Bill back to the ministry.

MR TWESIGYE: Madam Speaker, unless the House advises otherwise, with this current law, there is a Board that was supposed to be overseeing the operations of the Commission. As per this report, after the Board’s term of office expired, they could not renew it and it became redundant.

Therefore, in the view of the committee, we felt that if the corporate status could be removed and the functions go back to the ministry and the current secretariat continues operating the way it is, instead of having this law in place -

MR NIWAGABA: That was my argument. You cannot legislate to transfer services to the ministry which you do not create by an Act of Parliament. When you look at clause 3, it says, “dissolving the Board” which was established under this Bill. So, what are you trying to amend? Just concede, clause by clause. Let us not attract a debate on this particular matter because you have nothing to amend.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable chairperson, what the Attorney-General is saying is very correct. All your clauses should be as is since you are taking it back to the ministry. You are agreeing with the Government position; you do not have any amendments that you need to make.

Clause 1

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 1, agreed to.

Clause 2, agreed to.

Clause 3, agreed to.

Clause 4, agreed to.

Clause 5

MR ODUR: Madam Chairperson, I am rising on a point of procedure.

THE CHAIRPERSON: On which clause?

MR ODUR: The procedural matter I am raising is on the way this Bill has been drafted, which is a bit misleading. When we start processing Bills on clauses, we are talking about enforceable or justifiable clauses that become law.

What has been referred to here as clauses 1, 2 and 3 are not supposed to be part of the legislation. That is why the chairman even got confused because -

THE CHAIRPERSON: That is why the Attorney-General has corrected the chairman.

MR ODUR: Yes, but when we pass it here - For example, you are talking about clause 2, which is the objectives of the Bill and now Parliament is legislating on the objectives of the Bill and yet where we should be putting our input starts from clause 5.

So, the way this Bill was presented is a bit problematic. It cannot be done but it should have been sieved so that we start with where we are legislating, which is from clause 5 that seeks to amend the long title and then we go onward. That is what I wanted to bring to your attention, Madam Chairperson.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Wilfred - There is a clarification on this side.

MR LOKII: Madam Chairperson, I seek clarification. If you are repealing a law, do you reserve the objectives? *(Laughter)* I am just asking because Hon. Jonathan Odur is saying -

THE CHAIRPERSON: They are not repealing the law. They are only trying to take it to the main ministry.

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Chairperson, I am expressing fear. The other day we passed a Bill and thereafter, the Deputy Attorney-General went to the President with his full participation and said we coerced them.

Now, you have a minister who has gone silent with the chairman, I do not know what they are - So, the procedural issue I am raising is whether we should not stand over this Bill, they do some consultation so that when we return -

THE CHAIRPERSON: There is no consultation; there is nothing in this Bill. We are going to bring it under miscellaneous. Hon. Wilfred? In the absence of the Attorney-General, he is the Attorney-General. *(Laughter)*

MR NIWAGABA: Well, I notice the concerns by my brother, Hon. Jonathan Odur but some draftsmen do it the way it has been done, and include clauses to show the purpose of the Bill, the objectives and the like.

I have said that this particular Bill does not need any discussion in the form of an amendment because it has only two purposes; to dissolve the Board - And once you have dissolved the Board, there is nothing remaining. It collapses.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Clause 5.

Clause 5

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 5 stands part of the Bill.

(Question put, and agreed to.)

Clause 6, agreed to.

Clause 7, agreed to.

Clause 8, agreed to.

Clause 9, agreed to.

Clause 10, agreed to.

Clause 11, agreed to.

Clause 12, agreed to.

Clause 13, agreed to.

Clause 14, agreed to.

Clause 15, agreed to.

Clause 16, agreed to.

Clause 17, agreed to.

Clause 18, agreed to.

Clause 19, agreed to.

Clause 20

MR ODUR: Madam Chairperson, clause 20 seeks to amend Section 18 of the Principal Act by repealing subsection 2.

Subsection 2 of the Principal Act states that, "The minister shall, in consultation with the Board, appoint officers and staff to the office of Uganda's permanent delegation as may be necessary for the proper and efficient discharge of the functions of the Commission under this Act".

Subsection 1 establishes a permanent delegation to the United Nations Educational, Scientific

and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) headquarters in Paris. Subsection 2 provided for how you constitute staff and officers to be based in Paris. If we repeal without providing the mechanism of appointment of such officers and constituting the delegation, it will be problematic.

So, in the premise, I would propose that where the minister was required to consult with the Board, and we have dispensed with the Board, these officers are still appointed by the minister. Therefore, we remove the Board and remove the word “Board” so that it will read, “The minister shall appoint officers and staff to the office of Uganda’s permanent delegation, as may be necessary for the proper and efficient discharge of the functions of the Commission under this Act”.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Wilfred -

MR NIWAGABA: I think that is why I said we do not need to look at any amendment in this particular Bill.

THE CHAIRPERSON: We are not amending this Bill because they messed up.

MR NIWAGABA: Yes, you will end up messing it up. Once we disband the Board, it will back to the ministry, which will do its work as usual, administratively.

MR SSEMUJJU: You are calling clauses - and I want to understand him because if you are calling clauses and we are passing them, it means we must pass them properly. My understanding of what we are doing now is that we are doing it the shabby way of Government; that they are removing.

THE CHAIRPERSON: We are not doing it the shabby way; how do you pass a Bill without going clause by clause?

MR SSEMUJJU: The proposal of Hon. Niwagaba, like in the earlier Bill, was actually to delete every clause. That is how I understood him.

THE CHAIRPERSON: No, Hon. Niwagaba - First listen. That your proposal was to delete every clause - It is not deleting because we are going to delete the whole of this law using the miscellaneous - We are taking this back as a department in the Ministry of Education and Sports.

MRODUR: Firstly, what we need to understand is that there is a body called UNESCO. We are not doing away with UNESCO.

THE CHAIRPERSON: No.

MR ODUR: So, since UNESCO will remain in existence, it must be administered by some authority. In the past, it was the Board and it was a corporate body. Now the Government has decided that we do not want it to be administered as a corporate entity.

Therefore, there must be somebody else responsible for its administration which is now the minister responsible for education. This means that the functions, the delegations to Paris etcetera remain and there must be somebody responsible for designating those officers.

This clause seeks to repeal, and it will leave it hanging, and it can easily be a source of conflict because, who is responsible for the policy?

THE CHAIRPERSON: We are looking at the principal Act, not this Bill of theirs.

MR ODUR: I have both of them here. That is why I am raising it. But they are the owners of the Bill. I was just trying to help. If they are satisfied with the confusion *-(Laughter)* - I am okay with it.

MR TWESIGYE: Madam Chairperson, there is no confusion. I think that when we come to report to the House, we discuss and agree as a House. I wanted to re-echo that I agree with what Hon. Odur is trying to explain. If you allow me to read verbatim something very small, Section 18(2) of the principal Act –

THE CHAIRPERSON: We are on clause 20.

MR TWESIGYE: Yes, we are on clause 20 of the Bill. However, in the principal Act, it is Section 18. Since the Board is dissolved, it has to read differently from this. Currently, it reads: “The minister shall, in consultation with the Board, appoint officers and staff to the office of Uganda’s Permanent Delegation as may be necessary for the proper and efficient discharge of the functions of the Commission under this Act.”

I agree with Hon. Odur that we say, “The minister shall appoint –

MR NIWAGABA: Madam Chairperson, we have already passed clause 16 in this particular Bill and it speaks for itself. It says, “The ministry responsible for education, in consultation with the ministry responsible for the public service, shall appoint or designate a public officer of the ministry who shall be referred to as the “Secretary General” and who shall be responsible for the administration and day-to-day operations of the Commission.”

We have already passed the responsibilities to the ministry so, there is nothing more to talk about the Board. You are trying to resurrect something already dead.

MR ODUR: Madam Chairperson, there are two powers of appointment: the one we have provided under Section 16 which amends the principal Act is related to appointing a Secretary-General who will be the head of the Secretariat within the Ministry of Education and Sports. That is what we have passed under Section 16 which amends Section 14 of the principal Act.

Now, under clause 20, there is another office based in Paris. That is what I wanted to clarify.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Draft for me the amendment that you want.

MR ODUR: The committee chairperson has already accepted and captured it in the spirit to delete the Board –(Interjection)- Yes –

THE CHAIRPERSON: That is what I am saying. Propose the amendment on clause 20.

MR ODUR: Under clause 20, the proposed amendment would be to delete the word “Board.” The justification is to allow the minister to exercise the function directly without referring to a Board that does not exist now. It has been taken away.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Wilfred –

MR NIWAGABA: Well, in order not to waste time, let it pass as he has proposed.

THE CHAIRPERSON: No, it should not be like that.

MR NIWAGABA: Madam Chairperson, my considered opinion is that this entire Act is technically being repealed and they are only transferring the functions under the Act to the ministry. I am saying that we do not legislate for the ministry because the ministry is not created under an Act of Parliament.

Now, trying to make amendments to this Bill, as if we are keeping the Act in any way whatsoever when it is technically being repealed, is wasting our time. The proposal by Hon. Jonathan Odur, other than serving an academic exercise, will in the long run be irrelevant because we have already dissolved the Board and it is the ministry that is going to act.

Therefore, the ministry knows that in acting, it will have to appoint permanent representatives to UNESCO and the like. *(Applause)*

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, I put the question that clause 20 –

MR ODUR: Let me make one last attempt. Under clause 5, we passed this amendment; the long title. The long title, in legislation, gives you the entire scope of the law you are passing. We have said, “An Act to provide for the establishment and operation of the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO; to provide for the object of the Commission; to

provide the functions of the Commission and the Secretariat of the Commission and related matters.”

I have not amended anything; that is what the Government proposes. With due respect to my shadow Attorney-General who reports to me and should not even be disagreeing with me, as the minister responsible - *(Laughter)*

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, I put the question that clause 20 stands part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 21, agreed to.

Clause 22, agreed to.

Clause 23, agreed to.

Clause 24, agreed to.

Clause 25, agreed to.

Clause 26, agreed to.

Clause 27, agreed to.

Clause 28, agreed to.

Clause 29, agreed to.

Clause 30, agreed to.

Clause 31, agreed to.

Title

THE CHAIRPERSON: Title –

MR SSEMUJJU: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I hope that as Parliament, we shall not be like the traders who were complaining that the Government had established a tax called EFRIS –

THE CHAIRPERSON: By the way, the report for the traders has been uploaded.

MR SSEMUJJU: I would like to confess that right now; I do not know what we are doing - whether we are rebranding UNESCO or doing away with it. I am just listening to you, Madam Chairperson, saying clause this and we move. I need to understand because I represent a constituency here. What are we doing?

THE CHAIRPERSON: The minister is going to explain to you. Honourable members – Who? Hon. Ssemujju –

MR SSEWUNGU: He is the shadow Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and he should be sitting here and following what is going on closely. Madam Chairperson, I request that you rule that Hon. Ssemujju comes and takes up his seat because we are following well, but he is behind. Let him come to his seat and as the shadow Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, he will follow closely. *(Applause)*

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that the Title stands part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESUME

2.54

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that the House resumes and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that the House resumes and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

(Question put and agreed to.)

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE HOUSE

2.57

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Madam Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of the whole House has considered the Bill entitled, “The Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (Amendment) Bill 2024” and passed it without amendment.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE HOUSE

2.57

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the report of the Committee of the whole House be adopted.

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that the report of the Committee of the whole House be adopted by this august House.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

BILLS
THIRD READING

THE UGANDA NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR UNESCO (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

2.57

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled “The Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (Amendment) Bill 2024” be read the third time and do pass.

THE SPEAKER: Quorum still stands. I put the question that, “The Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read the third time and do pass.

(Question put and agreed to.)

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, “THE
UGANDA NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
UNESCO (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2024”

THE SPEAKER: Title settled and the Bill passed. *(Applause)*

Honourable members, we will break off for one hour. During the break, I want Hon. Obua, Leader of the Opposition, the shadow Attorney-General; RAPEX manager, Hon. Muruli Mukasa; Hon. Jonathan, the Chairperson, Committee of Environment and Natural Resources; and the shadow minister for environment to harmonise their position as we come back. Lead the team.

The House is suspended for one hour, not adjourned. We are coming back for the Bills.

(The House was suspended at 2.59 p.m.)

(On resumption at 3.56 p.m., the Speaker presiding.)

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, welcome back from lunch. Next item.

BILLS
SECOND READING

THE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS’
FINANCING (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Education and Sports - I saw him in the corridors. Hon. Musingo, we are waiting for you. *(Laughter)* Can you move the motion?

3.58

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Obua, can I have list of the people present? Commissioners, can I have the number of people in attendance? Please go ahead.

DR MORIKU: I beg to move that the Bill entitled, “The Higher Education Students’ Financing (Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read the second time. I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded? Seconded by the Chairperson of the Committee on Education and Sports, the Government Chief Whip, the shadow Minister of Education, Hon. Dorcus, Hon. Anifa, Hon. Mbwatekamwa, Hon. Connie, Hon. Emmanuel, Hon. Alanyo, Prof. Mushemeza, Hon. Sanon, Hon. Abeja, Hon. Phyllis, Hon. Akello, Hon. Okwir, Hon. Tonny – by the whole House.

Would you like to speak to your motion? Please speak to it. What are the objects?

DR MORIKU: Madam Speaker, the purpose of amending the Higher Education Students’ Financing Act, 2014 is to mainstream the function of the High Education Students’ Financing Board that was established under the Act into the ministry responsible for education.

The amendment abolishes the Higher Education Students’ Financing Board and transfers the function of the Board to the ministry responsible for education for effective management.

The entire staff of the Higher Education Students’ Financing will be transferred with their roles and duties under the Ministry of Education and Sports for effective management. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Can we hear a brief from the chair?

4.02

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SPORTS (Mr John Twesigye): I beg to present a report of the Committee on Education and Sports on the Higher Education Students Financing (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Madam Speaker, I beg that I skip the introduction, policy and principles, and defects in the law. Briefly, the object of this Bill has also been given.

The methodology

We met and held discussions with the Minister of Education and Sports and the Higher Education Students’ Financing Board. We also reviewed the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, as amended, the Higher Education Students’ Financing Act, 2014 and written memoranda from the Higher Education Students’ Financing Board.

Madam Speaker, for the benefit of all Members, allow me briefly to give a background of the Higher Education Students’ Financing Board. The Higher Education Students Financing Board is a scheme meant for Ugandan students seeking financial assistance to pursue a programme of higher education in an accredited higher education institute or university by National Council for Higher Education.

The loan scheme covers tuition fees, functional fees, research expenses, aids and appliances for persons with disabilities. The loan beneficiary covers the component of accommodation and other requirements.

It is very important to note that the Higher Education Students’ Financing Board currently supports programmes under Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), in line with the NDP III requirement that has placed emphasis on supporting science programmes that are critical to national development. Persons with disabilities are eligible to pursue either science or humanities programmes.

In the written memorandum from the Higher Education Students Financing Board, it was stated that currently, out of about 130,000 to 140,000 candidates that qualify for higher education annually –

- a) Government sponsors 10,000 out of the above number under the Government sponsorship scheme. That is direct

- entrants, totalling to only 7 per cent of the eligible candidates.
- b) The rest of the 93 per cent are meant to be privately sponsored, and only a fraction makes it to higher education institutions.
 - c) Government spends Shs 120 billion on the 10,000 Government-sponsored students, with an average government-sponsored student at a university budgeted at Shs 18 million per annum as a one-off payment.
 - d) The students' loan scheme employs the cost-sharing model where Government spends an average of Shs 4.5 million per student on beneficiaries' academic costs as students cater for their welfare costs.
 - e) With a budget of approximately Shs 4.5 billion for the new cohort, the students' loan scheme pays for at least 1,000 beneficiaries. With Shs 45 billion, the scheme could cater for 10,000 students.
- c) The committee further observed that the Bill states some of the defects in the existing law that the Bill intends to cure, including establishment of a certain number of agencies, institutional harmony, functional duplication, overlaps and affordability. However, the committee observed that none of these defects applies to the Higher Education Students' Financing Act, 2014.
 - d) The committee notes that the world over, most student financing models have established a specialised institution for the management of student loans given the unique nature of managing such schemes. In Africa, there are over 13 countries that are managing student loan schemes under semi-autonomous bodies having moved away from the management of such schemes under the parent ministries including Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, Botswana and South Africa.

With the current budget of Shs 120 billion, the scheme could support up to 40,000 students, which would translate to 30 per cent of eligible candidates, to higher education.

Observation and justification of the committee

- a) With reference to the submission from the Higher Education Students' Financing Board, the committee observed that mainstreaming the Board and the ministry would not cure the existing structural and operational issues associated with the delivery of services. *(Applause)* Instead, mainstreaming of the Board will lead to delayed decision making, disbursing of loans, and loan recovery.
- b) The committee observed that the management of the students' loan scheme requires managing a revolving fund channelled back to borrowers to make the scheme sustainable. The Board envisages that it will be self-sustaining as long as it is effectively managed and supported by the Government.

- e) The committee observed that the Certificate of Financial Implications envisages a savings of Shs 0.352 billion in the Financial Year 2024/25 and Shs 1.632 billion in the medium-term against Shs 1.636 billion that will be earned from income for loan recoveries and interest and protection fees expected to grow in the medium term.

However, the Certificate of Financial Implications is silent on the arrears amounting to Shs 14.6 billion, which has not been released by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as passed in Supplementary Schedule No. 1, Financial Year 2023/24.

The committee recommends as follows:

- (i) Higher Education Students' Financing Board be maintained as a semi-autonomous body, with a view of granting it Vote status in the medium term for it to effectively discharge its mandate; and

- (ii) The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should fully fund the Higher Education Students' Financing Board in order for it to become self-sustaining and support more students to access higher education.

8.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Committee on Education and Sports recommends that the Higher Education Students' Financing Board be maintained as a semi-autonomous body, and in this case, the committee feels that the Bill should not be passed.

Madam Speaker, while we were processing this, one of the members dissented from the views of the -

THE SPEAKER: We have been having harmonisation meetings. You as the committee chairperson should also report what we agreed upon in the harmonisation meeting. You are still on the Floor, hold your peace.

MR TWESIGYE: Madam Speaker, what I presented is the position of the committee. I am aware that there was a harmonisation meeting between the Ministry of Education and Sports, and the team as well in the House, in your presence.

THE SPEAKER: No, for me, I was having lunch.

MR TWESIGYE: While Madam Speaker was having lunch, I was with-

THE SPEAKER: I was not part of it.

MR TWESIGYE: I was with the Government Chief Whip and the honourable minister. The position was that whereas what is coming out of the committee is not to rationalise the Board – take the scheme back to the ministry but proposals can be considered where by this money could be distributed to district quotas, so that students can be admitted through the district quota system. Madam Speaker, that is what I picked.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, there is a minority report. We have not finished receiving reports. There is a minority report.

4.10

MR DENIS OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha): Madam Speaker, thank you for protecting that rule; my right which is well enshrined in our Rules of Procedure.

Honourable members, access to higher education should be by everyone, in your constituencies and because of that, this Board which has been dealing with this matter, needs to be examined so that we can make decisions from an informed point of view.

I have a minority report arising from my dissent from the majority on grounds that they want this body maintained and I think the Government is right on rationalisation and we must rationalise this body. My grounds are that; the expenditure on this Board is very wasteful. We are spending money National Social Security Fund (NSSF), the taxes -

THE SPEAKER: They call it a nugatory expenditure.

MR OGUZU: We are paying allowances to the Board members, which money could be used to pay people in our constituencies and you must be very careful when you are about to make that decision, because if some of your people go without higher education we must be able to know that you are behind it. *(Laughter)* So, there is wasteful expenditure you should be able to deal with.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Oguzu, please continue.

MR OGUZU: Madam Speaker, secondly, there has not been equity in the way this scheme operates. If I ask-

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Oguzu Lee, the current Leader of the Opposition brought a report to this House and he was quoting four to five people from Bukedea, whose names were from another region. There is no equity because those people did not benefit from Bukedea.

MR OGUZU LEE: Madam Speaker, thank you for that useful information. Today is an opportunity for us to balance the boat. If we can quote the late Hon. Cecilia Ogwal, we must be able to balance the boat and ensure this money serves people in our areas. If we are to produce scientists, they should not only come from Kampala or from a particular region. They must emerge from across the country, only then can we have a balanced development, so to align this scheme -

THE SPEAKER: I told him to summarise.

MR OGUZU LEE: I am making a summary so that you can understand and pick the main points. So, on the basis of equity, and affirmative action which is enshrined in our constitution, we must be able to make this scheme work for our country and that requires rationalisation. Lastly, Madam Speaker, because I need to bring out the -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, stop saying Hon. Oguzu is a mercenary.

MR OGUZU LEE: Madam Speaker, the scheme as run by the Board now, disenfranchises a number of communities without access to electricity and internet connectivity, because the Board requires that you apply online and there are systems and many procedures -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, with this scheme, you must apply online and he is very correct.

MR OGUZU LEE: Exactly. So, the infrastructure to achieve all this is largely missing in many parts where we come from and because of that, we are missing out by not benefiting from the scheme under the current arrangement. Madam Speaker, I therefore propose that there must be rationalisation.

Secondly, the resources which have been under the management of this Board, must be channelled to the District Quota System, Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the House where all of us will benefit. Only then, will you guarantee benefits for your children if you buy into my proposal.

Madam Speaker, under the current District Quota System, it is the local governments which identify and select the beneficiaries and working within the ministry, I am very sure we would be able to -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, can we have some order in the House.

MR OGUZU LEE: My proposal is that we must charge local governments working with ministries to identify beneficiaries. The local governments are already doing this in managing a number of programmes for the Government. We have the Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Fund and the Youth Livelihood Programme - they have been involved in recovery, so they have experience. That will at least guarantee that we all benefit from this scheme. This is a matter, Madam Speaker, which requires attention.

I also believe if the House adopts my proposal, we will be able to make the Government visible. For those of you who are in the National Resistance Movement party, you want to make your Government look like it is working *-(Applause)-* and because of that, we want to see the children benefiting. I want to know who has benefited from this scheme in my village. We cannot reserve this Board, which is central.

Madam Speaker, in recovering this loan, how will a Board, which is in the centre here go and recover money from my village? It is easier for us to work locally with the district people to recover this money than centralising a Board here for recovery purposes.

Therefore, given the liabilities and arrears, which the Government has not even paid, amounting to Shs 14.6 billion, which points to the fact that we do not have enough money. The money we have must be able to go into achieving the objectives of this scheme and that requires that we rationalise this Board.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the House adopts my minority report and we rationalise the Board. *(Applause)* Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, there is a procedural matter from Hon. Isiagi. Chairperson, go and talk from there. *(Laughter)*

MR OPOLOT-ISIAGI: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We are in the House deliberating on rationalisation, which reasons we already got; to avoid duplication and wastage of resources.

When we talk about this scheme, we are already crying because the scheme is supposed to be an equaliser. Some people are taking their children to very powerful schools, which charge a lot of money. Those pass highly and qualify for Government sponsorship.

Those who take children where they charge little fees –

THE SPEAKER: Like Amus College.

MR OPOLOT-ISIAGI: Yes, like Amus College *–(Laughter)–* end up not getting high points to qualify for Government sponsorship. Therefore, the rich end up taking their children to powerful and very expensive schools where they charge Shs 4 million per term. At the end of the day, they perform highly and go to university under Government sponsorship.

Now the poor who take to schools where they pay Shs 300,000 or Shs 900,000, much as they are very capable, are not prepared to pass as highly as the other ones. At the end of the day, they are the ones supposed to go on private sponsorship, yet the rich have gone on Government sponsorship.

So, we are not balancing the boat. It would have even been the other way around. We allocate very little money for the loan scheme. On top of that, most of the money is spent on administration and on people in air-conditioned offices, driving vehicles, which can be done by others.

Therefore *–(Interjections)–* it is a procedural matter. *(Laughter)* Since you do not want a procedural matter, can I now thank the people who authored the minority report *–(Applause)–*

for having been very patriotic? You could have even added there that we remove the money, which is allocated to students under Government sponsorship and add it to the scheme *–(Applause)–* so that if you are rich, you pay fees at university since you have the money so that that one who is poor borrows the money to go to the university. I salute you, the minority report writers.

I conclude by saying, Madam Speaker, that if we cannot rationalise this one, then we do not need to rationalise any institution. This should be the first to be rationalised. I beg to move. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: There is another procedural matter.

MR SSEWUNGU: Madam Speaker, I seek your indulgence. First of all, let me make the record clear. Maracha District has 54 students on the loan scheme. Secondly, when Parliament passed this Act, the challenges were not on the Bill or Act. It was on the Government's commitment.

First of all, the Act states that beneficiaries; those who go for these loan schemes can even be those studying arts subjects, humanities or sciences. However, because the Government never had the money, they opted for only scientists and took them up.

Secondly, when we talk about this loan scheme, we also look at what is happening in our neighbouring countries. Whenever you talk about costs and expenses, it is the same in the ministry. I would like to seek your indulgence, Madam Speaker - can the chairperson of the committee negotiate, on behalf of the members who passed the report? It cannot happen.

As a committee, we sat and discussed this issue of the loan scheme, up to the time when we agreed. Indeed, I am the one who invited the honourable member who authored the minority report to sign the report.

I seek your indulgence, honourable members. The interests and intentions of the loan

scheme, as per the law we passed were that all Government sponsorship –

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of order.

MR SSEWUNGU: Madam Speaker – *(Interjections)*- no, I am on procedure, honourable members and the Speaker has allowed me.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members – *Omusomesa* and *Omukatuliki*, all your issues were covered in the report, as a member of the committee.

4.23

MR JONATHAN EBWALU (FDC, Soroti West Division, Soroti): Madam Speaker, Hon. Oguzu Lee has ably persuaded me. *(Applause)* Given the current scheme as it is, it benefits only the children of the rich, as opposed to those of the poor. Because they ask you to apply, you have to apply on the Internet.

Also, the children who pass very well in primary schools go to the best schools in the country. Those are the ones who are considered to get this loan. Very few of the children from Arapa and Agora in Soroti benefit from this scheme.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, if we are talking about equity, I would rather request that we give more funding to this scheme and then take it back to the quota system, so that all the children benefit from wherever they are in the villages.

Finally, I would like to request the committee that you lay on the Table here in Parliament the children who have benefited from this, district by district. *(Applause)* Tell me how many have benefited in Soroti District. How many have benefited from Maracha District?

Otherwise, the current system only benefits the children of the rich. I am here to support the minority report. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

4.25

MR FRANCIS MWIJUKYE (FDC, Buhweju County, Buhweju): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Listening to the proposals by Hon. Oguzu Lee, I realise that his proposal is pro-poor, pro-people, more effective and more transparent. *(Applause)*

Some of us do not even know how this scheme has been operating. People come to you and ask, “We want to be part of this quota”, but you look for it and do not get it. A Member of Parliament cannot trace the loan scheme. It is very difficult to find it, especially for us who come from local districts.

I would like to suggest that we go by this approach because it is more transparent and effective. Thank you. *(Applause)*

MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, woman Representative, Terego): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank my brother, Hon. Oguzu and all of you –

THE SPEAKER: He is Hon. Oguzu Lee.

MS OBIGAH: Hon. Oguzu Lee. Today you have joined me to swim in the waters of the rural people. We are so happy because of this scheme. A district like Terego without computers or electricity –

Honestly, you are to apply online and pay Shs 50,000. If you are saying it is a scheme to help the vulnerable, why are you again asking for Shs 50,000? After applying, one does not even get a response.

One goes to apply for it at a computer centre and they go back home without even knowing what happens and the shortlists are made without their name. I beg we go by the quota system so that my rural people in Terego can also get a share. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: There is a motion by the Chairperson of the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

4.27

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Amos Kankunda):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have carefully –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, listen to the Chairperson of the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development.**MR KANKUNDA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Having carefully watched the mood and the deliberations that are being put on the Floor, I propose that I move a motion that we stop the debate and move to the next stage.**THE SPEAKER:** Is the motion seconded? [*Members: "No."*] Those seconding it, please stand up. I can see Hon. Solomon, Hon. Sanon, Hon. Allan, Hon. Rose, Hon. Jane, Hon. Sylvia, the Government Chief Whip and the whole House.

Honourable members, physically, we have 126 Members and 70 virtually; so, we have quorum.

I put the question that the Higher Education Students' Financing (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read for the second time.

*(Question put and agreed to.)***BILLS
COMMITTEE STAGE****THE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS'
FINANCING (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024****THE CHAIRPERSON:** Honourable members, this is the first time I have seen a minority report take the day.

Clause 1

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 1 stands part of the Bill.*(Question put and agreed to.)**Clause 1, agreed to.**Clause 2, agreed to.**Clause 3, agreed to.*

Clause 4

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Goli Ogwal, I am going to send you people out; stop making noise.

I put the question that clause 4 stands part of the Bill –

MR OGUZU LEE: We are moving to dissolve the board under clause 4. I am very particular about this money being able to benefit our constituencies. When we replace the board with the ministry, what guarantee do we have that this money will go? We need such a commitment; they need to guide us on how they will achieve that before we can move.**THE CHAIRPERSON:** Yes.**DR MUYINGO:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We all agreed with the majority report but I would like to add –**THE CHAIRPERSON:** You agree with the minority report?**DR MUYINGO:** We agree with the minority report, but to bring out what my brother here says, inserting somewhere, the word "district quota system" has got to be part of the regulations –**THE CHAIRPERSON:** As a new clause.**DR MUYINGO:** As a new clause.**THE CHAIRPERSON:** Is that agreeable?**MR SSEWUNGU:** Madam Chairperson –**THE CHAIRPERSON:** Just a minute. Hon. Oguzu Lee, a new clause, okay.**MR SSEWUNGU:** Madam Chairperson, I am not in agreement with the minority report because it has not been read on the record of

Parliament and I want to be specific on that. In the minority report, he has given a summary of his own words; it is not on the record of Parliament.

THE CHAIRPERSON: It is uploaded.

MROKUPA: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Earlier in the morning, the Shadow Attorney-General guided us on how to proceed with these Bills because we were going to repeal them. However, if we are amending them again, I am getting mixed up.

He had guided us well that if we are moving the responsibilities to the ministry, there is no need for amending them here. He added that those would be taken care of at an appropriate time. Is it procedurally right for Hon. Oguzu Lee to start amending, yet we are not amending, but repealing?

This is the confusion that has been caused by this rationalisation. Is he proceeding well by doing what is contrary to what had been said in the morning? (*Mr Omara rose*) - Hon. Paul Omara, you are not the chairperson - (*Laughter*) - neither a minister nor a shadow minister. Please hold on.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, Hon. Elijah raises a pertinent issue. Can we hear from the Shadow Attorney-General?

MR NIWAGABA: Now, you have got me off guard. (*Laughter*)

THE CHAIRPERSON: We want the quota system.

MR NIWAGABA: If we want the quota system, under what legal regime does it come? Maybe if the minister comes -

THE CHAIRPERSON: The Constitution - equity?

MR NIWAGABA: If the minister comes and undertakes to bring regulations under -

THE SPEAKER: Equity -

MR NIWAGABA: No, under the Education Act, within a specific timeframe for approval of Parliament, that would be a win-win situation. Under the Education Act, they could come up with a statutory instrument, but to be laid for approval of Parliament.

DR MUYINGO: Madam Chairperson, first, as the Government, we agree with the position that when we go to develop the guidelines, we will have to emphasise the issue of the district quota system. The quota system has been working before, but for -

THE CHAIRPERSON: The money will be added.

DR MUYINGO: This one is also going to be added so that when money is appropriated, every district will have to benefit. (*Applause*)

MR OGUZU LEE: The amendment should read like this - (*Interjection*) - that -

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Oguzu Lee, what they are going to come up with are the regulations to that effect. There is no amendment to this law.

MR ODUR: Madam Chairperson, now that the minister seems to agree with the proposal by Hon. Ogunzu Lee -

THE CHAIRPERSON: Leave the Shadow Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to speak.

MR ODUR: ... as far as a provision providing for a district quota system -

THE CHAIRPERSON: Clause 4.

MR ODUR: Yes, there are two areas in the law. First, I want to answer your concerns. This law is both a repealing and an amendment law. So, it is doing both. It is repealing some sections, but also amending sections of the principal Act. So, it is possible for any amendment to come, if it is acceptable to the mover.

Therefore, under section 20, we have eligibility for the scheme. In subsection (2), it says that “in determining the eligibility into the scheme...” – now, the board will be replaced by – “... the minister shall take into consideration the following...” –

They have listed regional balance – we can either replace “regional balance” with “district” or –(*Interjection*)- of course, gender and others are there.

I would now want to invite the minister, if he agrees that the quota system has to come, then, under section 20 – when we reach there – under the regional balance, we make an amendment.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, can we have some order? You rephrase the amendment in clause 4.

MR ODUR: No, when we reach section 20.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. However, clause 4 also has something.

MR OGUZU LEE: I would like to amend clause 4 to read: “On the commencement of this Act, the Higher Education Students’ Financing Board, established under the Act of 2014, shall be dissolved and the scheme operated by the ministry, under the district quota system.” I beg to move.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: My understanding of the guidance by the Shadow Attorney-General was that we could come up with guidelines under a different legal regime, that is, the Education Act, not this one.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Even under section 20 – what Hon. Odur has just said is about the eligibility into the scheme - the regulations would come under this clause.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: I disagree with him and I am taking the opinion –

THE CHAIRPERSON: This is still provided for under the Education Act – and even in the Constitution: equity.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: We might lose the objective of the Bill under this rationalisation if we go into amending this particular –

THE CHAIRPERSON: No, we cannot amend this one.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: (*Interjections*) You may disagree with me, but let me finish my point. I think the Shadow Attorney-General had guided very well. What the minister should concede is on the guidelines under the Education Act, but not to amend this Bill on rationalisation. You might be shooting your own Bill if you accept the amendment now.

MSADEKE: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. You are listening to two lawyers giving you two different opinions. The Shadow Attorney-General has guided that we need a principal Act under which we shall anchor the requirements for regulations to be made by the minister. What Hon. Odur has presented is that –

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Anna, the principal Act is under section 20, where Hon. Odur has said the regulations should come from. So, they are saying the same thing. All that they are saying is coming from the principal Act, and I have the principal Act here.

MSADEKE: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We do not seem to be on the same page, yet we all went to law school and, probably, studied the same things. I would advise that you hear from your in-house legal counsel, to guide. What Hon. Odur is providing seems to be different from what Hon. Niwagaba is providing. If we are repealing and moving the functions of the financing board – it ceases to exist –

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Anna, what have you understood from the two?

MS ADEKE: Madam Chairperson – (*Interjection*) - yes, information –

THE CHAIRPERSON: I want Hon. Anna to tell me what she has understood from the two.

MS ADEKE: In that spirit, we seem to all be in agreement that we should move the money to the quota system. However, to get the minister to promise and legally anchor to the regulations, there should actually be an amendment in the Principal Act where we shall give the minister that duty –

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Ann, I want to refer you to Section 20 of the Principal Act on eligibility into the scheme and it says, in parts thus:

- (1) The scheme is only for Ugandan students seeking financial assistance to pursue accredited courses to study or programmes of higher education in accredited institutions in an institution of higher learning recognised by the National Council of Higher Education.
- (2) In determining the eligibility into the scheme, the Board shall take into consideration the following:
 - i) Regional balance;
 - ii) Gender;
 - iii) Social-economic needs; and
 - iv) Equity.

That is where Hon. Odur said that the regulation should be drawn from. It is the same thing that the Shadow Attorney-General was mentioning. The problem with Hon. Ann is that she only has the Bill, not the Principal Act.

MR OGUZU LEE: Madam Chairperson, I would like to emphasise my point on clause 4(1), which seeks to have the Board dissolved and place its responsibility with the ministry, but also ring-fences the issue of the district quota as agreed to by the minister. *(Applause)*

That is why I am moving that at the commencement of the Act, the Higher Education Students' Financing Board established under Act 2 of 2014 shall be dissolved and the scheme shall be operated by the Ministry of Education under the district quota system. That places the responsibility with the ministry but ring-fences the issue of the quota system. Only then can

we guarantee that all of us will benefit from this scheme. Otherwise, if we do not ring-fence that, I am worried we will lose the point. The regulation would be for the finer details.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Odur.

MR ODUR: Madam Chairperson, for clarification, I have taken into consideration the popular view by Hon. Oguzu Lee that there must be a district quota system that should allow all the districts. That is why I went to section 20 and said that when we get there, we need then to amend the principal law by (i) replacing “regional balance” with “district quota”. When we reach section 41, the minister should be given powers to make regulations over several matters of the district quota system.

THE CHAIRPERSON: That should be in sections 20 and 41. Clause 4 – Professor, please first sit. You will give me clarification when we reach section 20 – on the same clause? Honourable members, let us hear what the Professor has to say.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: Madam Chairperson, in the morning, we agreed that once these Bills have been assented to and become Acts, we shall need miscellaneous legislation – *(Interjections)* - let me finish. You can disagree with me - and do away with these laws.

THE CHAIRPERSON: The repealed Bills, not all.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: If we amend the Principal Act in a law that we are likely to do away with in the miscellaneous –

THE CHAIRPERSON: This is an amendment Bill, not a repeal, Professor.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: No, I also studied law and we are here as legislators – *(Interjections)* - listen to me. Madam Speaker, Shat will happen –

THE CHAIRPERSON: There is a point of order.

MR BASALIRWA: Madam Chairperson, is it in order for the Professor of Political Science to insist on making arguments on matters of law but based on political science when you have already made a ruling? *(Laughter)*

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, if you are going to continue making noise, I will send you out. Those are all humanities *–(Laughter)–* but not all are being repealed; some are amendments.

By the way, where is Hon. Tebandeke? Has he gone to school? I heard somebody saying “These lawyers are disturbing us.” That is the benefit of being learned.

Clause 4

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 4 stands for part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 4, agreed to.

Clause 5, agreed to.

Clause 6, agreed to.

Clause 7, agreed to.

Clause 8, agreed to.

Clause 9, agreed to.

Clause 10, agreed to.

Clause 11

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that Clause 11 -

MR ODUR: Madam Chairperson, on Clause 11, in the spirit of the agreement we have had, clause 11 seeks to amend Section 5 of the Principal Act and it will give the minister powers that are listed. In Part 1(e) one of the powers is that the minister shall determine the number of eligible students to benefit from the scheme. This is where we can have the first

opportunity to mention the district quota. So, we could amend and the minister should follow if you have the Principal Act.

Therefore, I want to insert in (e) that; “to determine the number of eligible students to benefit from the scheme based on the district quota system”. Then we can build on that.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, is that okay with the minister?

DR MUYINGO: It is okay, Madam Speaker.

MROGUZU: Thank you. Madam Chairperson, you are aware that-

THE CHAIRPERSON: You have just come, where have you been?

MR OGUZU: We have been in committee working. Madam Chairperson, you are aware that some districts are very large. I am the one who proposed this quota when I was the youth MP. Therefore, I would like to propose an amendment that instead of “district quota”, let us have “constituency quota” so that we as the MPs can regulate and manage.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, constituencies are not administrative units. I put the question that clause 11 be amended as proposed.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 12, agreed to.

Clause 13, agreed to.

Clause 14, agreed to.

Clause 15, agreed to.

Clause 16, agreed to.

Clause 17, agreed to.

Clause 18, agreed to.

Clause 19, agreed to.

Clause 20

MR ODUR: Madam Chairperson, in clause 20, I propose an amendment to substitute for paragraph 2(a) in the principal Act to read as 2(a) “district quota”.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Is that okay?

DR MORIKU: Madam Speaker, I agree. We substitute with “district quota system”.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. I put the question that clause 20 be amended as proposed.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 20, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 21, agreed to.

Clause 22, agreed to.

Clause 23, agreed to.

Clause 24, agreed to.

Clause 25, agreed to.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, I get so irritated when we are handling very serious business and people are talking in cocoons. Please, let us finish this. We have a very important Bill coming up. Next-

Clause 26

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 26 stands part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 27, agreed to.

Clause 28, agreed to.

Clause 29, agreed to.

Clause 30, agreed to.

Clause 31, agreed to.

Clause 32, agreed to.

Clause 33, agreed to.

Clause 34, agreed to.

Clause 35, agreed to.

Clause 36, agreed to.

Clause 37, agreed to.

Clause 38, agreed to.

Clause 39, agreed to.

Clause 40, agreed to.

Clause 41, agreed to.

Clause 42, agreed to.

Title, agreed to.

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESUME

5.05

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that the House do resume and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that the House resumes and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

(Question put, and agreed to.)

(The House resumed, the Speaker presiding)

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister.

5.05

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Madam Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of the whole House has considered the Bill entitled, “The Higher Education Students’ Financing (Amendment) Bill, 2024” and passed it with amendments. I beg to report.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE HOUSE

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister.

5.06

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the report from the Committee of the whole House be adopted.

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that the report from the Committee of the whole House be adopted by this honourable House.

(Question put, and agreed to.)

BILLS
THIRD READING

THE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS’
FINANCING (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister-

5.07

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled “The Higher Education Students’ Financing (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read the third time and do pass. I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. I put the question that “The Higher Education Students’ Financing (Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read the third time and do pass.

(Question put and agreed to.)

A BILL FOR AN ACT TITLED “THE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS’ FINANCING (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2024”.

THE SPEAKER: The title settled, and the Bill passed.

MR SSEWUNGU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I seek your indulgence to put on record. I do not agree with the way we have passed this Bill. The winner of the day - the mover of the *-(Interjection)-* the Speaker has given me a procedural matter -

Did not attend the committee of Parliament to generate a minority report. The records and the rules are clear because, how did he generate a dissenting view when he never attended the committee where we sat? *-(Interjection)-* Hon. Oguzu Lee here.

So, I wanted to put that on record because it can attract legal issues.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, Hon. Oguzu Lee is a member of the committee and he has a right to bring a minority report under Rule 205 of the Rules of procedure.

He has powers and can bring a minority report. It is just unfortunate that the majority report has not taken the day and it is only his minority report that has taken the day. I would like to congratulate you, Hon. Oguzu Lee.

MR OGUZU: I would like to set the record clear because what he said has ramifications for me. Madam Speaker, the record of attendance is a book where we sign and if that book is checked on the day when this matter was considered, I was there.

I even took pictures when I was in that meeting and I have the evidence. He is just aggrieved because they have lost, but we do not need numbers on matters of the truth, we only need to stand with the people of Uganda and that is what I have been pursuing. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members can we go to the next Bill?

BILLS
SECOND READING

THE NATIONAL FORESTRY AND TREE
PLANTING (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members of the National Forestry. Who is the chairperson? Move a motion-

5.10

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (ENVIRONMENT) (Ms Beatrice Anywar): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled “The National Forestry and Tree Planting (Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read for the second time.

THE SPEAKER: Seconded by Hon. Isaac, Eddie, Hon. Achayo, Dr Ruyonga, Hon. Acibu, Hon. Linda, Hon. Menya, Hon. Muhammad, Hon. Muwuma, Hon. Allan, Hon. Aguti, shadow minister, Government Chief Whip, Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives - by all the ministers and the Noah(s). Honourable minister, can you speak to your motion, give us the objectives?

MS BEATRICE ANYWAR: The Bill intends to dissolve the National Forest Authority and transfer its functions into the Ministry of Water and Environment. This will save the administrative costs and increase efficiency in the operations.

We have challenges with disparity in the salary structures that have also affected our operations. With this Bill being passed, it will help us as the Government to harmonise this position and the demotivated public servants who are in the ministry can respond swiftly to the calls where they are supposed to work.

Madam Speaker, as you are aware, if the National Forest Authority (NFA) comes into the ministry, it will enable the Government to fast-track all interventions and particularly enable the Minister to come directly and report

always, as this House has always demanded. This will be much better because we will save money, which will go into the loopholes where we do not have enough enforcement in place and this will help us.

So, Honourable colleagues, I beg that you support the Bill. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I do not know which language is being spoken here. Can we now hear from the chair of the committee? What is the position of the committee? Let us give the observations and make the conclusion

5.14

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (Dr Emmanuel Otaala): Thank you, Madam Speaker and honourable colleagues. Before I go to the observations and recommendations, I beg to lay on the Table - *(Interruption)*

THE SPEAKER: Yes, procedure matter.

MR ENOS ASIIMWE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is it really in order - *(Interjection)*- Yes, I will come. Yes, I will come. Why don't you listen? Anyway, is it procedurally right for us to process government Bills when the Attorney-General and the Deputy Attorney-General are not with us here? What if they write to the President and advise that what we did is not right and the Bills are sent back? Kindly guide, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: We have a number of learned brains here. However, what Hon. Enos is raising is pertinent. It is not right. We have the Attorney-General, we have the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and we have the Deputy Attorney-General, but they are not here to support us.

The Attorney-General is out of the country to defend a position of the country and he got permission from me. The Deputy Attorney-General, while he was here, both of us were called for a meeting. I said, “I am still here, you can go.”

However, next time, we will need to have one of them in the House. We have the Shadow Attorney-General. *(Laughter)*

DR OTAALA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your guidance to the House. I beg to lay on Table a copy of the report of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources on the National Forestry and Tree Planting (Amendment) Bill, 2024 and the accompanying minutes of the proceedings.

Madam Speaker, allow me also to lay on the Table a letter that I received today. It is addressed to you and copied to me. Since it touches on this matter, I felt that I needed to bring it to the attention of this House. It is a letter that is against the mainstreaming of the National Forestry Authority (NFA).

THE SPEAKER: How do you read a letter, which is written to me?

DR OTAALA: It is copied to me.

THE SPEAKER: You were just copied in. Do not take action on it. You read your report. How did you smuggle my letter out? Anyway it stays in the border. *(Laughter)*

DR OTAALA: Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Please go ahead.

DR OTAALA: I will proceed. Madam Speaker, as you are all aware, the National Forestry and Tree Planting (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was read for the first time on 9 April 2024 and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources for scrutiny. The committee has scrutinised the Bill in accordance with Rule 189(c) and now reports.

The background of the Bill is that the Government has over time realised a proliferation of government agencies through Acts of Parliament, Executive orders and administrative arrangements.

The Bill recognises that this proliferation of agencies has led to overlap in mandates and

uncertainties regarding jurisdictions and high administrative costs, but also recognising that in agencies, they are better paid –

THE SPEAKER: There is an honourable minister hiding. She is not used to being on the Frontbench. *Mugole*, come and sit near here.

DR OTAALA: Hon. Lillian Aber, congratulations for rising to the – *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Is it part of the report?

DR OTAALA: Madam Speaker, it is only prudent that we are courteous to each other, that when one has achieved something, we all celebrate together.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Lillian, congratulations, and thank you for moving from up there to down here. We thank God for everything.

DR OTAALA: Madam Speaker, I would like to state clearly that the object of this Bill is to dissolve the NFA and transfer its functions into the ministry responsible for environment to give effect to the government policy on the rationalisation of government agencies.

Allow me to underscore, before I go to the findings, one core function of the NFA, namely, to develop and manage all central forest reserves. I would like to state clearly that NFA has been managing only central forest reserves as opposed to district forest reserves that fall under the purview of the Ministry of Water and Environment. Now, allow me to go to our committee analysis, observations and recommendations.

This part of the report examined the proposed clauses in each part of the Bill, their constitutionality, and relevance in light of existing laws and policy on rationalisation, and the mischief they intended to cure. The examination is structured around thematic areas outlined in the Bill.

i. Overlapping forestry mandate with district forestry services

One thematic area is the alleged overlap in the mandate between NFA mandate and those of the district forestry services.

The committee noted that in 1998, the Government took a decision to transform the forestry department into two institutions; the National Forestry Authority and the District Forestry Services, with the aim of strengthening, streamlining and increasing efficiency in the management of forests in the country.

The committee observed that whereas the mandate of NFA is to manage 506 central forest reserves covering an area of 1.265 million hectares, which accounts for only 26 per cent of the total forest cover in Uganda, that of the District Forest Services under the purview of the ministry is to manage 196 local forest reserves, covering 5,000 hectares, which is only 0.02 per cent of the total forest cover, and providing forestry extension services and oversight on 48 per cent of forest cover existing in private land.

You find that most of the forests are actually private forests. These two mandates do not overlap at implementation and therefore, there was no evidence adduced to show that the ministry responsible for the environment shall satisfactorily implement the mandate of NFA upon rationalisation.

The committee noted that most of the district forest reserves that were under the purview of the Ministry of Water and Environment are no longer in existence, whereas the Central Forest Reserves under the National Forest Authority are in existence across the country, although some have been encroached upon.

- ii. Financial sustainability *vis-à-vis* the need to relieve the Government of financial drain on its resources

The committee noted that NFA has positioned itself to mobilise its own resources for forestry management and with minimal support from the Government. The institution can be self-sustaining in the medium term. The institution's

non-tax revenue has been increasing over the years, as you can see in the narrative there, but also in the next table – from Shs 9.521 billion in Financial Year 2018/2019, to Shs 10.411 billion in Financial Year 2019/2020, to Shs 9.271 in Financial Year 2020/2021, to Shs 12.106 billion in Financial Year 2021/2022 and to Shs 14.018 billion in Financial Year 2022/2023. That shows an upward trend and shows that NFA, once strengthened, will be able to generate more revenue for the country.

The committee, therefore, noted that, with the improved institutional image and ability to attract funding from development partners, the institution can generate its own NTR and be self-sustaining in the near future. The committee noted the following are some of the strategies NFA has developed to increase its NTR.

- (a) Investments in forest plantations
- (b) Investment in ecotourism
- (c) Support and manage tree farmers and planters in central forest reserves.
- (d) Ability to attract external funding from development partners.

The next table shows you the kind of relationship that NFA has established with those international agencies that are donating. I want to quickly remind ourselves that some of these donors are very hesitant to give money directly to the Government, but they would prefer to give an agency established like this one.

Finally, Madam Speaker, allow me to tackle why my committee felt that NFA must not be mainstreamed or dissolved as proposed by the Bill.

1. The NFA's uniqueness in addressing climate change and its impacts

The committee noted that the world is currently grappling with the challenges posed by climate change. It is a known fact that one of the most effective ways of removing carbon from the atmosphere is through afforestation, reforestation and improving forest

management and conservation. Many countries are strengthening forestry management by establishing semi-autonomous institutions such as the NFA. In the East African region, Uganda was the first to establish a forestry authority. Kenya and Tanzania made several benchmarking visits to Uganda and established their own semi-autonomous forestry service agencies in 2007 and 2011, respectively.

The committee noted that as the world takes steps to trade in carbon under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, Uganda has also, through NFA, developed capacity to undertake monitoring, reporting and verification of carbon.

Uganda's emissions are projected to reach 143 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 from 115 metric tonnes in 2023 and 236.4 metric tonnes by 2050, under the business-as-usual scenario. That is going to be the upward trend of carbon dioxide emission.

All of us, in the most recent past, saw the enormous effects of carbon dioxide emission into our environment, contributing to climate change.

To mitigate these emissions, NFA intends to implement mitigation actions to reduce emissions. When all the planned and intended mitigation actions have been implemented, Uganda's emissions will begin to reduce by 24.2 per cent by 2030. This reduction will come from forestry. NFA has lined up mitigation actions to reduce emissions by 2030 to 108 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

These are the mitigation actions that they have already lined up.

- (a) Climate smart agriculture
- (b) Sustainable fuel wood and commercial charcoal production
- (c) Large-scale commercial timber plantations
- (d) Restoration of natural forests in the landscape

Madam Speaker, in the morning when I presented a report on meteorology, I was charged with the responsibility of making a cost-benefit analysis – quantitatively – although at that time I made a qualitative analysis. I now give a quantitative cost-benefit analysis of the decision of mainstreaming NFA.

The committee noted that there may not necessarily be significant economic gains in the short and medium term arising out of mainstreaming NFA into the ministry. Whereas mainstreaming NFA will eliminate the board of directors and some members of senior management, these costs are relatively very small in comparison to the overall cost of sustainably managing and developing central forest reserves.

There will also be severance costs for the existing staff, hence no substantial cost saving. Further to this, the cost-benefit analysis was done before the Government enhanced the salaries of scientists.

The committee noted that mainstreaming costs will be higher under the ministry because over 80 per cent of the NFA staff are scientists and are currently earning salaries under the scientists scale.

The committee, therefore, observed that at the current staffing level of 364 contract personnel, the annual wage bill of Shs 8.264 billion, compared to what NFA is doing, is not so significant. The board and committee's annual budget is only Shs 362 million. The total annual budget for remuneration of contract staff and board of directors is only Shs 8.626 billion.

If the current staff are paid under the salary scale for scientists – all foresters, of course, are scientists – the expected wage will be Shs 11.181 billion – when NFA mandate is taken to the ministry. So, it will be moving up to Shs 11.18 billion, from Shs 8.6 billion. This excludes the salary of the nine scientists staff. The total number of current staff in approved positions is 364, with a total annual wage bill of Shs 8.264 billion.

The other point on why my committee recommends for NFA to stay is the impact of mainstreaming on forest cover in the country. As I said, the district forest covers that are under the ministry are no more. Most of you may realise that when you were growing up, you had forests within your localities. *(Interjections)* These are no more. The committee noted that the mainstreaming and the transitional period, thereunder -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, listen to the report and make a decision based on what you are hearing and what you see out there.

DR OTAALA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The committee noted that the mainstreaming and transitional period thereunder, is likely to pose a threat to forest cover in this country, which NFA has tried to keep at bay over the years.

Our greatest worry is that the ministry that has failed to protect district forest reserves -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, listen.

DR OTAALA: How will it now come to protect the central forest reserves that are under NFA? It will result in increased deforestation and forest degradation if we mainstream NFA to the ministry.

NFA has managed to keep at bay the numerous land grabbers who, in a number of instances, apply for court injunctions to enable them to take over forest reserves for personal gains. *(Interjections)*

Madam Speaker, may I let the House know that about 120 illegal titles created in forest reserves were cancelled in 2019. The process to cancel additional 400 illegal titles in the central forest reserves is ongoing. There is a high risk that this process will be jeopardised with mainstreaming the authority to the ministry without a clear mechanism of protecting central forest reserves. I submit.

Reduced investment in plantation development

There is a general feeling of uncertainty among the commercial tree farmers that mainstreaming NFA to the ministry may expose their plantations to risk of land grabbers, encroachment and theft of the assets as a result of reduced protection. These investors may therefore lose confidence in the investment climate, leading to reduction in forest cover.

NFA still resolving the many cases of land grabbing in the central forest reserves

In 2017, Government lifted the ban on licensing new investment in central forest reserves, and NFA made new offers for over 40,000 hectares. The authority is still sorting out the encroachment problem and licensing new investments. Sensitisation of encroachers and local leaders has been done in many areas and this process is ongoing.

Loss of employment opportunities

NFA currently employs 364 full-time contract staff who are paid salaries through the Government payroll. In addition, NFA has engaged services of about 400 patrol men from the communities neighbouring the central forest reserves, who are paid monthly patrol allowances.

Most of the work of NFA is done at very odd hours. They capture people who are encroaching on forests even at night. *(Interjections)* There is likelihood that some of these members of staff will lose employment. *(Interruptions)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, can you leave the chairperson to finish? Have you finished? Leave the chair to finish and then you make a decision.

DR OTAALA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for guiding the House. As I come to the end, I was saying that there is likelihood that some of the staff who have been patrolling these forests will lose employment with the restructuring and mainstreaming. This will result in loss of livelihood and may cause social disruptions because they are not a small number.

My committee, therefore, recommends as follows:

- (a) That the National Forestry Authority be retained as a semi-autonomous entity and not be mainstreamed into the ministry responsible for environment as proposed in the Bill. (*Applause*)
- (b) That the ministry responsible for environment should stick to its core mandate of policy formulation, establishment of standards, resource mobilisation, offering support supervision and to allow NFA to do its mandate of managing and conserving forest cover in the country.
- (c) That Government should empower NFA to fully execute its mandate to sustainably manage central forest reserves and to enable it to oversee over 150,000 hectares of private forest and also spearhead the recovery of the country's forest cover, which has increased since 2015.
- (d) That the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003 be amended to mandate the NFA to manage the district forest reserves, if at all there are any still left.

Finally, I wish to inform the House that the committee recognises the NTR that NFA is generating currently, and the potential of the National Forestry Authority to generate even more revenue for the country, as well as its immense contribution in mitigating the effects of climate change.

The committee is therefore constrained to agree with the principles of rationalising NFA to the ministry as proposed in the Bill. Madam Speaker, I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, I get scared when people stand because they can jump on me. (*Laughter*) You have heard the report. You know the forests that we are talking about. You know what is around. I am going to allow limited debate. In that limited debate, I first want to know which Members are in for rationalisation?

Who are those who want NFA to be abolished? Honourable members, which Members are in for mainstreaming; taking NFA from where it is to a department in the Ministry of Water? Who are those who want NFA to be taken away and put into the ministry?

Honourable members, I want you to listen. The motion that is here is about mainstreaming the National Forestry Authority (NFA) in which you are going to take NFA to the Ministry of Water and Environment to be a department. Is the question understood? Who are those who want it to go into the ministry? All I want to see are your raised hands. If you are an *ex-officio* member, do not put up your hand.

Honourable members, who are those who want to maintain National Forestry Authority? Let us go into a debate and that report will take the day. Do you want me to declare the results? Hon. Iddi -

5.49

MR IDDI ISABIRYE (NRM, Bunya County South, Mayuge): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Honourable members, I have the microphone.

When rationalisation was tabled in this Parliament, there were agencies that we could touch and others not. I am not surprised that the honourable minister, Beatrice Anywar, is the one tabling a Bill here; the one who once protested in the country to protect the forest, the one who was once nicknamed the 'Mama Mabira'.

Madam Speaker, in the spirit of nationalism, the Government that I support - If we are talking about environment, the chairperson has talked about the Government forests. Where are they, if you do not talk about NFA?

Tomorrow, when officials from the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) come here, they will tell you that there are roads that belong to the Government and others belong to UNRA. Madam Speaker, allow me to state this; we do not want to be educated on the importance of forests. The National Forestry Authority, with its mandate that was given by

this honourable House - We have not been told where it has failed.

I represent a constituency that has forests but the controversies that we have in my district are a situation where this very Government is issuing land titles in the forest. So now if you let these forests go into the same hands, are we going to remain with any forest in this country?

Madam Speaker, in the name of protecting people's land, in the name of protecting people's forests in this country, we must not allow the National Forestry Authority to be rationalised. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable member for Soroti City.

5.52

MR JONATHAN EBWALU (Independent, Soroti West Division, Soroti City): Thank you, Madam Speaker. When we allow our forest to go into the hands of the ministry, given the current situation, it is like we are pushing the goat to go to where the hyena is.

Madam Speaker, the people who are giving out our land in the forest are the local governments, not the NFA. When you look at what is happening in Soroti, Soroti has a forest. There is a place in a 10 block. The city went and gave out that place to a number of people. It was only saved by the NFA. That means if we did not have the NFA, by now that land would not be there. I therefore say that I am here to support the NFA to remain where it is and then we give more support to them.

As I conclude, a few days ago, NFA was giving trees to us. I have planted 6,000 trees in my constituency. Government, where were you at the ministry to give us trees? You go back, we are for NFA. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Esther –

5.53

MS ESTHER AFOYOCHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Zombo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I stand to support that

NFA must remain semi-autonomous for these reasons:

As I was growing up, Zombo district had a forest called Lendu Forest, with natural trees. Today, Lendu forest is depleted, the same road that they used to deplete this forest was never constructed until NFA came in and re-afforested the entire place.

Madam Speaker, the Government has not demonstrated good leadership in terms of managing forests and I think they cannot be custodians of forests at this time. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Isaac.

5.54

MR ISAAC OTIMGIW (NRM, Padyere County, Nebbi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am in support of NFA being rationalised and taken to the ministry – *(Interjections)* - Yes. We also have our reasons; we heard yours. This is a debate.

Madam Speaker, NFA was established in 2003. At that time, you could at least see that Mabira Forest was somehow there. Down the line, where is Mabira now? The chairperson said very clearly that they prefer working mainly at night.

THE SPEAKER: Could I ask something? Was it the NFA that cut down Mabira?

MR OTIMGIW: No, Madam Speaker – *(Interruption)*

MR RAUBEN ARINAITWE: Madam Speaker, let me give him information about Mabira.

THE SPEAKER: You used to work with NFA?

MR RAUBEN ARINAITWE: Yes, please. Let – *(Interjections)*

THE SPEAKER: Get information.

MR RAUBEN ARINAITWE: Let me give you information about Mabira. Madam Speaker, in Mabira, there are 39 villages which are called “enclaves”. So, at the time of de-gazettement –(Interjections)- let me tell you from a professional point of view.

From the time of de-gazettement, those enclaves have their own titles under mailo land so, they are not part of the forest; the same way you see Lugazi Sugar Factory is not part of that -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, just hold on. Hon. Dr Lulume, I know you are conflicted. You want that land to be de-gazetted so that you people take the land.

MR RAUBEN ARINAITWE: So, Madam Speaker, when NFA was formed, that land was left under a private forest; that is what they have cut. That is why you think Mabira is not there; it is there. What we see is land for people who were there before the gazettement and they have titles. Mabira is there, I can assure you. You can even go and see it there.

MR OTIMGIW: Thank you for the information. I am surprised you say Mabira is there. We are not talking about the Mabira we see on the road. Go a bit deeper and see if Mabira is still there.

Secondly, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Isaac Otimgiw, do you pass there when you are going to northern Uganda? (Laughter) You come from Nebbi. Do you know what is in the east?

MR OTIMGIW: Let me conclude, Madam Speaker. Secondly, if I may conclude, I would also like to talk about Non-Tax Revenue. We appreciate that they are raising NTR of almost Shs 9 billion but the real sources of that NTR should be established. Is it coming from the real forests that they are actually chopping down? The real sources have to be established.

Lastly, Madam Speaker, I appreciate that if the workforce of over 400 people employed in

NFA goes within the ministry, they are going to be compensated. Moreover, some of them will be retained. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Have you compensated the ones of the Rural Electrification Agency?

5.58

MS PASKA MENYA (Independent, Woman Representative, Pader): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am here to support that NFA must stay –(Applause)- for reasons that Acholi or the northern region has suffered a lot from charcoal burning.

Right now, we are trying to recover by planting trees that are being provided by NFA. (Applause) If we are to merge NFA with the main ministry, I am afraid we may not achieve this. So, I stand firm in supporting NFA to stay.

5.59

MR ALEX BYARUGABA (NRM, Isingiro County South, Isingiro): Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. I have had an opportunity to work with the environment sector for quite some time. I know that this rationalisation has major reasons. If we find an institution that is more of a consumer than a producer, that institution should certainly be done away with.

However, with NFA, we see very clearly that they are raising a lot of NTR. What reason are you going to give this *wananchi* in Isingiro who never saw a tree until NFA was established in Isingiro? (Applause) We now have Rwoho Central Forest Reserve, a very huge forest reserve which has been restored, improved upon and even expanded. What will you tell those people?

Secondly, Madam Speaker, the ministry has a mandate to collect a Tree Fund. This Tree Fund has never been put into effect and this is an area where you still want to put NFA and make it worse. Where is the Tree Fund? What have you been doing with that money? Have you ever collected any?

As a ministry, I think it is important that we look for a smaller, efficient Government and you cannot do that unless you do it in a small way, which way is through NFA.

As Members of Parliament, many of us have been supported by the NFA with seedlings *-(Applause)-* year after year, season after season. Even during the other season when we gave them money, every Member of Parliament received some seedlings. And this is an area you want to kill. For goodness sake, we should be giving the NFA more autonomy and power.

6.02

MR SAMUEL OKWIR (NRM, Moroto County, Alebtong): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this is a very controversial issue. If it means debating up to morning, we shall debate. *(Applause)*

MR OKWIR: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity. We must have trust in the system. There is a false impression being created here that there are donors and supporters who want to support activities within this Government but do not want to work with the Government. This is not true.

We can have reasons to support or disband NFA but we should not discredit the system that NFA operates under. *(Applause)* I am making my point. The issue here - I have forest reserves that have been managed under NFA and those under the district. However, I have conflicting situations where NFA went and evicted people very late in the night. These are people who have stayed there for over 40 years and buried people there – *(Interjections)* - Yes.

Look here –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Okwir.

MR OKWIR: Yes, Madam Speaker?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Okwir, when you are talking about such a serious matter of eviction,

we need evidence. That is one. Two, during the war in northern Uganda, not only in Acholi but also Lango and even Teso, when people went back, they took over the land belonging to the National Forestry Authority (NFA). *(Applause)* You are the encroachers to NFA and he knows it. *(Laughter)*

MR OKWIR: Madam Speaker, I do not want to exchange with you but my submission is that these are people who have lived there for over 40 years. They have buried their ancestors there and NFA wakes up one morning and tells them to leave. Where should they go?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Okwir, when you get somebody on your property, don't you evict that person? Why were you talking about the eviction of the buses yesterday? You need that land; it belongs to a body. *(Laughter)* Yes, Hon. Muhammad Nsereko -

6.05

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Central Division, Kampala): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to support the position of the committee regarding the retention of the autonomy of the National Forest Authority. *(Applause)*

The rationale for the rationalisation was to create efficiency. I heard the minister very well; there is nowhere you promised this House that by mainstreaming the National Forestry Authority into your ministry, it would become more efficient than it is today.

Let me address only one issue; the collection of Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) through the climate change programme which we all know is called carbon credit. If well empowered, NFA is a source of greater revenue and efficiency to this country – *(Applause)* - and you will look for numbers.

I can give you one example and you must explain, honourable minister, how far you have gone with the proposal that you have in your ministry with the Office of the Attorney-General to hand over 25 per cent of the forest cover of Uganda to Shell in lieu for carbon credit.

You might come back here and see what I am talking about it. I challenge you and that is the reason I am posing questions today. There is carbon trade and who issues the permits? No, you will come back and respond.

Through the National Forestry Authority, from our portfolio in Africa, we can harness over \$ 500 million, which the ministry cannot do. Our role should be to empower this authority to keep the forest cover and promote the planting of trees and forests so that in the future, we can even earn more.

Honourable members, we are not saying, no to your making lean of the Government. If you think that you have better qualified people who can help us get more, please get them to NFA and make it function better. *(Applause)*

If you think there are very many people, streamline it and the number but do not destroy the authority, for you will not leave its functions performing to expectations.

Finally - *[Ms Kaaya: "Information."]* Please, I take it.

MS KAAAYA: Madam Speaker, NFA is the custodian of what we call the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) under the United Nations Framework Convention where NFA is also leading the monitoring, verification and reporting of carbon emissions.

The only defence we have, as Uganda, to safeguard the extraction of fossil fuels globally - It has been projected that the extraction of fossil fuels under the East African Crude Oil Pipeline, the Kabale Airport and the oil refinery yet to start, is going to emit over one million tons of carbon.

Whenever we attend international meetings, we confirm to them that with our affirmative action of the National Forest Authority, we are ensuring that forest acreages are going to be maintained. To safeguard our oil extraction and energy prospects, we are confirming that the forest cover under the management of NFA

is going to absorb all the carbon. Therefore, if we remove NFA, our defence for our fossil oil extraction is dead.

We are saying that, affirmatively, with the heat you received in the last period, we can only defend ourselves by maintaining the National Forest Authority. *(Applause)*

MR NSEREKO: Thank you for that wonderful information. I think Hon. Beatrice Anywar, *Mama Mabira - (Interjection)*- Formerly, no. Still *Mama Mabira*. I would like you to reflect in your heart, go into your sentiments and know what Ugandans know you for; as that lady who put her life and line on the forefront.

I am appealing to your sentiments to understand that we have come from far through challenges and you cannot hand over meat to a lion and expect to find it in the morning.

6.11

MR DENIS OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha): Madam Speaker, I am here to support the committee's position that we should not rationalise and dissolve NFA.

For the information of Members, the President signed a declaration in Glasgow to end deforestation by 2030 and the committee has shown us that we are steadily recovering forest cover from the activities of NFA. What we need to implore the ministry to do is to monetise that.

For example, they have shown us that there has been forest cover increasing under climate funding. You can monetise that through what Hon. Muhammad Nsereko talked about; carbon trading. Without delivering on that, you are moving to claim more responsibilities. Why don't you run and do what the law currently gives you the mandate to do?

Secondly, the minister said that they cannot quickly report to Parliament. Minister, Section 79 of the current law provides for annual reports under which you are supposed to report to this House. Are you doing that?

Thirdly, the ministry, as far as I know, cannot manage licences. NFA, at the moment, is generating non-tax revenue through licensing activities. Some people have been blaming the NFA for evictions. I would like to inform those colleagues that under Section 15 of the current law, you cannot enter into a forest reserve to do activities without a permit.

Therefore, people must be advised to get a licence from NFA and then they would be able to execute their activities. *(Interruption)* Let me get information from Hon. Rose.

MS OBIGAH: Thank you, Madam Speaker and Hon. Oguzu, for giving me a chance. From global warming, we are now going to global boiling. The recent statistics showed that we went up to 40 degrees Celsius. If we remove NFA, we are going to destroy this country permanently. *(Applause)*

Madam Speaker, even if we wanted to create another authority, maybe the Uganda Forestry Authority (UFA), all authorities and entities that are going to plant trees and increase plant cover must be protected. Without trees, we are dead. Currently, the President is advocating for more tree planting; we are here to protect our environment.

Therefore, NFA is here to stay and let us support it. Thank you, my brother. *(Applause)*

MR OGUZU: Madam Speaker, to conclude, there is an honourable colleague who has seen sense in what we are talking and needs to come and confess here. I think I should give him an opportunity.

6.14

MR GEOFFREY KAYEMBA-SSOLO (NUP, Bukomansimbi South County, Bukomansimbi): Thank you, Hon. Denis Oguzu, for giving me leeway.

Madam Speaker, as we are fighting to see that NFA is not rationalised, the problem we have is with the Government officials, especially the “big people”, who always come and take away that land by force. I think that is why you want

to rationalise it, so that you can take that land freely as you have been doing. *(Laughter)* I beg to submit.

MR OGUZU: As I wind up, I invite honourable colleagues that we retain NFA because nobody will be able to insulate himself from the environmental problems we will suffer when NFA is gone.

6.15

MR ISAAC MODOI (NRM, Lutseshe County, Bududa): Madam Speaker, I stand here to say that NFA must not be mainstreamed. *(Applause)* They have not told us the reasons, at any level, why they have failed. Maybe the same reasons would have touched on UWA or NEMA. I would like to say here with authority. With due respect, I have worked around the country. NFA has got infrastructure, it has institutions and is locally and internationally connected.

The problem affecting the whole world right now is climate change and the question all over the world is on how to remove carbon from the environment. There is no way it can work through institutions that the Government has so far suffocated. For example, there is no reason whatsoever that the Government can come up with, on why NFA should be mainstreamed.

Indeed, the East African region has been coming to Uganda to benchmark on how to create their forest authorities. Wherever we go, we are being quoted as the best in the region. So, I find it difficult – even as I talk right now, the neighbouring countries come around, even to the Mt Elgon area so – *(Interruption)*

MR WANDWASI: Thank you, honourable member, for giving way. Madam Speaker, NFA should have even been considered for more appropriations. *(Applause)* Why all of us are in for NFA is because the majority of us are dedicated members of NFA. The little forest cover that we have in our districts has been saved by NFA.

All of us are down to earth. At least we are planting seedlings. We have gone ahead by

mobilising our people to practise agronomy by planting some trees. So, to say that you mainstream NFA, you would have just killed this country –

THE SPEAKER: Did you mean agroforestry? That one. *(Laughter)*

MR MODOI: We are dealing with a carbon bank. When you come to Elgon Zone, Masindi Zone – we talk of Carbon Bank. Carbon Bank is one of the projects under NFA. I think it will not be rational to mainstream the National Forestry Authority. It should stay.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Goli and Dr Keefa.

6.18

MR MOSES OGWAL (NRM, Dokolo North County, Dokolo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was very impressed with the report of the committee. The committee highlighted critical issues of how important forests will be under the management of NFA. A key element that I was impressed with is the business opportunity that is available under the sale of carbon credit. That is amazing, and it gives us an opportunity to change this country.

The other thing, which is very key, is that we sometimes do not quickly calculate how important the environment is. We calculate it when we see challenges that the environment causes. For example, in Dokolo today, we have floods, which have affected over 15,000 people. They have nowhere to go.

That is why I propose that we strengthen NFA so that issues like floods can be managed. I support the issue of staying NFA and strengthening it. *(Applause)* Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Dancing Queen?

6.20

MS FLORENCE ASHIMWE (NRM, Woman Representative, Masindi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I stand here to support the motion that we should not mainstream NFA. I am here representing Bunyoro Subregion, the

custodian of oil and gas – where we are going to be affected – and the custodian of Budongo Forest. Bugoma Forest was destroyed and up to now, we shed tears. NFA is trying all it can to restore the lost glory of Bunyoro.

Therefore, I cannot miss supporting NFA to remain as it is, to do its work to bring back the glory of Bunyoro as it used to be; to bring back Bugoma, to bring back Budongo and to protect Bunyoro region. I submit.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Mourine and Hon. Stephen.

6.21

MS MOURINE OSORU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua City): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I support that NFA must stay. In Arua City, I do have Barifa Forest. If it was not for NFA, I think Barifa Forest would have gone. *(Applause)* NFA started in 2004 – if I am not mistaken – and it has just planted trees, which are yet to yield. I understand the gestation period of a tree is about 20 years – yes, it depends on the variety of the tree you have planted.

These trees are about to yield. Once they yield, it means we are going to have a lot of revenues from this NFA. When we come up with mainstreaming NFA into the ministries – look at Apaa, where we have a lot of problems. What is happening in Apaa is political. NFA has been –

THE SPEAKER: Is that the Zoka Forest?

MS OSORU: Yes. NFA has been overpowered by the alleged – some people in the Government, who are trying to put a lot of stress on the people of Apaa in Zoka Forest. Those politicians, the so-called “big people” whom we do not know, are the reason why there are a lot of issues in Apaa.

Madam Speaker, I want reforestation from NFA. We must strengthen it. Without NFA, Uganda is nowhere. Look at Arusha and Rwanda. We are always happy because they are green. Where are we going as a country? We must impress and leave it the way it is.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Dr Keefa?

6.23

MR KEEFA KIWANUKA (NRM, Kiboga East County, Kiboga): Thank you, Madam Speaker. For many years, I chaired the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and I have had a strong association with the National Forest Authority. I understand the challenges that they are going through.

The first thing that surprises me is that there is no consultancy report to justify something very controversial. For instance, what is it that the National Forest Authority has failed in order for it to be mainstreamed? *(Applause)*

By the way, we mainstream when the importance of something has ceased and you want to bring it into the mainstream so that it can go with everything else.

At the moment, we have pressures around climate change and the global trend is to strengthen such institutions in order to counter the pressures of climate change. That is why I wonder whether there is any justification from international benchmarks -

The other issue is that ministries normally concentrate on creating an enabling environment, that is, the law and the policies and things like that - reducing the degradation, which is leading to deforestation; so that it can enable the National Forestry Authority to manage. However, here you are talking about taking the services that are being delivered by National Forestry Authority into something which should be concentrating on creating an enabling environment.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I strongly object to what is being proposed in the Bill and strongly support the committee report. Thank you.

6.25

MR STEPHEN MUGOLE (NRM, Kabweri County, Kibuku): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you for this opportunity. This early afternoon when the committee chairperson brought the – *(Inaudible)* - he was

standing like on a terrible pain, but today I am trying to support this.

National Forestry Authority works in synergy with the Uganda Wildlife Authority. Let me give an example of Budongo Forest. When you enter Kicumbanyobo, when you are going to Murchison Falls, the only reserved Budongo Forest is within the national park. This is because of working together with the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

This morning, we have just empowered Uganda Wildlife Authority by adding Uganda Wildlife Education Centre into it. It was like a takeover instead of a merger. For National Forestry Authority to be denied or scrapped instead of empowering it would be wrong for us. What I suppose and believe is that National Forest Authority –*(Interjection)*– do you want to give information? I can take it.

DR BWANIKA: Thank you, honourable member for giving way. Madam Speaker, in the animal kingdom, we do not trust the ministry. These forests house baboons, chimpanzees and mountain gorillas, which fetch a lot of money for this country in terms of tourism. Before 2004, when the forestry authority had not come into play, forests were destroyed in this country.

The information I am giving is that apart from representing the people of Kimaanya-Kabonera, I represent the animal kingdom and our trust is in the forestry authority. It should stay.

MR MUGOLE: Thank you for the information. I would like to conclude that we continue with having the Authority.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Let me have Hon. Catheline and then you, chairperson.

6.28

MS CATHELIN NDAMIRA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kabale): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Allow me also to thank the committee for the wise recommendations. I join my honourable colleagues to support that

NFA should be maintained as it has been aware that a big number of our population is still using firewood. NFA had come to revamp the situation and this is the reason I support that it should be maintained. Thank you.

6.29

MR BOSCO OKIROR (NRM, Usuk County, Katakwi): Madam Speaker, I would like to sincerely thank you for this opportunity. I come from a semi-arid area. When issues to do with the environment, particularly the forest cover are being discussed, I nearly become a bit emotional –

THE SPEAKER: You can be. You do not have to become a bit emotional. *(Laughter)*

MR OKIROR: Absolutely. When the framers of the 1995 Constitution put in place a law, under the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, and particularly Objective XIII, the State set out with a duty to protect important natural resources including; land, water, wetlands, minerals, oil, fauna and flora on behalf of the people of Uganda.

When we set this objective, we domesticated enforcement mechanisms through legislation, that is, under the NFA. I think we were in the correct mind-set to do that duty that we want to protect our forest cover. Many speakers have presented here that nothing has been given as a justification for the need to transfer that duty back.

I hasten to add that with this protection and enforcement, which has been given by the law, I am really in support of the committee report that we should be able to maintain NFA absolutely. *(Applause)*

The forest cover over a period of time has been reducing. However, I want to tell you that right now, just the mention of the name “NFA” anywhere makes somebody terrified that they need to protect something. There is that cutting across. For us to withdraw, we are going to send people into celebration that NFA finally has been closed. It is going to be terrible. I want to give Hon. Odur chance to give information. *(Interruption)*

MR ODUR: Thank you. Madam Speaker, in the morning, I had sought that we should interrogate the four terminologies being used by the Government and I want to demonstrate on this one. They are saying they want to “mainstream.” Literally, mainstreaming means that there is a mainstream somewhere. It ordinarily means that there is a bigger entity in Uganda that has been overseeing the issue of forestry in Uganda, which does not exist. That is when the small stream now feeds into the mainstream.

In this case, NFA is the bigger stream. In any case, the ministry should have been rationalised into NFA. That is the information I wanted to give you. *(Laughter)*

MR OKIROR: Madam Speaker, I want to thank Hon. Jonathan for that information. It is very vital information. Finally, Uganda is a very beautiful country. If there are things that we stamp our feet as a legislature of our time is to see to it that we cannot wish away the valuable resources that we have like forests and land. Let us stand together to see that we can protect that for the benefit of the people to come beyond us. Most obliged.

6.32

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI (NUP, Butambala County, Butambala): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can see even the mood in the House but let me speak as an MP that represents an area that for long has had adequate national forest cover. I have been here for about 12 years. When I became an MP, my area had almost a natural forest across.

It is not the first time that I am standing on this Floor to express my displeasure with an institution called NFA. At one time, I called it a “terrorist organisation” in terms of environmental degradation.

NFA, in my area - I will speak for it - has been at the forefront of allocating standing national forests to private tree planters – *(Interjections)* - I have every evidence to speak to that. As I speak now, when NFA –

THE SPEAKER: Point of order-

MR OGUZU: Madam Speaker, under the current law, Sections 41 and 42 of the National Forestry and Tree-planting Act, 2003, the National Forestry Authority (NFA) is empowered to license activities in forest reserves. So, is it in order for the honourable member to impute that a licence confers ownership of land in a forest reserve when it is not?

Two, has honourable member taken note of the fact that the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development has been implicated in issuing illegal titles in forest reserves which is not the mandate of NFA. He may be misleading the public; is he in order? That record must be set properly.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us get Hon. Kivumbi, followed by Hon. Mpenduzi and Hon. Kabanda.

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: Madam Speaker, thank you for your protection. In life, there are moments of truth. For me, this is a moment of truth. I have had meetings with my sister, even in your office - mother-in-law - and I have had a disagreement with my shadow minister, publicly and on various forums. My concern has been that the National Forestry Authority has not lived up to its mandate.

When they formed it, the national forest cover was around 30 something. As we speak now, on its watch, and it was given everything; it was given police, military, and everything to protect our forests. This is an institution that I even contemplated at one time taking to the courts of law for failure to meet its mandate. It has fallen flat.

I know that the National Forestry Authority in Uganda has been parceling out large portions of land to very influential people to destroy forests and they could be the one that are protecting it. This is an institution that should-

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of information-

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: No, information, hold on-

THE SPEAKER: I have granted it.

MR MUZAALE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The information I want to give Hon. Kivumbi is that - I do not know whether where he comes from is not part of Uganda - that is Butambala. But in Busoga, where I come from, NFA has done a good job. First of all, in restoring land that had been encroached upon.

Secondly, giving private licences to people to plant trees. So, if you come here and say that NFA is actually doing to the contrary, I do not agree with you. Most importantly-

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: Thank you for that information. Let me give you a fact, my brother; I come from an area with a long forest cover, not only in my constituency - that cuts across Mpigi, Mawokota, Masaka all the way to Busujju - that whole forest cover was under NFA, and under the watch of NFA where there was a standing forest, NFA gave it to a private tree planter who destroyed the forest with excavators, removing pillars. This is an institution we should have done away with yesterday!

THE SPEAKER: Clarification-

DR BWANIKA: Madam Speaker, we are taking a very important decision for the nation. I request Hon. Kivumbi to lay on Table figures. When you talk about forest cover; in 2004, what was it? And what is it today, so that we can make a decision? It is important, Madam Speaker, to substantiate the information.

I also want to hear from Hon. Kivumbi; are you giving figures from your district only or are you giving national figure? We need to look at them and make a decision.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you have all talked but there is only one person who will hear. Let me first hear from Hon. Mpenduzi before I take action.

6.39

MR OJARA MAPENDUZI (Independent, Bardege-Layibi Division, Gulu City): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. First, I join colleagues in thanking the committee and I fully associate myself with the position they have expressed.

Madam Speaker, you are very much aware that I come from an area that has been greatly ravaged by indiscriminately cutting of trees and general environmental destruction. Between 2017 and 2019, there was an invasion, where specific indigenous tree species were targeted including what is called *Azelia Africana*, a very special tree species.

We tried very much, but unfortunately we realised that the people that were targeting these trees and exporting them to Thailand and other countries were getting permits from the ministry. The President issued a directive and the NFA worked entirely with the local government to protect these kinds of trees.

As I speak now, there are a lot of issues we are dealing with. When you look at the level of environmental destruction-

THE SPEAKER: Is that the time you caned people?

MR MAPENDUZI: Madam Speaker, I do not remember caning anybody, but I know there are a lot of things that the ministry has to deal with-

THE SPEAKER: First of all, was the land for the university that was supposed to be de-gazetted, de-gazetted?

MR MAPENDUZI: Madam Speaker, probably the honourable minister will answer that. Unfortunately, no, to this day.

THE SPEAKER: So, when do they want to de-gazette it?

MR MAPENDUZI: Madam Speaker, Parliament took a decision but we have not heard from the honourable minister. Probably,

you will task her to explain when that resolution will be implemented.

THE SPEAKER: The minister was supposed to bring a motion after Parliament passed its decision. Up to date we have not yet seen.

MR MAPENDUZI: The minister has not brought in any motion and that is unfortunate.

THE SPEAKER: So, let us wait. - I will give you time to speak; do not worry. *Mama* Mabira, just stay calm.

MR MAPENDUZI: Madam Speaker, there are times when Parliament has to take hard decisions, and one of those decisions we have to make today is to protect NFA, and have it fully empowered to do even much better than what they are doing. Much as some Ugandans think NFA is not doing a lot, the problem comes back to us because we are not giving them the amount of support they need. We need to stand our ground and protect the NFA.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Aogon?

6.43

MR SILAS AOGON (Independent, Kumi Municipality, Kumi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. As we speak now, NFA is operating as a vote and that independence gives them the power to move quickly. If we decide to take them back to the ministry, that will jeopardise their speed of movement. For that reason, it should stay where it is.

Secondly, we all know the bureaucracy that are in our ministries; let us not deceive ourselves. If we give NFA to those people, their speed will be at a snail's pace because they take their time, they do things the way they like and they do not mind.

Therefore, for that reason, let the National Forestry Authority (NFA) stay where it is.

Madam Speaker, the global trend is very clear. The hottest matter on the table right now is climate change and it is highly connected with the issue of forestry. We cannot afford

to be retracted when the world is expanding on matters of climate change and therefore we need to retain NFA. Let it stay where it is. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kabanda?

6.44

MR DAVID KABANDA (NRM, Kasambya County, Mubende): Thank you, Madam Speaker and members. First of all, I would like to thank you for congratulate me on being promoted Secretary-General of the Patriotic League of Uganda and I can see the Leader of the Opposition is very happy and willing to join. *(Laughter)*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for the very good report. You know, sometimes, working for the Government can be very hard. And I know inside *Mama Mabira*, she is very happy that most of the Members are rejecting her proposal because she is known for being at the forefront of protecting the forests in Uganda and I know if she was not a minister, she would be with us to protect the forests.

She would even undress here because the love she has for the forests in Uganda is-

Firstly, the committee has made very good observations and recommendations. And when you look at the mover of the Bill;

1. She has not justified and has not given reasons as to why NFA should be mainstream. The committee has put good reasons as to why NFA must stay.

I have three forest reserves in my constituency; Kyampisi, Kisombwa, Muyinayina and the fourth one is Kasolo. However, when these people give you a license and you find out that there is an issue with that license, you can just walk into their offices and that license is cancelled.

Whenever you go to the Ministry of Land- let me give you an example, where you find a place with three titles- because it has happened in my constituents, it takes you ages for any of the titles to be cancelled.

Therefore, let us not merge, let us not take NFA to these people, because as Hon. Jonathan said, they are already preparing on how to share forests, yet NFA is there protecting our forests. I beg to submit. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, thank you for the debate and for coming in big numbers today, for the Bills; we still have the Bills. I am constrained to put a question now because of the quorum.

I do not want anybody to run to court because of NFA - there is a likelihood that a person like Hon. Kivumbi –*(Laughter)*– will run to court. But we will handle and conclude NFA first thing in the morning.

But there is nothing like, “Let us go and mobilise.” Even a blind person- I mean if it is something that is correct, even a blind person can see. If it is wrong, it is wrong; if it is correct, it is correct. So let us come back tomorrow and then we put and finalise. House adjourned to 10.00 a.m. tomorrow.

(The House rose at 6.48 p.m. and adjourned until 18 April 2024 at 10.00 a.m.)