

**PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA**

**Thursday, 23 September 2021**

*Parliament met at 2.10 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.*

PRAYERS

*(The Speaker, Mr. Jacob Oulanyah, in the Chair.)*

*The House was called to order*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I welcome you to this sitting. Today, as you know, is Private Member’s time. However, as you also know, today is Prime Minister’s Time, which takes almost an hour from our debate. There are Members who have requested to raise some very urgent matters that have happened in their areas of representation. So, there will not be much communication from the Chair.

2.21

**MS DORCUS ACEN (NRM, Woman Representative, Alebtong):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise on an urgent matter of national importance, concerning the plight of the people of Alebtong District, regarding the damages caused by repeated and multiple hailstorms within the district.

Specifically, from the assessment team, the area which is being severely hit and having reoccurrence is been Amugo sub-county. The farmers are facing repeated disaster, as a result of this kind of reoccurrence.

Last week, we had heavy rains, coupled with hailstorms and this affected specific locations in terms of villages – Atoaria and also parts of Alere in Abongoatin Parish, Omwonyo Gweno in Abunga Parish, which have been severely affected. This affected mostly crops and livestock.

For crops, mostly maize and cassava were hit. In terms of the magnitude of the destruction, we have 632 acres of maize and cassava destroyed. This affected a total of 1,146 people from 191 households, 154 acres of maize and 83 acres of cassava, among others.

My prayer, Mr Speaker, is that the Government takes this as a serious issue and comes to the rescue of the distressed farming community of Amugo Subcounty. We are asking for – if possible –

I know that we have done this in the past with limited response from the side of the Government but we continue to plead for food relief and also seeds to support some of the farmers who had actually got seeds, fertilisers and pesticides on credit from agro-input dealers. Thank you.

2.14

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Thomas Tayebwa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. A few minutes ago, I spoke to the Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development released some emergency funds for the Government to make procurements to help distressed areas.

The minister assured me that by this weekend, they are expecting some food to arrive in their stores. So, I am going to ensure that the minister delivers the required food to Alebtong and other areas for which we had committed.

**THE SPEAKER:** I think there was a similar issue from Kitagwenda. Is the Member here? I think we have a similar situation in Kitagwenda.

2.15

**MR NULU BYAMUKAMA (NRM, Kitagwenda County, Kitagwenda):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is almost the same thing because Kitagwenda was hit hard by hailstorms. The areas of Kyotamushana, the entire Ntara Town Council, Rwenjaza Subcounty and Kanara Subcounty were seriously hit. These are the areas that were badly hit by hailstorms.

So, my prayer is that we get food for these people and seeds such that our people can plant and also survive like any other Ugandans. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Make the same commitment for Kitagwenda. Mukono is also the same but she did not come to me, so, please proceed; if you have started negotiating this thing outside the Speaker’s office. *(Laughter)*

2.16

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Thomas Tayebwa):** Sorry, Mr Speaker. I just heard her saying, “Mukono”. I thought she had come to your office.

Mr Speaker, like I told colleagues, we received some money - around Shs 15 billion - and we are already making procurements for very urgent interventions in terms of food, tarpaulins and all those relief items.

It might not be enough but we are going to try our level best to ensure that at least we reach most of these areas, including Buliisa – that hospital which was washed away by floods. We have resolved that, indeed we come in and immediately build an emergency health centre III in Buliisa to serve the community.

So, starting next week, we are going to start distributing food and relief items for those areas which are highly distressed, including Karamoja.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable minister.

**MR THOMAS TAYEBWA:** Mr Speaker, there is one small thing. For honourable members whose district disaster committees have not yet submitted reports to the Office of the Prime Minister, I request that you link up with the CAOs to ensure those reports are submitted because they are the ones we are basing on to make assessments and come in with the rescue.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, Government Chief Whip. You see, Members also want their colleagues to know that they have had a problem. So, that is why they come to the Speaker even when all those procedures have been done. Just to show solidarity with the people, they come and make this. They say, “No, we have been hit. There has been a problem.”

Even when you say, “No, they have already sent some interventions there but our people have been hit by this kind of situation.” It also still serves the same purpose.

2.18

**MS MANJERI KYEBAKUTIKA (NUP, Woman Representative, Jinja City):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am standing here because I am concerned about the conduct of Umeme and its staff during operations, while dealing with residents.

I want to inform this House that the Umeme operations are characterised by panic, torture, running battles with residents and brutality.

An example of this is that on the 14th of September, there was a nasty incident in Jinja in a place known as Namulesa. Residents were beaten up and teargassed. Two pregnant women were tortured severely and are now admitted in hospital. Their property was also destroyed.

My prayer, Mr Speaker, is that the director of Umeme should be invited to Parliament to explain to us why they militarise their operations.

Secondly, the Managing Director of Umeme should come and commit himself how he is going to compensate the residents of Namulesa in the form of medical treatment and property that was destroyed. I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. All the requests are for Umeme to come to Parliament.

**MR SILWANY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. This Parliament agreed that the contract and operations of Umeme be stopped in this country. Therefore, nothing relating to Umeme should even move nearer to this Parliament.

These issues of Umeme mistreating people, charging bills - Ugandans have been crying, including the President, who came out one time and complained about Umeme. As Parliament, this is the time we should take a drastic decision to say “no” and stop the operations of Umeme.

The procedural point I am raising is: would it be procedurally right, to invite a company, that this Parliament already pronounced that it should be closed to again come back to this august House, yet we said “Go, no more operations of Umeme?”

**THE SPEAKER:** Even if there had been no resolution of that nature, we cannot invite a corporate company to the Chambers of Parliament to discuss anything.

Honourable members, we pass the resolutions of Parliament but when we pass those resolutions, it is not like we have turned on and off a switch; there are processes that will come after that. An assessment has to be done by the people from the other side to see how it can be done properly within the law. As you may know, Umeme is a concessioner and the concession was given by the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company; they gave a concession to Umeme. They agreed on the terms with Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL).

Therefore, if the processes for termination are ongoing, they have to look at the contract and then see how it can be done properly. Parliament may have given guidance on this matter but allow the people who are in charge of management of the contract to look at it and take appropriate action. If they don’t, we have to occasion again a discussion to see why they have not heeded to our call. Otherwise, they will have to seek an explanation as to why they did not heed to our call. Could it be because the contract cannot be terminated? Or could it be that if they carry out the cost and legal implications, would it be too much? Then, they can come and explain to us.

For now, I am sure the processes are on and like you have said, many people are unhappy about what is going on. I am even surprised that Umeme can now buy teargas and use it in this country. Does Umeme have its own teargas?

2.24

**THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE** **(Dr Chris Baryomunsi):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The Minister of Energy and Mineral Development is not in the House. Let me stand for her and thank the Member from Jinja for raising this annoying issue.

We condemn in the strongest terms the harassment of Ugandans. Even if they are not Ugandans, nobody should harass an individual, particularly on what she has raised before the House. Definitely, Umeme will be out of order, if they are doing that.

The minister responsible for energy will be instructed to investigate the issue raised by the honourable member that Umeme staff are harassing and beating Ugandans and give us a report next week. This is not acceptable. We shall request the minister to investigate this matter urgently and bring us a report.

It may not be possible to bring Umeme in the House but the minister, who supervises the sector, will come and give us a report next week. Maybe, we could also give him two weeks to update Parliament on the status of the Umeme contract in the country. We make those undertakings. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** In the meantime, what about the pregnant women who are in hospital? Has the minister come? Honourable minister, you are in charge of the energy sector. Issues have arisen about the conduct of staff of Umeme, which hon. Dr Baryomunsi has responded to in brief.

The statement is that some staff of Umeme went and brutalised people, including pregnant mothers, who are now hospitalised. The Member alleges that they had teargas. She is, therefore, seeking treatment of these persons who have been injured and other matters. Would you like to say something about that because the honourable minister had made pledges that the ministers will come with a proper statement after investigation.

2.27

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (ENERGY) (MR Sidronius Okaasai):** Mr Speaker, we are aware of what is taking place and the ministry is investigating it. We shall submit a report about it. We are already carrying out an investigation on what is happening.

While we were in Iganga, on a tour, we met a demonstration. We stopped and addressed the congregation. We also had the same experience in Kumi. The senior minister has issued an investigation to that cause and we shall submit a report.

**THE SPEAKER:** Do you have any ideas of the processes Parliament recommended that Umeme’s contract should be terminated? Do you have any idea or would you prefer to come back later with that?

**MR OKAASAI:** We are aware about that and we are carrying out a study because there was a concession that was supposed to last up to 2025. We are now looking at the cost implications. Otherwise, if we terminate it now, what will it imply? And if we let it continue running, what is the financial implication?

We shall –*(Interruption)*

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was among the Members who investigated NSSF, where Umeme was involved in a number of issues.

However, the clarification I am seeking is in relation to what the minister has said. Has the contract for Umeme been terminated or is it still functional? That is what we need to know so that the records can be clear. If it is blacklisted, is it still functioning or has it been terminated? The minister can explain that so that our records can capture that very clearly. Thank you.

**MR OKAASAI:** Mr Speaker, on the question that has been asked, I would like to state that we are still studying it and we are going to submit a report about it. However, Umeme is still working because the concession has not been terminated.

2.29

**MS KEVIN OJINGA (NRM, Woman Representative, Pallisa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this chance to air out matters of national importance in my district.

Last week, we experienced heavy rains that flooded almost half of the district. These floods washed away three bridges. There was the main bridge of Kaboloi that serves the people of Agule, Chelekura, Kameke and Oboliso subcounties. It also flooded also another bridge from ometai.

There was an effort to reach out to the Ministry of Works and Transport because they are the ones solely responsible for building the main bridges. However, up to now, nothing has taken place.

Mr Speaker, I would like to ask you, probably because most of these ministries work on directives - if there are not directed, nothing will happen *–(Interruption)–* yes, that is a fact. When they are not directed, they do not visit the areas.

My prayer is that let the ministry responsible go out to those bridges because pregnant mothers and other sick people cannot access the district hospital; even the farmers are not able to bring their produce to town. I request the ministry concerned to reach out to the district and help us. Thank you, Mr Speaker, for according me this time.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, is this your first time here? You are very welcome, honourable minister. We thank God for your presence in this House. We know what you went through but you are welcome to deal with this matter.

2.32

**THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT (Gen. Edward Katumba Wamala):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Before I respond to hon. Ojinga, let me take this opportunity to say this. I would like to thank you and the whole House for the spirit you showed me on that difficult day, 1 June 2021. I have never seen that kind of love. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, I thought that if we could love each other like that – and not only in times of bad situations – the world would be a better place to live in. I highly appreciate everyone of you, the messages, the contributions and everything. Thank you very much.

I have heard the cry from hon. Ojinga. I request that in some of these circumstances - some of us have an open-door policy. If such a matter arises, either call me or come to my office so that we can address these issues. Our people must get the services they deserve. Please, let us be ready to talk to each other directly instead of delaying. I do not need to have any other directive from any other person.

If you have any issues – some Members of Parliament have been to my office on some of these issues. I would encourage you to come and tell me the problems. If I can solve them, I will do. If it requires another ministry to partner with, I will do that. I had not got that report but I will follow it up, Mr Speaker*. (Applause)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Honourable minister, again, you are welcome but you should not be disheartened by this. It will be a dual process that the Member will notify you and you take action. It is also of benefit to the Member and the people who are affected to see their representative speak on the issue that is affecting them.

Therefore, we cannot rule that out because it would be difficult for the Member for Pallisa District to do the other processes without letting the House also know that her people are in trouble from natural disaster.

Thank you very much. Can we now go to the Order Paper, please? *(Hon. Robinah Rwakoojo rose\_)* On what matter do you rise, Member for Gomba West?

**MS RWAKOOJO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. on 17 August 2021, the Rt Hon. Speaker referred to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs the return of the Succession (Amendment) Bill, 2018 and the Sexual Offences Bill, 2019 by His Excellency the President for consideration.

The committee commenced the consideration of the said Bills under Rule 143. On 16 September, 2021, the Rt Hon. Speaker guided the House on the businesses that had lapsed with the Tenth Parliament and its implication of the Speaker’s guidance.

Pursuant to Rule 235, the returned Bills ceased henceforth as a result of the guidance rendered by the Rt Hon. Speaker on Thursday 16 September, 2021. The text of his communication is attached here.

In light of the above, the committee awaits the reintroduction of the two Bills to enable it work on them. I beg to report.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. I think the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs says that they do not have any work now. That is all it is saying because what had been sent to them has been overtaken by events. Therefore, the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs wants to be busy; let us get them work to do.

Honourable members, in the distinguished stranger’s gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation from the Parliamentary Forum of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. We also have the following:

1. Hon. Kakooba Onyango - the Secretary General
2. Ms Winnie Kamau – Programme Manager
3. Mr Jules Byabagobo – Human Resource and Procurement Officer

They are here to observe the proceedings but also to meet the leadership of this institution since the Parliament of Uganda is a full member; there are things that they needed to brief the leadership of the House about. Please, join me in welcoming them*. (Applause)*

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE STATUS OF THE QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION SERVICES IN UGANDA

2.38

**THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND** **NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Dr Chris Baryomunsi):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Last week, the Rt Hon. Prime Minister communicated to this House that we shall receive a statement on the status of the quality of telecommunication in the country and I am here to give that information to the House. Thank you, Rt Hon. Speaker, for according us the time on the Order Paper.

I would like to acknowledge the presence of the Executive Director, UCC, Eng. Irene Kaggwa, in the gallery.

This is the statement on the status of the quality of communication services in Uganda. The Uganda Communications Act, 2013, seeks to, among others, promote and safeguard the interests of consumers and operators as regards to the quality of communication services and equipment in Uganda.

Quality of service from the user perspective is defined as a corrective effect of service performances, which determine the degree of satisfaction of the user of the service. This covers factors such as network coverage, whether the subscriber can make a call on the network, mobile internet availability, connection speed and delays in browsing the web and transferring files over the internet.

It is not worthy that the quality of service may differ with time at the same location or at different locations within the same timestamp

across the same network.

The quality of service performance of an operator in a particular location at a particular time is typically impacted by a range of technical factors, including the following:

In-network and out-of-network issues:

1. Infrastructure coverage.
2. Strength of the network signal which is critical for communication between the user's device/phone and base station due to network design.
3. Level of radio emissions from other sources/networks or from within the network which can cause interference to the signal between the phone and the base station.
4. Capacity at the base station to support the desired operations or demand in the respective locality (congestion).
5. Reliability of electricity supply.
6. Quality of end-user devices. For instance, the quality of the phone that one uses determines the quality of service also.

Monitoring the quality of service

The quality of service in Uganda is monitored by the regulator - Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) - through independent tests conducted by the regulator, reports submitted by the operators and feedback from consumers.

In this respect, an annual technical survey was carried out in the period from September 2020 to October 2020, covering 24 towns across the country. The towns considered were Gulu, Mbarara, Mbale, Masindi, Arua, Kabale, Iganga, Hoima, Lira, Ntungamo, Jinja, Fort Portal, Soroti, Masaka, Kamuli, Mityana, Oyam, Mayuge, Kampala, Kotido, Mubende, Tororo, Mukono and Entebbe.

The survey reviewed the quality of service of Africell Uganda Limited (Africell), Airtel Uganda Limited (Airtel), MTN Uganda Limited (MTN), Uganda Telecom Limited (UTL), Smile Communications Uganda Limited (Smile) and Tangerine Uganda Limited (Lyca). A summary of the findings is available in Annex 1 which is attached to this report. This statement has been uploaded on our iPads.

This performance assessment covered Blocked Call Rate (BCR) (equal to or below 2 per cent) and Dropped Call Rate (DCR) (equal to or below 2 per cent) in the case of voice services, while the download throughout in the case of data services.

Notably, the lockdown period, due to the implementation of mitigation measures to curb the COVID-I9 pandemic in Uganda, was also associated with internet-related complaints, especially relating to low connection or data speeds.

Factors Observed to Affect Quality of Service in Uganda

1. Limited Coverage

The communication network infrastructure is available mainly in the urban areas and limited in the rural areas. This implies that there are areas that are scantly or not covered by the operators’ networks. For instance, recently, I was in Ntoroko and the Woman Member of Parliament raised a complaint that in many parts of Ntoroko, they do not pick either MTN or Airtel and most of these telecoms.

Therefore, persons in these areas are not able to access the telecommunications services or if the services are accessible, the quality is compromised due the resultant weak network signal.

Under the new licensing regime, which we put in place as a sector, the licensees have been obliged to ensure that their respective networks extend to and services are available in at least 90 per cent of the respective licensed geographical area within five years of grant of a licence. This means that for you to now acquire a licence, we give you a condition that within five years, you must cover at least 90 per cent of the area but not for you to be licensed to cover a geographical area and then you just serve 10 or 20 per cent.

These are to be complemented by interventions by the Government through mechanisms such as the Uganda Communications Universal Access and Service Fund under the Uganda Communications Commission towards 100 per cent national coverage. In other words, in situations where these operators may not be able to give us sufficient coverage, Government through the Universal Access and Service Fund managed by UCC, we can come to the rescue of that community by maybe raising towers or supporting that community to get network.

1. Signal Interference

Signal degradation caused by interference from other radio communication sources such as illegally installed signal boosters has been observed to be prevalent. These unauthorised boosters amplify the radio signal noise causing signal interference to mobile networks of duly licensed network operators and thus affecting the quality of service.

A public warning against the sale, installation and use of signal boosters without prior authorisation from Uganda Communications Commission was issued. Enforcement against these is also underway in a collaborative exercise.

Mr Speaker, there is a tendency by Ugandans to put investments on ground, for example, radios. Somebody goes, buys equipment, sets up radio infrastructure, even tests it, and then comes to UCC to seek for a licence and then you find that there is a challenge.

The correct procedure is; you first engage with UCC to get a licence and authorisation for you to establish a radio and the same for the other communication facilities. You find that somebody establishes a facility and interferes with the existing infrastructure. This compromises the quality of some of the services that we provide. Therefore, we want to issue that guidance that if you want to invest in these communication services, you are required to first engage with UCC, get necessary approvals - because they are technical, they will guide on how to establish some of these services.

Otherwise, if you start without authorisation and concurrence, then you may cause interference and be responsible for substandard quality because of that unapproved installation.

1. Substandard Devices

Substandard devices do impact the user's quality of service because the manufacturing of these compromises on conformity to some of the relevant standards to minimise cost thus affecting their ability to for example, decipher a fair signal in the presence of noise from other radio sources.

Again, it is important that when you are buying equipment, you get technical advice so that the experts in UCC can help and guide you on what kind of equipment would be suitable for that kind of communication facility that you are establishing. However, most often, you find people just buy equipment - some of which might be substandard - and then you find it affects the quality of the services which we provide.

Type approval of communications equipment and apparatus by the Uganda Communications Commission is required by law prior to importation, sale, installation and use of such in Uganda. This is conducted to ensure conformity of the equipment and devices with the respective industry and National Communication Standards.

This function is being complemented with measures implemented in  
collaboration with other Government agencies to bar the continued importation and use of such devices in Uganda.

Therefore, we advise Ugandans to follow the law. Otherwise, you might put money in equipment and apparatus, which will be declared substandard by UCC when you have already spent money. We need to therefore follow the law and get support from the technical services of UCC before we can import and install most of these communication equipment.

I also would like to comment on refusal to set up masts. Communities are commonly objecting to establishment of masts within their neighbourhoods due to concerns about health and  
safety effects of masts. This is impacting the grant of construction authorisation by the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) to telecom operators to set up the requisite infrastructure in the vicinity of such communities.

However, a base station is required to provide network coverage to people using cell phones in its specific surrounding geographical area. The closer a base station (mounted on a mast) is to the mobile  
phone user, the stronger the signal from the base station and thus, the better the quality of communication.

The NEMA and Uganda Communications Commission are working jointly to sensitise the masses that the masts in Uganda are within the recommended international health levels, and thus do not pose a risk to their health but that they are required to facilitate improvement of network coverage and capacity of networks in their communities.

Mr Speaker, let me make a comment on this. There is fear in the public and people think that if you are near a mast then you are at a risk of contracting illness, including cancer. The technical information is that the radio frequency electromagnetic radiation, which is emitted by these masts, is weak to the extent that it cannot damage the DNA of a living cell because the radiation is non-ionising. In other words, it cannot cause an effect on an atom or molecule by removing an electron; if you remember your basic science.

Therefore, radiation from these masts does not injure a DNA; the smallest genetic unit of a living cell. Studies have been done across and there is no evidence to show that the masts, which we use – Even if we upgrade technology from 2G to 3G, 4G and to 5G, there is no evidence whatsoever that these masts can create a risk of getting cancer or any other illnesses. Therefore, there is no justification for Ugandans to fear. Allow masts to be put *–(Interjection)–* Yes, I am speaking authoritatively on that subject *– (Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, there is fear in the public; people fear the masts but there is no evidence and you can check. There is a lot of documentation in these areas. We would like to advise the public that the Government of Uganda cannot, in any way, allow installation of equipment or any other communication gadgets, which would pose risks to Ugandans. There is fear across the world - You recall when COVID-19 started in China, even in the UK, people started destroying the 5G masts thinking that COVID-19 was due to 5G technology. However, there is no evidence to that effect because we now know how COVID-19 is caused.

However, UCC, NEMA, the Government and Ministry of Health shall continue to sensitise the public not to have fears about the communication masts and towers, which we are mounting to extend this communication service.

Insufficient network capacities, especially in busy locations in the towns and during the lockdown, residential areas that experienced unusual influx of a large number of people or usage outside of the  
forecasts - All these contributed to network capacity and insufficiency in the communications area. This constrains the available network resources resulting in experiences such as blocked call attempts, dropped  
calls and low speeds in the case of data.

Due to the difficulty in obtaining timely authorisation to establish additional masts, the market players resorted to availing alternative internet connection technologies such as fibre to the premises to offload some of the traffic and alleviate congestion challenges thus delivering better quality services to the  
consumers.

I would also like to add that the Ministry of Information, Communication Technology and National Guidance is working out interventions and we shall soon come to the House for support to address the question of connectivity so that we cover the whole country by laying the national backbone infrastructure to cover the rest of the country, which is not yet covered. This intervention will also address what we call last mile connections so that all districts, health facilities, schools and Government infrastructure can be connected to these internet services.

This has become more urgent in the wake of COVID-19 where we have been announcing lockdowns and children are at home and people resort to e-trading. Therefore, we need broadband connectivity in the outer parts of this country.

Mr Speaker, the other factors are that objects in the environment such trees, hills and buildings can  
have an effect on the coverage area because they block the signal between the base station and the phone. Those of us who come from mountainous areas, we know that depending on whether you are on the other side of the mast or in the shadow area, there is interference with access to this network and communication services.

In addition, spectrum is a finite resource and thus is a limited natural resource required by all forms of wireless communication. This is very important because many of us run to UCC to request for frequencies. You know there have been limitations in terms of giving frequencies for radios. The reason is that spectrum is a finite resource, which has to be shared. For instance, if your area is already covered by radios, there may not be space for additional radio to be licensed because this spectrum is not infinite and Ugandans need to appreciate that science.

The frequencies of the radio spectrum themselves do have different propagation  
characteristics with lower frequencies able to travel further and penetrate windows and walls, while higher frequencies increase capacity and are more commonly used to offer high speed services.

In Uganda, majority of communication subscribers are still using basic phones that operate on the less spectral efficient 2G technology, which is largely carried on the lower frequencies. This impacts the optimisation of the frequencies for the provision of the more spectral efficient 3G and 4G technologies accessible only with smart phones. We have been upgrading the technologies; I think we are now at 4G. I know there are applications for us to consider upgrading to 5G and this definitely will improve our capacity to communicate well but it also requires that we upgrade the devices - the type of phones, for instance, which we use - if we are to communicate by voice.

As a result, there is poor indoor coverage in premises such as arcades, storied buildings and some building basements, due to failure of the radio signal to penetrate concrete walls of these buildings, hence affecting the quality of service and customer experience within these facilities.

Additionally, when new buildings are erected, these block mobile signal propagation and affect penetration of the signal. That is why the physical planners need to work with UCC so that, as buildings are planned, the issue of communication is also accommodated.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, in line with the Digital Transformation Programme of the NDP III and the objectives of the National Broadband policy of 2019, the ICT sector has prioritised inclusive access to quality communication services required for us, as a country, to benefit from the developments and opportunities that ICTs present to the development of our country and citizenry.

We are, thus, focused on improving coverage and addressing the other bottlenecks affecting the quality of services while holding the operators accountable, in line with the provisions of the recently adopted Uganda Communications (Quality of Service) Regulations.

Let me say that one of the issues in the country is the cost of internet. We have been bringing down the cost of internet. In the last few years, it has dropped from $1,200 per megabyte per second to $70.

We have already instructed the National Information Technology Authority of Uganda to work around the clock and address factors responsible for the high cost and in the immediate term, bring the cost to $30 and eventually, to $10 per megabyte per second, which is the international benchmark. So, in the next few months, it should be able to drop from $70 to $30 and we are working on the issue.

We call upon all Members of the 11th Parliament to support the sector of Information and Communications Technology in the realisation of this quest, especially the fight against misinformation that is hindering the spread of infrastructure and in facilitating the ownership by our populace of internet-enabled devices, rather than using the old technology of 2G.

Let me also add, as I conclude my statement, that one of the challenges we have in our times is the expansion of the media space, which has included social media - which social media we should be using for positive communication but there is a lot of abuse of the social media space. We shall be coming up with relevant legislations to regulate social media so that we can use all these platforms for positive communication and socio-economic transformation.

I thank you very much, Mr Speaker and honourable members, for listening to our information paper. Thank you very much.

**MR EKANYA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I have known you as a person who meets standards and quality. I have checked, on the Encyclopedia, the purpose and objective of a statement by a minister in the Commonwealth.

I find the statement by hon. Chris Baryomunsi, the Minister of ICT and National Guidance, not meeting any of these required standards. The minister seems to be supporting the service provider against the interest of the consumers of Uganda.

I am, therefore, seeking for your guidance, that, isn’t it proper for the minister to be sent back – *(Laughter)*– so that he prepares a comprehensive statement, attach the licence requirements and show to what extent all these companies have fulfilled the requirements of terms and conditions of the licence since they were set up here - for example, MTN, Airtel and all these companies - instead of blaming consumers.

It is the same ministry, which is supposed to regulate all importers of equipment in this country, using other Government institutions like UNBS and others.

I find this statement not meeting the quality and character of Dr Chris Baryomunsi, whom I have known over time. I, therefore, seek for your indulgence that the minister be sent back to prepare a comprehensive statement.

The cost of recovery – Mr Speaker, Ugandans are losing money every time they make calls –

**THE SPEAKER:** The point of procedure?

**MR EKANYA:** Therefore, I am seeking, through you, Mr Speaker, that isn’t it procedurally proper for the minister to be sent back and to present a comprehensive statement next time?

**THE SPEAKER:** *(Member rose\_)*Can I guide on this, honourable member? I see you standing up already. Honourable members, I have not seen the honourable member for Tororo County North for a while and instead of waiting for me to open the debate so that he debates, he decided to debate through procedure.

Honourable member, that is a matter of opinion as to whether the minister’s statement does not meet standards. I cannot be engaged in that debate. I will take that as a debate to inform the minister so that he can respond appropriately when he stands up to respond.

Honourable members, rule 52 allows us to debate this matter and debate starts now. However, going by the numbers again and in view of the fact that we have Prime Minister’s Question Time, I will start from Rushenyi – three minutes.

3.07

**MS NAOME KABASHARIRA (Independent, Rushenyi County, Ntungamo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the Minister of ICT and National Guidance for giving us some highlights, although he did not exhaust, as my colleague had indicated. Nevertheless, we thank him for bringing us this statement.

Mr Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic came when all of us were not aware and did not know what to do with many of these things. I thought that this is the time to learn that COVID-19 is likely to stay and maybe think of how our people in rural areas shall continue to study - those in primary and secondary schools and even university level.

Some universities have been trying to go online but it is still difficult because deep in the villages, students cannot access the internet just because of the network. It is good that he mentioned the network, Mr Speaker.

When I am in my constituency, I cannot access it because some of us stay in areas where there are hills and mountains. When I talk about this, he knows. In Kanungu, the terrain is the same as in Rushenyi. You cannot talk to people.

In this era, you are in a certain area in Uganda but you are cut off completely. We have been trying to check. We use our own means to go to these service providers. Of course, they are looking at making money.

Hon. Chris Baryomunsi, can you help us so that this network can be accessed? You talked about the radio signal interferences but the people who are setting up those radios are doing it because of what happens. You need to check what is happening in your docket.

The money that people ask for licensing a frequency is just too much to be managed. You also said that some frequencies cannot be given but I would like to tell you that some people are hoarding. Ugandans know how to make deals; they are hoarding licenses and frequencies.

When you pay some money –*(Member timed out.*)

3.10

**MR CUTHBERT ABIGABA (NRM, Kibale County, Kamwenge):** Thank you, Mr Speaker for the opportunity. I am happy to speak on this subject because it is an area where I can speak with authority.

Before I became a politician, I worked in telecommunication for about 10 years of my professional experience. Therefore, this is an area I appreciate very well. I would like to thank the minister for the statement. However, I have a few observations. Some of these things may be invisible but very significant.

Telecommunications have changed their modes of operation. They have now taken a decision to outsource their network maintenance services. The effect of this is a lot of externalisation of labour. Right now, we have networks in Uganda but no one knows where they are being maintained from. For the purposes of Uganda, I am very much aware that our networks are being managed from China.

Mr Speaker, some of the qualities of the services we are talking about are very bad because the people who are supposed to respond to network failures are in a different time zone. There could be a network shutdown in Uganda but the person who is supposed to maintain this, is sleeping in China because of the different time zones.

This also comes with a lot of security. Sometime back, we witnessed a situation where phone numbers of “big people” were being hacked and they were sending us messages. You can imagine receiving a message from the Rt Hon. Speaker’s phone, requesting a Member for support. This is happening because someone who is maintaining this network has the capacity to make any configuration in this network and because he or she is doing it outside the country, it is not easy to track it. Therefore, it is a big risk to have our networks externalised. Countries like Rwanda and Tanzania have totally rejected this model yet in Uganda, we have maintained it.

The other issue I want to talk about is the broadband policy, which the minister has briefly talked about. This policy came up in 2018 and it was providing for simple things, which would help us to solve problems that people are raising about network coverage. It was providing for things like number portability, in-country roaming –*(Member timed out.*)

**THE SPEAKER:** Do I give the honourable member more time?

**HON. MEMBERS**: Yes.

**MR ABIGABA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker and Members for pleading for me.

When we talk of the number portability and in-country roaming – Honourable members, you will remember that if you travel from here to any other parts of the world, you can still make a call back home using your very own number. However, in Uganda, it is not possible. If I moved to Karamoja and I have an Airtel line, when there is no Airtel network - there could be an MTN network but I will not be able to use it, even when I am within Uganda.

Therefore, this broadband policy was providing for such gaps but the minister has remained silent about these issues. We do not know what you are planning, honourable minister.

Lastly, about the quality of services; the network has Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that you have rightly put in your graphs. However, we have seen that some operators do not fulfil the international requirement and satisfaction criteria in the graphs you have shown.

In Uganda, we have never heard UCC - our regulator - come out to penalise these network operators. It is we, the consumers, who bear the cost. There are very many dropped and silent calls but whenever they happen, it is the user that bears the cost. The network operators are just shielded. Therefore, we would like to request UCC to come out and penalise these operators so that they recognise that we, the consumers, have a stake in this business. I thank you, Mr Speaker. *(Applause)*

3.15

**MR NOAH MUTEBI (NRM, Nakasongola County, Nakasongola)**: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to discuss the status of communication in Uganda. I also thank the Minister of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance, hon. Baryomunsi, for giving us information as far as communication is concerned in this country.

I would like to say a word about frequencies. I want to inform this House that there are radios in Uganda which share frequencies. Let me give an example. The Government of Uganda owns UBC radios in this country. When you go to Nakasongola, Fort portal and some other areas, they have those radios.

We have UBC Buruli FM in Nakasongola that shares a frequency with Salt FM and this has resulted in interference in the frequency. The people in Nakasongola wish to listen to information in the language they understand better but when they switch on, they go to Salt Fm. There is competition. Honourable minister, I would like to urge that, that problem is solved so that we do not have interference.

There is also another issue; UBC Buruli FM, in Nakasongola and Uganda Telecom Limited (UTL), are Government entities. Some two weeks back, UTL disconnected UBC Buruli FM for two weeks. The ICT minister, hon. Baryomunsi, can bear witness.

I called the manager of UBC main branch to come and help the people of Nakasongola and reconnect the radio. Mr Speaker, he was not bothered until I wrote a letter to the minister for ICT. I would like to thank hon. Baryomunsi for being pro-people. This is why the President is giving us good ministers who are now handling our issues very well. I thank you.

When I wrote the letter and went to him, we discussed and within a minute, the radio was connected back on air. However, there is a problem. These Government owned radios, in some areas, are in rented premises. In Nakasongola, that radio is in someone’s house and one day, we shall be forced out of the house. What will happen? It will be a shame to the Government that a Government radio has been forced out of a building.

I would like to urge the Government that as we put Government facilities such as radios that we are talking about, we should construct something to house them, like you have done in some areas.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, as my sister, hon. Kabasharira - *Member timed out.*)

**THE SPEAKER:** If we are to continue along those lines, Members will be limited. Can I have the honourable member?

3.19

**MR NABOTH NAMANYA (FDC, Rubabo County, Rukungiri):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable minister, I thank you very much.

However, we have had an issue with Facebook closure yet in your report, you have not properly articulated its fate. It is of late that the people have tried to maneuver on Facebook. In that regard, people have both evaded tax; you did not articulate that point.

Similarly, we are in a period where we are being encouraged to attend parliamentary sessions on Zoom. We have also encouraged students to study online but I wonder how somebody procures data and within a minute, they tell them that it has expired. I do not understand that. What is the shelf life of internet, because within no minute you are told it has expired? Honourable minister, we need clarification on that.

Likewise, one may buy minutes on the phone but the following day when they wake up to make a phone call, you will notice that they cannot communicate. Some of us come from Kigezi, which is mountainous and we have faced problems. In Kigezi subregion, many of us do not follow what is happening in Parliament and Uganda. It is like we are in a different country where we cannot be connected to the rest of Uganda. Honourable minister, we need your clarification on that too.

There are mountainous areas, whether you believe it or not –*(Interjections)*– I come from Rukungiri. Once you are on one side of the hill, you cannot tell what is happening elsewhere. Honourable minister, please clarify on that as well. When you get the microphone, tell Ugandans, especially the people of Kigezi, how they will equally benefit from the communication services in Uganda. I thank you very much.

3.21

**MR ABDHULU BYAKATONDA (Independent, Workers Representative):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for according me this opportunity. I also thank the honourable minister for the presentation.

Honourable minister, I think we need to do some more work regarding the content on the radios because it is not educative at all. We need to do something about the charges and a lot other things. I would advise that we examine these media houses’ services. For example, what is the best standard of a media house? What are the regulators doing?

I think the challenge is on the continent. One time I read that one head of state had to fly in a chopper to a neighbouring country in order to communicate on the internet. I think this is a key driver for development, honourable minister. There is e-marketing and all those things that require internet.

Actually during lockdown, school children in villages cannot use internet. My research shows that at least only five per cent are accessing the internet yet we are supposed to look at the human development index where service delivery, using this internet and media houses, can play a key role.

I think we should design a questionnaire to help us gather information for us to come out with the best approach. I thank you.

3.23

**MR SHEDRICK OBONG (Independent, Lira West Division, Lira City):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to make a contribution on the presentation made by the minister.

I stand to bring on board the concerns that I got from my voters on how they are being treated by some of these communication companies. I have been getting such reports for a very long time and I have been monitoring the situation, until 15 September, 2021, when I became a victim too. After, I realised that these complaints were genuine.

Mr Speaker, on 15 September 2021, I had a mobile money balance of Shs 100,904. I wanted to make a contribution to a burial in my constituency. Because this wasn’t enough, I had to deposit more money on the account. However, when I sent Shs 110,000, instead of getting the balance that I expected, I realised that the money that had been deducted was more than what I sent. I had to calculate for myself. Later, I realised that Shs 15,550 more had been deducted without being accounted for on my mobile money account.

The matter may sound very minor but I would like us to imagine this: how many subscribers do we have in Uganda? If they are picking such money from these subscribers and are not accounting for it, at the end of the day, don’t you think these telephone companies would be taking free money from our voters?

I would like to put the minister on notice on this because we need to make a follow-up on this matter for us to find out how we are being treated.

Secondly, most times, when these telephone companies are billing, they do it on a minute-by-minute basis. However, imagine a situation where somebody who has struggled to get some money like Shs 500,000 or Shs 1,000 and has bought some minutes but each time they talk for just 30 seconds, a minute is deducted. This is a big concern *–(Member timed out.)*

3.26

**MR RICHARD SEBAMALA (DP, Bukoto County Central, Masaka):** Thank you, Mr Speaker and the Minister of ICT, for the statement. I would like to re-echo the colleague’s issue on frequency hoarding.

Honourable minister, there are people that got these frequencies but are not using them. When you go to UCC to get a frequency on a particular wavelength, UCC provides it. However, those people that get them are not using them and are not ready to surrender them, unless you pay them a lot of money.

Secondly is on the mobile phone feedback. Our voters have these small phones; sometimes, they call them “*ka torchi*.” As they call us, we get very rude feedback. All these phones are supposed to be imported after being checked by your people. However, I wonder whether you are regulating the phone gadgets coming into the country.

Three, internet is a right in many countries. It is only in Uganda where internet is being charged. With a right to information, there are very many countries that have decided that internet be a right to help people access information anytime. I would like you to clarify how far you have gone with the provision of free internet.

I would like to re-echo feedback and similar content on radios and TVs like DSTV and the rest. There are stations bringing in the same content yet they are charging Ugandans for it.

If you do not buy a computer in the ICT centres in Kyanamukaka, then nobody will learn computer. So, it is important that we create ICT centres in such places as subcounties so that people – I grew up in the early 2000s and that time we used to go to internet cafes. Government can create an internet café at the sub-county level to help people access internet.

In terms of compensation, these telecom companies leased land to erect their masts but when this time elapses and they come back, they either pay less or they delay to pay the landowners and then we have feedback on that.

The other is what my colleague echoed about taking off money unknowingly. Then we are hearing that there is another thing coming up where *–(Member timed out.)*

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

3.29

**MR PETER OKEYOH (NRM, Bukooli Island County, Namayingo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement. However, honourable minister, we have a problem in Bukooli Island. The Government of Uganda installed URA service centres on Hama Island and Sigulu Islands where taxpayers go, are assessed and they pay. However, there is always no network and because of this, a taxpayer who has been assessed to pay Shs 50,000 is told to go to the nearest URA point, which is in Busia and spends extra Shs 30,000 to pay the Shs 50,000.

When you come to Hama Islands - schools are closed and so we have to study using radios and televisions but all our pupils have not got this chance because they cannot access radios, UBC and even internet. What plans do you have as a ministry to extend network masts to these islands?

Most of us have now resorted to Safaricom, which is from the neighboring country. This poses a security risk because sometimes, when our people go the lake, with their phone, in case there is a robbery, they cannot communicate to the security personnel either the Marine Police or UPDF marine. What plans do you have for the islands?

In addition, it cuts across all the islands in Lake Victoria. When you go to Vumba Islands in Bunya South, it is the same with Lolwe Island and Lyabana in Buvuma; there is a problem of network. How are you going to help these Ugandans access network? Thank you.

3.32

**MS FLAVIA KABAHENDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kyegegwa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank Dr Baryomunsi for the elaborate presentation. However, at this juncture, I would like to inform the Minister for ICT that Kyegegwa District is the first and most probably the only district that runs a radio in the whole country- Kyegegwa Community Radio.

We got a license and this radio has operated for the last nine years but UCC has failed to renew our license, giving us very tough requirements including that all the workers on that radio must have registered with the Media Council and all that and qualification when actually we are trying to provide employment.

In addition, that being a radio that is run by the district, UCC would be assisting us the very same way they assist the other Government radios.

Mr Speaker, we would like to request the minister to tell the technical people to renew our license. Secondly, to widen our network and area coverage to assist us to meet the required standard so that the district continues to serve the people.

Mr Speaker, in Kyegegwa, we are told to use the radios in Kabarole and Fort Portal for the learning of children and students, which radios do not even reach Kyegegwa District.

Therefore, with community radio, which is not actually for profit, we have decided to do our own tailored learning so that our children can continue to learn. We would want to be supported with the support that Government renders to the Government radios for efficient operations and for our children to learn.

In addition, we are a community radio that runs not for profit but for the very little levies that we make, for maintaining this radio so that we do not constrain the district budget, which is inadequate.

Mr Speaker, we request for capacity building for the workers on this radio and we invite the minister with his technical staff to come to Kyegegwa and see how Kyegegwa people are generous, to the extent of even donating a radio to the Government. Thank you.

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

3.35

**MS SANTA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for giving this statement but I have some areas of clarification. Honourable minister, you have told us about the technical survey done in the period of September 2020 to October 2020 covering major towns but not all towns.

I would like to know from you; when will you reach the rural areas, which you have also acknowledged that they are not covered and have very weak network?

Mr Speaker, there are very many areas, for example, in my district. I have written very many times to UCC to come and help my people to get connectivity but up to now, we have not got any assistance. Even when the minister promised on the Floor of this Parliament, we have not seen UCC coming to give us the network that we need.

Secondly, you made mention that you are soon coming before Parliament. I thought you should have come even yesterday because in this era of COVID, we have many students in rural areas who cannot access network connectivity. When are you coming before Parliament?

Mr Speaker, I thought this statement by the minister is lacking. I do not know whether it will not be good for the committee also to look into this. There are many issues, for example, the security of I.T. Are you training security experts to handle the issues of hacking or what foreign service providers are handling?

Finally, I also what to know from the minister the issue of cyber crime, which is very rampant. What are you doing about that? Thank you.

3.38

**MR GILBERT OLANYA (FDC, Kilak South County, Amuru):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the honourable minister for the statement. I would like to seek clarification from you about what you were explaining about the distance of human settlement to the mast.

When they were installing masts in my area, the community was advised never to settle near the mast for about 500 metres especially people in grass-thatched houses. I did not get you clearly when you were explaining the impact of masts near human settlements.

Secondly, honourable minister, you introduced free-to-air decoders for television sets. Free-to-air decoders remain only within Kampala.

I remember the other minister explained that the Government is in the process of extending to other parts of the country – the northern, eastern and other parts of Uganda. However, to date, it is only people in Kampala enjoying free-to-air television. It means they are watching television free of charge while those in northern and eastern Uganda are paying for television subscription. You must pay for DSTV, Star Times, Zuku and GOtv, among others.

Honourable minister, you need to tell us; what is the Government’s plan of extending free-to-air services to other parts of the country?

As my colleague alluded, honourable minister, right now for Members to access *Facebook*, you must go through VPN. Without that, you will never access *Facebook*. You need to explain why it is so.

Finally, about the control of network at the border point, for some of us who come from the border points, the moment you are at the border, your network changes automatically to the network of the other country and we have no control completely. People living at the border points find difficulties in communication. I do not know how the Government is controlling our network within our territory.

There are many areas in Uganda without network coverage. For example, when I am in Amuru, I am totally locked in other places because we have no network communication *– (Member timed out.)*

3.41

**MR PATRICK OCAN (UPC, Apac Municipality, Apac):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I appreciate the minister for the statement on the status of quality of communication services in Uganda. My concern is in respect to Africell Uganda. Currently, Africell is one of the preferred service providers for internet used by many companies and individuals in Uganda.

However, recently, there are statements from the directors informing clients to switch to alternative service providers because they are going to close effective 7 October this year.

We are aware that Africell took over from Orange Uganda. In 2019, having recorded a debt portfolio of about Shs 250 billion and a net loss of Shs 1.5 trillion after acquiring the stakes, they are closing because most of the burden was inherited from Orange Uganda. However, being the most preferred service provider, I would like to know from the minister if there was any attempt by the Government to save this company from closing.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, the communication sector is a very critical sector in the economy. I expected not only the technical briefs in this statement but the impacts on socio-economic status; the status of the sector on socio-economic impacts. I expected to see a reflection of how the sector contributes to employment in Uganda, how they contribute to GDP and other aspects. Thank you.

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

3.43

**MR APOLLO YERI (NRM, Tororo Municipality, Tororo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I come from Tororo and I think a Member has already alluded to this fact; that when you are in Tororo, it is as if you are in Kenya. The radio waves are interfered with and I do not know how we shall overcome that.

Coming to the issue of mobile phones, one gets a different code, which is not a Ugandan code and definitely, you are not going to receive or send any information correctly. It is alarming and I do not know how UCC will solve this challenge, which is a very serious issue within the border points. Thank you.

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

3.44

**MS CAROLINE KAMUSIIME (NRM, Woman Representative, Rukiga):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. Allow me to thank the minister for the statement. We have a problem, especially those near the border. Rukiga District neighbours Rwanda and we have been having this problem for a long time. I have one subcounty in Rukiga and that is Kamwezi Subcounty. The moment you step in Kamwezi, they charge you Shs 2,200 to make a call and this has been ongoing. I have been writing letters concerning this.

Now that the minister is here, I want you to see how you can help border districts, especially Kamwezi Subcounty in Rukiga where you cannot make a call. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

3.45

**MR AMOS OKOT (NRM, Agago North County, Agago):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the report because he has given us an opportunity to talk about the plight we are facing regarding communication. Information is a necessity and you cannot reach anywhere unless you get media where you can communicate what you want.

Honourable minister, you spoke widely about the network coverage. In my area, we have insecurity and due to that, it is only through communication that we can coordinate with security people and other people who can rescue us. Places like Lapono, Omiya Pacwa, Paimol, Parabong Tek and Atut – You have to write those places because you said you did a survey but you never reached those areas.

I am trying to bring this to your attention because this is a constitutional right and it is only you who can help us to solve this problem.

Secondly, the Government is saying ICT is one of the sectors they are focusing very much on but to enhance skills and knowledge to that effect, our students have to learn a lot regarding those issues. I would like to find out from you; who is in charge of putting computers in schools? Is it your department or it goes to the Ministry of Education and Sports? Some few days ago, I was interacting with hon. Muyingo and he referred me to UCC. Maybe you have to help because in my area, many schools are lacking such things.

Another point is about the cost of airtime. These days, many people have resorted to buying new SIM cards because when you are using your old SIM card, the way MTN charges you is higher than those with new SIM cards. This is to the extent that people are buying new SIM cards so that the cost can be a little bit lower. Maybe you need to find out the nitty-gritty of those issues. In a way, it is like people are paying a lot of money and I have also experienced it.

At first, I would buy a bundle at Shs 30,000. Shortly, they increased it to Shs 35,000 and later, they went to Shs 50,000, and it reached an extent that even the bundles that you buy do not last longer *– (Member timed out.)*

3.48

**MR POLYCARP OGWARI (Independent, Agule County, Pallisa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable minister, I actually support my colleague, hon. Geoffrey Ekanya, that if it was allowed, you would go for more research for the right information.

Honourable minister, when you look at this, the network itself – If I can give you an example, you can be in Pallisa town but you cannot access communication in some places – no network. My county of Agule is divided into three. There is a sub-county called Chelekura. You can never get network of both Airtel and MTN, unless otherwise. You have to drive a distance nearer to the town.

The next issue that I would love to tell the honourable minister is that UBC is a radio for the Government but we are getting worried with the way it is operating. When I go to Pallisa, I always use a phone but they say, “We first have to switch off the side of Pallisa so that you in Agule will be heard properly.”

My question is, we used to have our machines in Butebo and the Government picked them. Where did they take them? When the machines were in Butebo, we could have enough and clear communication. However, as we speak right now, it is a problem on UBC.

So, honourable minister, do for us research and find out where our machines, which the Government got from Butebo are. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Honourable members, unfortunately, the time is up. It is one hour and now I have to call the shadow minister of the sector and then I ask the minister to respond, so that we go to Prime Minister’s Time.

If there is no shadow minister, I go to the minister *–(Mr Nambeshe rose\_)* – No, he is not the shadow minister, is he?

3.51

**THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr John Baptist Nambeshe):** I am ably representing the shadow minister. *(Laughter)* Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I thank the minister for the statement. However, I will commence with a propping question to him because in his statement, he has clearly stated that he attributes the signal interference to illegally constructed or installed boosters.

I want to believe him but I want to ask a fundamental question. In border districts such as Bududa and the one that was mentioned as the island, we have Safaricom on roaming, which even breaks those obstacles you have mentioned in your statement.

You said that there are objects in the environment such as hills - and of course a terrain like that of Bududa, which is mountainous, you find that we hardly have network. We cannot access telecom networks such as that of Africell and even MTN. However, Safaricom roams around and is easily accessible by all.

So, we wonder what technology they are using that we are lacking. Are we in the other old technology of 2G that you mentioned in your statement? *(Laughter)* Safaricom roams in geographical coverage areas which are far beyond what is supposed to be.

UCC should have done us a favour as a constitutional body because you conducted a benchmark measurement on the telecom operators. You know the best and the worst. You should have named the best and the worst. If Africell, for instance, was the worst performer because of lacking accessibility in places such as Mbale or Bududa, it should be named.

Also, the newly adopted regulations are very good. In the provisions, you can slap these telecom companies with fines. I do not know whether you are enforcing compliance by ensuring these regulations penalise so that you regulate and ensure that there is quality of service to the consumer or user.

Lastly, it is about the masts. Mr Speaker, there are theories – I do not know whether they are conspiracy theories and they are numerous – that in some settlements where these masts are, women normally experience miscarriages or stillbirths. So, as a ministry, you should interest yourself.

By the way, the ministry should have even done some benchmarking because why is it that if you go to countries such as Kenya, those masts are constructed far away from settlements? They are far, not within the proximity of settlements. That could be the reason because science is not investigated to the dot. Investigations are still on.

These theories, which we receive, ought to be put to rest with further investigations. So, we could give some of the theories a benefit of doubt and ensure that these masts are constructed far away from where the people have settled. Otherwise, I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, briefly please. Group the issues.

**DR CHRIS BARYOMUNSI:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I appreciate all the comments that have been raised. I may not respond to each and every issue, but we have taken note of the concerns.

Let me clarify that the Rt Hon. Prime Minister, while announcing the legislative agenda of the current week, said we shall bring a statement on the quality of telecommunication services. So, I was required to write a statement in that regard.

Otherwise, I have capacity to write a comprehensive statement which covers everything. Therefore, in light of that, I prepared this statement to generate debate from the Members, so that we pick the issues as a ministry –*(Laughter)*– and act on them.

So, hon. Ekanya, that was the context in which this statement was brought. As a ministry, we can always bring additional statements, covering a broad range of issues because there are many issues, definitely, which are not captured in this statement. However, we appreciate the concerns and comments and we have taken note of all these issues. Our desire, as a ministry, is to ensure that we serve all Ugandans and that all your constituencies and communities are served.

Hon. Kabasharira raised an issue. I said that we shall soon come to Parliament. We are working out a project to expand connectivity. We have been laying the national backbone infrastructure and we have done four phases.

They have been previously approved by this House; phase one, phase two, phase three and phase four and we are now preparing for phase five, where we shall do the last extensions and last mile extensions, which will address most of the concerns raised by the honourable members.

As a ministry we shall work with you and maybe prepare a form and request each Member to tell us the challenges in terms of network so that as we design this, we make sure that where there are gaps, we capture them.

There are provisions in this project to support additional masts and towers in the different parts of the country so that we improve network and connectivity. So, when we come with those proposals, I am sure we shall have an opportunity to, again, engage and ensure that we serve you in your constituencies.

The hacking of phones and all these technical issues you have raised, we have adequate technical capacity in UCC and most of these issues have been dealt with. There was a tendency to swap sim cards and do all these hacking but I have been assured by the technocrats in UCC that this has been greatly reduced and it is no longer a big a problem as it was, in the recent past.

The other issue that was raised is to do with in-country roaming and communities at border points picking networks from the neighbouring countries. The operators have again been required to sign agreements to ensure that one is able to pick the network within the country and cut-off the external network. This is a recent innovation by UCC.

Going forward, we should be able to see improvement in that. It is true that when you reach Katuna, on the Uganda-Rwanda border, you will pick a network from Rwanda. Even in Kanungu, there are points, when you reach, you pick the DRC network. The UCC is working on this to ensure that the operators technically control the network so that one is able to pick Ugandan network even when they are at the border points.

Hon. Noah Mutebi, we apologise that UTL, which is a Government company, could actually switch off UBC radio, another Government entity. There has been poor coordination among the agencies but as a new team in the ministry, we are going to coordinate the agencies. Otherwise, that should not have happened.

When the honourable Member of Parliament raised the matter to me, we had to reconnect UBC Buruli FM. We, therefore, undertake to ensure that there is better coordination among the Government agencies. Even if one owes the other money, we can internally sort it out without distracting service delivery.

On the issue of UBC Buruli FM and Salt FM sharing a frequency, the honourable member had brought it to my attention and I have already directed UCC to sort it out. Even in my area, there is a radio in Kanungu, which shares a frequency with a radio station in Rubirizi. The radio stations end up picking the same frequency but this again has been sorted. Therefore, technically the issue can be sorted and it will be handled so that there is no interference from one radio to another.

Yes, UBC Buruli FM is in a rented building but we have provided additional resources to UBC and I know there are other forms of equipment, which the honourable member had raised to upgrade the radio through UBC. These are going to be addressed because we need better communication facilities.

Regarding Facebook, UCC regulates all communication operators and the law, which was passed by Parliament, provides the basic and minimum conditions. Facebook, as a private operator, breached some of these conditions and discussions are ongoing between UCC representing the Government of Uganda and Facebook to harmonise and understand each other to ensure that the law and the guidelines, which we have passed by the country are followed.

Whether it is television, radio, online communication or social media, you must fit into the communications law, which was passed by this Parliament. However, discussions are ongoing between UCC and Facebook. Sooner than later, the discussion will conclude and we return to the original position.

Those using Virtual Private Network (VPN) are doing it irregularly. I can assure you that even when you use VPN, you are not avoiding taxes. The problem is that people lack knowledge about information technology. You may think it is free but taxes are still covered under VPN.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, it is Prime Minister’s Time.

**DR BARYOMUNSI:** Finally, Mr Speaker, I will write responses and share them with Members in the House because we have captured all the questions. In the interest of time, we shall put down written responses and share them with Members. We are always available to address these concerns.

Mr Speaker, once again, thank you very much and I thank Members for raising these comments, which will help us as ministry, to improve delivery of services. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Clerk, can we go to item 3(2)?

STATEMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT BUSINESS OF THE SUCCEEDING WEEK, 28TH- 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021

4.04

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Mr Speaker, allow me to give a statement under rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure that requires me, as the Leader of the Government Business to make a statement in the House regarding the business of the Government of the succeeding week. I am, therefore, submitting the following business for the succeeding week, that is, 28th to 30th September 2021.

1. Statement on the status of Kampala Infrastructure and Institutional Development Project.
2. Resurfacing of the old taxi park in Kampala.
3. Improvement of traffic control in Kampala City.
4. Statement on the status of security in the country.

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Rt Hon. Prime Minister. Honourable members, as we go to the next important item, which is the Prime Minister’s Time, there are improvements that we need to make. These questions are now by raffle and no one gets to hear them before they are asked. No one even gets to see them before they are presented.

Some of the questions cover two pages; one question covers two pages. Clerk, you need to improve on this. Once questions are submitted to you, please, redraft them so that they are real parliamentary questions that the Rt Hon. Prime Minister has to read.

We cannot tell the Prime Minister not to read a question because we do not know the question. You cannot give us an answer to a question we do not know. Yet, the questions cover pages; one question covers two pages and the Prime Minister’s response also covers another two pages; one question ends up on four pages.

We need to improve on this so that we use the Prime Minister’s Time more effectively instead of - This brings me to the issue of an urgent need to look at the rules again to see how we can make this more functional.

The same applies to rule 155. I have just received notification from the Chairperson of the Committee on National Economy that since the rules were amended, they now have issues. Over the time, we have only had it with the - all borrowings were sent to the Committee on National Economy and now, the committee is supposed to work together with the committee responsible for the particular sector. They are having some difficulties with that.

It has worked all these years without the sectoral committees. The introduction is now causing challenges. I do not know but like I said before, we may need to set up a team to look at these rules again to make them more functional and fit for purposes though that will be for another day. Please, let us deal with the Prime Minister’s Time. Otherwise, you can already see that there is a challenge.

**MR KATUSABE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. My procedural issue is in regard to the communication from the Prime Minister. Madam Prime Minister, you are fully aware that in October, we might experience pounding rains across the country; October is just one week ahead.

Wouldn’t it be procedurally right for the Prime Minister to put into consideration the level and scale of preparedness of this country? This is not restricted to Kasese; it is across the entire country. This is in order for our citizens not to be sucked into the horror or pain of floods, destruction of property and crops and plantations all over.

Mr Speaker, that is my procedural issue.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, although the procedural matter sounded like a question to the Prime Minister. I do not know how to deal with that because it is already a question to the Prime Minister. Can we deal with this during the Prime Minister’s Time?

PRIME MINISTER’S TIME

4.10

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms** **Robinah Nabbanja):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We shall improve.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, it is not just about you; it is about the Members who ask the question.

**MS NABBANJA:** That is why I have said we shall all improve. Mr Speaker, hon. Lucy Akello, Woman Member of Parliament for Amuru asked a question but it has a big preamble. I think that is where the Speaker has an issue. I will try to fit it in 30 minutes because that is what I am remaining with.

The National School Health Policy, which has gathered dust for the last 19 years is now mature enough. The policy lacks the regulatory impact assessment and certificate of financial  
implication, which are key requirements before it is presented for approval.

The consequences of this lack of policy among young people will be malnutrition issues, alcohol and substance abuse, teenage pregnancies and child marriages, etc, which all hinder the young people from realising their full potential and definitely impact negatively on the country’s aspiration to attain the middle-income status.

The question to me was: “Rt Hon. Prime Minister, when will the National School Health Policy be brought to Parliament for consideration?”

My response is: the Government recognises school health as a strategic opportunity for schools to optimise education achievement by preparing and nurturing children and youth into healthy and productive adults.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education and Sports embarked on the process and the draft regulatory impact assessment report and a draft National School Health Policy were developed. The above were subjected to extensive consultations with a cross-section of various stakeholders, both within and outside the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Sports has reviewed its consultations using appropriate methods in the new normal, including virtual meetings.

After consultations, the technical team will prepare a plan to determine the cost requirements for the National School Health Policy. The plan will also help in securing a certificate of financial implication from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

In view of the above, the draft National School Health Policy will be submitted to Cabinet for approval before 30 June 2022 and thereafter to Parliament.

The second question came from hon. Kahunde, Woman Member of Parliament, Kiryandongo District. She said that Government spends more than one trillion shillings annually on renting office space for central government offices yet the Government committed to construct a one stop office complex for all ministries, departments and agencies at Bwebajja.

The question to me was to update this House on how far the Government has gone with the implementation of this project at Bwebajja.

My response is quite brief because I tried to condense it. They had given me 14 pages but I tried to condense them into four.

In October 2017, the Cabinet under Minute extract 428/2017, approved policy proposals, among others, as work with NSSF as the financer to construct a one-stop centre Government campus to accommodate all ministries, departments and agencies currently accommodated in privately rented office space.

The idea behind this policy proposal was to address the challenge of paying rent for Government offices, which was then estimated at an annual increase of 12 per cent and thus risking to become unsustainable in the medium term; that is to say, between Financial Year 2012/2013 to Financial Year 2020/2021, rent expenditure has risen from Shs 38.19 billion to Shs 130.17 billion respectively. Therefore, it is not one trillion because that is the amount of money we spend, including parliamentary offices.

On 7 June 2018, the Government of Uganda, represented by the Office of the President and the Minister of Finance, on the one hand, signed a project development agreement with NSSF. The campus is to be constructed on a build-operate-transfer public-private partnership model. The understanding is that the fund would use its money to deliver a turnkey project to Government. Thereafter, the Government would repay the fund annual installments of Shs 177.7 billion growing at five per cent per annum for 15 years. After which, the facility would revert to the Government.

At the centre of PDA is a requirement for both parties, that is Government of Uganda and the NSSF, to procure consultants to fast-track the realisation of the campus. NSSF is obliged to procure a consultant to develop preliminary conceptual designs to form the blue print for the campus to be reviewed and approved by Government of Uganda.

On the other hand, Government of Uganda is equally required to procure a contract management consultant to monitor and oversee the interests of Government during the design and construction stages of the campus.

Government of Uganda finalised its procurement of the contract management consultant. On the other hand, NSSF is yet to finalise procurement of the designs consultant. This was on account that their best evaluated bidder, that is, M/s Paragon Architects Limited - a consortium with Impark Associates (U) Ltd - declined to sign the agreement two days to the expiry of their bid validity.

In light of the above, the NSSF was left with no option but to re-advertise for expression of interest for the provision of consultancy services for feasibility study, design and construction supervision of a one-stop Government office campus of Bwebajja in the *Daily Monitor* on 22 July 2021.

The implication of the revised procurement schedule for the designs consultant is that:

1. The initial feasibility study for the campus is expected by 05 January 2022.
2. Client review and approval of the draft designs will be on 09 January 2022.
3. Scheme designs by 01 May 2022.
4. Planning and approval by l3 July 2022.
5. Detailed designs by l4 December 2022.
6. Construction process should start earliest March 2023.

Mr Speaker, the third question is from Hon. Dr Emely Kugonza, Member of Parliament Buyanja East, Kibaale District.

In 2005, Government launched the systematic land demarcation programme in accordance with the 1998 Land Act. In September 2016, the systematic land demarcation exercise was launched in Kibaale District. On 09 September 2017, H.E. the President of the Republic of Uganda handed over the first batch of 250 land titles from the exercise to the locals at Bujuni Primary School grounds amidst great excitement and jubilation by the residents of Kibaale.

The President promised that the programme was going to expand and benefit many more bona fide occupants in the district. Since 2017, the programme has stalled and no further titles have been issued.

Hi question: What is the current plan of Government of ensuring the programme is revamped and the residents of greater Kibaale districts enabled to get land titles?

My response: The processing of certificates of titles for residents of the greater Kibaale (Kibaale, Kagadi and Kakumiro districts) is ongoing for some of the places where Government has fully compensated the registered proprietors (absentee landlords). The compensation was carried out in a phased manner. Currently, we have processed 1,593 certificates of titles in the name of Uganda Land Commission and the process of having these titles transferred into the names of the bona fide occupants is underway.

Number four, What is the latest update on the programme of compensation of the absentee landlords? In addition, when is this exercise of compensating absentee landlords in Kibaale District expected to be completed?

My response is that the Uganda Land Commission has been paying claimants in installments for compensation in Kibaale. Based on the information in our records, the payments so far made against the claims submitted to the commission is at 54.94 per cent.

The fifth question is from hon. Kahunde Helen, Woman Member of Parliament, Kiryandongo District.

She asked: Karuma Bridge was constructed in 1963. It is said to be narrow, one-carriage way, no pedestrian or bicycle lane, no monitoring equipment, the bridge is also a site for several major and minor accidents. Government pledged to construct a new Karuma Bridge to address the above. The question is; what is the status of this project?

Mr Speaker, the existing bridge was indeed constructed in 1964 and is insufficient to accommodate the increased levels of traffic on the road. The bridge has also been the scene of several accidents - as she rightly put it.

The Government of Uganda recognises the challenges posed by the existing bridge and prioritised its replacement in our National Development Plan III period.

The new bridge will provide a reliable link between the northern and southern regions and is expected to aid the development of the priority sectors of tourism, agriculture, oil and gas and industrialisation.

The feasibility study and detailed engineering design for the new bridge were completed in 2015. The bridge construction is scheduled to commence in the NDP III period. And the Government of Uganda has contacted the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on the possibility of partnering in the delivery of this key infrastructure.

The construction of the bridge is planned to start in the Financial Year 2023/2024 after completion of the financing preparation process and procurement of a contractor.

Hon. Ssasaga, Member of Parliament for Budadiri East in Sironko District asked the following question: In Sironko District, there are 34 subcounties and l0 town councils; out of these 14 subcounties and eight new town councils are not coded by the Ministry of Local Government. These have been in existence for the last two and half years. As a result, the political leadership in these non-coded subcounties and town councils have not got their ex-gratia payments for the last two and half years since establishment.

Each of these honourable councillors is entitled to Shs 525,000 per quarter for the last two and half years. Due to failure to receive their ex-gratia, the councillors have gone for litigation in respect for their arrears, where the district is likely to suffer a loss in compensation claims.

When will the new sub-counties and town councils in Sironko District be coded?

When will the ex-gratia arrears to the affected honourable councillors be paid? The last one is, when will the new elected councillors in those un-coded subcounties and town councils start receiving their ex-gratia?

Mr Speaker, it is true that there are subcounties and town councils in Sironko, which are not yet coded. They are part of the 352 town councils and 364 subcounties, which are yet to be operational. However, I wish to inform Parliament that Cabinet approved Shs 29.3 billion under the Parish Development Model to finance the operationalisation of the new 716 administrative units across the country for the initial activities.

Additional funds will be availed in the next financial year’s budget. In addition, the Ministry of Local Government has already submitted a supplementary request to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for the above funds. I wish to inform Parliament that Government is aware that the term of office of the political leaders commenced on 12th May 2021. Arrangements will be made to ensure that these elected leaders are paid their due outstanding arrears.

Mr Speaker, the last question came from hon. Charles Matovu, Member of Parliament, Busiro County South. He asked: Could the Rt hon. Prime Minister state to the House plans by the Government to construct and maintain public toilet facilities in all landing sites, on various water bodies across the country, including those in Bussi Subcounty, Busiro County, Wakiso District?

The Government has put in place efforts to improve landing sites on major lakes in Uganda by establishing beach management units, which are fishing community based to coordinate activities necessary for development at the landing sites. I wish to inform this House that every financial year, the Government, through various local Government councils, budgets and allocates funds for a number of activities. The construction of public toilets in the public or communal places, including the common user facilities at the landing sites like that of Bussi County, falls under some of these.

In addition, the district local Governments are mandated to develop and maintain the required infrastructure at landing sites.

Mr Speaker, when I got this question, I informed the Minister of Local Government to take up the matter and guide Wakiso District and other districts with similar challenges to prioritise this need during the budgeting cycle for the local Governments so that funds are allocated to this urgent demand. I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Rt hon. Prime Minister, for responding to those questions. However, we said this is still work in progress. We will always keep on finding the best way we can utilise this time. Leader of the Opposition -

4.32

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga)**: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to appreciate my sister and friend, the Prime Minister, for the response to the questions. However, on observation and in agreement with your earlier concerns about the structure of these questions, I think the tendency around them is to dilute the whole essence of getting quick answers to the questions so that many questions are answered. I will join whoever will be leading to amend the rules and make sure that as many questions from Members are accommodated and answered in time.

I have a few follow up issues for the Prime Minister. Initially, on page 5, on the question raised by hon. Kahunde, it is very important that costs to Government are minimised and only incurred where they are inevitable. The desire and urge to minimise costs by Government housing itself in its own premises – of course, which is a policy reversal because the same Government sold its own buildings and it is now reconstituting itself to build a new one.

The concern on (iii), Rt hon. Prime Minister, about the Bwebajja project; I hope we are not incubating another white elephant. Last year, Parliament passed the famous NSSF (Amendment) Bill, which is about to race back for reconsideration by the House. Did this amendment Bill affect the capacity of NSSF to deliver on the arrangement? I understand that if the law returns and it is carried as per the propositions, you are going to see a lot of outflows from the NSSF facility and this was a new product.

The amendments to the law brings within the NSSF product range, new products, which takes out money. Did the amendment take into consideration the tenets of its undertaking between NSSF and Government and therefore, it will not be disconfigured if the law returns? I hope I am understood, Rt hon. Prime Minister. We need clarification; we do not have to come back here and race with the same questions.

On page 7, about the compensation of landlords, the desire for compensation is countrywide. Can you make Parliament understand the concentration in a particular enclave? I do not begrudge you for having been the leader of the beneficiary district but do you want to help Parliament understand this special concentration around Kagadi-Kibaale-Kakumiro because the desire for compensation is countrywide?

The Government was utilising the $ 150 million from the World Bank to undertake this compensation. At 54 per cent, what capacity is remaining and how many more tenants can you cover not just in Bunyoro sub-region but in other places, including the greater north and in Buganda here? Why the choice for concentration? There are institutions that desired compensation, they were long evaluated and they have been trekking to Government to be paid out and leave the Government to operate and they are being frustrated. Why the concentration?

Lastly, on page 11, Rt hon. Prime Minister, on the advice humbly given under the Parish Development Model, these particular subcounties and town councils to become operational - I heard the President addressing the ruling party caucus and in that caucus meeting, the funds available to the Parish Development Model were unilaterally increased.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, do you want to inform the country about how much money is eventually available in the local governments, where we come from? The guidelines have been shifting and migrating on the Parish Development Model. At the same time, money has been remitted but there are no guidelines and they are not moving. You can open the Floor and Members will tell you the same thing.

So, is the Prime Minister communicating coherently about the position of the Government on these subcounties and town councils and, subsequently, what the Parish Development Model represents and how much money is available for its implementation, Mr Speaker?

**MR THOMAS TAYEBWA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My brother, the Leader of the Opposition - when I look at rule 41(9), it says, “The Leader of the Opposition shall have a right to comment or reply”. However, he is asking substantive questions, which would also require the Prime Minister to go back, ask for responses and consult.

So, I just wanted to know whether we are moving procedurally well because whereas we appreciate that what he is raising are very pertinent questions, instead of comments or replies. So, we need your guidance. Is it a matter of questioning or he should have commented or replied to issues raised? Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Under the new rules, the Leader of the Opposition was making an attempt to extend the Prime Minister’s Time by asking additional questions. However, the rules themselves do not allow new questions. *(Laughter)*

The rules say you put it in the box, do a raffle, pick and the Prime Minister responds to them. So, what the rules allow you to do is to comment. *(Laughter)* It would be up to the grace of the Rt Hon. Prime Minister, if she wants to answer or not but the rules, really, will not allow you to ask.

**MS NABBANJA:** In the interest of our country, honourable colleagues, I want to remind our colleague of how the NSSF (Amendment) Bill or the would-be Act collapsed. I believe we are coming up with something better.

Mr Speaker, how much money is available for the Parish Development Model? I think I will come with an answer next Thursday, such that I can give concrete answers for the House to appreciate how we are moving with the Parish Development Model.

The last question he asked was about Bugangaizi and Buyaga. Mr Speaker, these are historical injustices that took place when all of us were yet to be born. He knows that there are absentee Baganda landlords, who took over land from those counties. You are aware of the history.

So, the Government was trying to help people in that part of the country, where I come from, and this has been in this House since 2006 - I believe he was yet to be in this House, just like I was - when Parliament and the Government decided to help that part.

He knows some of his parents - because I know where he comes from – are the ones who have our titles. *(Laughter)* Yes, the NRM Government is concerned and friendly. For us in Bunyoro, we appreciate the NRM Government for helping our people out of this injustice.

Mr Speaker, I have made developments in that part of the country but I do not have a title. Nobody has a title, including hon. Emely Kugonza. So, we are there. When the Government comes up – *(Interjection)* – yes - to help our people in that part of the country, I think the Leader of the Opposition should appreciate. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Rt Hon. Prime Minister. When you come back to respond to some of the questions, the first question related to the NSSF (Amendment) Bill is: was the Bill returned - if it had been implemented, after it was passed by Parliament, it would have depleted the funds from NSSF. That was the question.

So, if you are responding, you need to deal with it. The response you gave did not quite capture what the question was. So, as you come back, please, deal with it that way. Thank you. Can we continue with the Order Paper?

PRESENTATION OF A PETITION OF THE TORORO LOCK-UP OWNERS AND VENDORS’ ASSOCIATION PRESENTED ON THE VARIOUS IRREGULARITIES EVIDENCED IN ALLOCATION OF LOCK-UP SHOPS AND STALLS CARRIED OUT ON 18 AUGUST 2021 BY THE TORORO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AND THE ALLOCATION COMMITTEE

4.44

**MR APOLLO YERI (NRM, Tororo Municipality, Tororo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I am moving this petition under rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda.

This is the humble petition of the Tororo Lock-up Owners and Vendors’ Association, which I am presenting now. Who are these petitioners? These are traders in Tororo Central Market, under the umbrella –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, just proceed with the petition; read it.

**MR YERI:** I am reading it.

**THE SPEAKER:** I hear you asking questions again. *(Laughter)*

**MR YERI:** No. It is under the umbrella of Tororo Lock-up Owners and Vendors’ Association.

*The subject matter of the petition is on the various irregularities seen in allocation of the lock-up shops and stalls, carried out on 18 August 2021 by the Tororo Municipal Council and Allocation Committee, following a consent judgement in the High Court of Civil Suit No. 047 of 2009 between the petitioners and Tororo Municipal Council.*

*What do the petitioners say?*

1. *Way back in the 1980s, the native people of Tororo were called upon by the Tororo Municipal Council authorities to develop an area chosen by the market using their personal resources;*
2. *A number of lock-up shops were built under a chosen area and stalls were also built in the middle, so that it formed a market - the stalls were in the middle and the shops were on the sides;*
3. *Tororo Municipal Council approached the petitioners with the idea of developing the market to be funded by World Bank, under the Markets and Agricultural Trade Improvement Programme, known as MATIP;*
4. *They resisted the said funding programmes from developing the market because, having developed and possessed the market for over 30 years, they feared to lose their bona fide interest in the market;*

*They filed a civil suit in the High Court of Mbale vide HCCS No. 047 of 2009 against Tororo Municipal Council wherein, a consent judgment dated 18 August 2014 was entered with terms that the market be re-developed and upon completion of the same, the Tororo Lockup Owners and Vendors Association be given opportunity to collect rent from the said market and that the said lockup shop owners be reallocated lockups on the ground floor of the newly constructed market upon completion;*

*Upon completion of the development of Tororo Central Main Market, the Tororo Town Clerk sought the Solicitor-General’s interpretation of the consent judgment, which interpretation was exactly as was agreed upon by the parties in the consent judgment;*

*On l8 August 202l, an allocation exercise for the lockup shops and stalls was carried out, however it was marred with various illegalities:*

*Non-eligible members of the Lockup Owners and Vendors Association participated and were illegally allocated lockups and stalls;*

*The municipal council authorities conspired with nine other business persons in Tororo Town to register a company called Tororo Market Business Association (TOMABA), contrary to the already existing Tororo Lockup Owners and Vendors Association, with a malicious aim of empowering non-eligible persons to get allocated lockup shops and stalls in the market;*

*The purported allocation committee did not sit prior to the allocation exercise day as evidenced by the absence of the Chairpersons of Tororo Lockup Owners and Vendors Association in the allocation committee meeting;*

*The procedures of allocation as agreed upon in the consent judgment were not followed and that is why, there were no minutes taken to that effect;*

*The technical staff from the Ministry of Local Government who were under duty to observe the transparency of the allocation exercise also deviated from the terms of the consent judgment.*

*Your petitioners aver that the above illegalities and irregularities have greatly affected the running of their businesses, and created a cloud of uncertainty for the future of the Tororo Central Market and other such markets country wide.*

*The prayers* –*(Interruption)*

**MR FRED KAYONDO:** Rule 76 says: “*A Member shall not read his or her speech, but may read extracts from written or printed documents in support of his or her argument and may refresh his or her memory by reference to notes*.” Are we proceeding well, Mr Speaker, since the honourable member is reading word for word? Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, you will discover later that that is not a statement nor is it a speech. It is a petition under rule 30, where the Member is required to read what the petitioners have presented. He is proceeding very well in the circumstances. *(Applause)*

**MR YERI:** Mr Speaker, thank you for that wise ruling. These are the petitioners’ prayers:

1. *The Parliamentary Committee on Local Government and Public Service investigates this matter and reports back to Parliament within two weeks.*
2. *All allocations be halted until this report is out.*

I would like to lay the petition on the Table.

**THE SPEAKER:** Let the records capture the text of the petition. Thank you, honourable member, for raising this issue through a petition by your people.

Honourable members, if you look carefully at rule 30, if a matter is of an urgent nature, the Speaker has discretion to handle it otherwise, than what has been rendered in the prayer.

Under rule 30(5), all petitions must be referred to committee but rule 30(6) provides *“Notwithstanding subrule (5), the Speaker may refer a petition of an urgent matter to a particular Minister or Committee.”*

Honourable members, this relates to allocation of stalls in a market that has already been constructed. Some of them are already occupied. There is disagreement on how they were allocated. If we send it to the committee, the committee will have 45 days to handle it and yet the prayer is that everything should be halted. This would affect the businesses of these people in Tororo.

I am, therefore, referring this matter to the Minister of Local Government and the minister responsible for markets in this country to handle within ten days, and report back to this Parliament on the status of what has transpired in Tororo Market. *(Applause)* It is so referred. Clerk extracts the minutes and submit them to the minister responsible for Local Government. Thank you very much. Next item.

STATEMENT BY SHADOW MINISTER ON COMPULSORY INSTALLATION OF ELECTRONIC TRACKING DEVICES ON MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES

4.55

**MR ABDULLAH KIWANUKA (NUP, Mukono County North, Mukono):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. This is a statement on compulsory installation of electronic tracking devices on motor vehicles and motorcycles.

During an address to Parliament on 18 June 2018, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda informed the country that electronic number plates were to be fixed into every vehicle and motorcycles. The electronic number plates were to be controlled at a central monitoring system. It was advanced that electronic plates would bolster security, particularly management of crime scenes in this country.

On 5 August 2021, Parliament was informed by the Minister of Security, hon. Jim Muhwezi that a Russian firm had been identified and contracted to implement the installation of electronic tracking devices on motor vehicles and motorcycles. The contract was preceded by a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed between the Government of the Republic of Uganda and Russian firm, Joint Stock Company Global Security on 19 March 2021.

Ordinarily, every intervention intended at improving security in the country is welcome. However, this particular project and its subsequent contract raise pertinent issues to do with fairness, privacy and data protection.

Nature of the contract

During a press briefing at the Media Centre, the Minister of Security informed the country that the Joint Stock Global Security company was contracted as a Public-Private Partnership (PPPs). The company was contracted for 10 years under a build-operate-and-transfer arrangement.

It is imperative to note that PPPs have an ending legal framework that elaborates how they are to be procured under Sections 21, 22 of the Public Private Partnership Act, 2015, which requires, among others, that before a public-private partnership project is contracted, it should be preceded by preliminary economic cost benefit analysis registration with PPPs units and feasibility study. Section 31-36 of the Act also specifies the procurement rules and methods.

Based on the President’s directive to the Minister of Security issued on 13 June 2021, the Joint Stock Company Global Security presented unsolicited proposals to the Government of Uganda. Section 34 of the Public Private Partnership Act provides a criteria and process of how unsolicited proposals should have been handled. The criteria consists, among others, alignment to National Development Plan, feasibility, innovativeness and cost effectiveness.

In the event that the proposal has been successfully evaluated, Section 34(6) provides and demands that it should be subjected to a competitive bidding procedure. When the proponent of the proposal is not successful, Section 34(7) provides for compensation of the proprietary interest. Therefore, the Presidential directive not to consider any other interested bidder is unlawful for it did not permit competitive bidding.

Mr Speaker, the traffic and road safety registration of vehicles and licensing and third-party insurance regulations do not provide for installation of electronic tracking devices; that is the existing law in this country.

On transportation equipment, they provide for colour, character, shape, material and placement of plates hence there is no enabling law in this country providing legal provisions for the installation of tracking devices on transportation equipment.

The minister indicated that owners are expected to foot the bills of installation of plate replacements on already registered vehicles and motorcycles, not the Government that has installed the project. It is only fair that the owner bears the plate cost at the registration of new transport equipment while the Government foots the bill of plate replacement for already registered transport equipment. Worryingly, the project is likely to diminish privacy of users of vehicles and motorcycles adorned with electronic plates in disguise of national security.

The tracking function of the plates would violate Article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, particularly location of privacy of a person. The electronic plate project not only infringes location, privacy but also life profiles of people. For instance, visits to hospital while revealing that you are ill or have a patient while a visit to offices or political organisations may reveal your political affiliation.

Therefore, location tracking reveals portrait of an individual including relations, preference and personal ails among others. Such information is categorised as special personal data that any public body is deterred from collecting or processing for it violates Section 9(1) of the data protection and privacy act.

Mr Speaker, through the central monitoring system of the electronic plates, historical and real time record of target would be extracted by public bodies, hence, the project will facilitate Government stalking without due regard to privacy of the users of transportation equipment.

Precedence was already set that required monitoring system or centres to have an enabling legal framework. For instance, the monitoring centre that facilitates interception of communication was provided for under the regulation of Interception of the Communications Act.

More still, the tracking will not be limited to public spaced but extends into people’s private homes, particularly when vehicles and motorcycles are parked. This will in effect unreasonably lead to extraction of information within home boundaries without a warrant for a court order.

Given past acts of security agencies, especially curtailing movement of opposition leaders, the project is suspicious for it may be purported at curtailing dissenting opinions against the Government.

Although it may be argued that the Government may be justified to track a vehicle and motorcycle onto which public funds have been spent, it is incomprehensive when applied on private transport equipment that was never purchased on public resources.

Nevertheless, information extracted about a person using a vehicle and a motorcycle on a public road or waters is not necessarily public. Even in public space, there is privacy of people, hence, either way, consent of vehicle and motorcycle owner and users is required. In the event that voluntary consent is not required, there should be a lawful well-defined procedure of accessing that vehicle.

When it comes to data storage, there are also issues regarding data storage and access. In the recent past, it has been reported that the police has mysteriously lost CCTV footage. This is an indication that these are gaps in the security of data for it can end up in the hands of third parties and criminals. Wrong elements in the security circles may use their privilege to illegally retrieve data with the intention of undertaking harming tasks or horrendous acts.

In conclusion, in regard of all these legal, fairness and privacy, data protection and illegal concern, it is not surprising that the project has triggered debate and concern in the public. This subsequently prompted a personal statement from the Minister of Security disassociating himself from the project’s due diligence flaws right from the beginning.

It would, therefore, be prudent that the Minister for Security briefs this Parliament and addresses the public concerns pertaining the installation of electronic tracking devices on motor vehicles and motorcycles. I beg to move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable member, Shadow Minister of Security, for this statement. *(Applause)* The challenge with this kind of statement is you do not know how to process it. As it is being made under – of course, there is Rule 25(2)(l) which makes the provision for a statement for the shadow minister.

However, the details of how you process it are not provided for and you have two alternatives; to treat it as a statement under Rule 53, which is for the Leader of the Opposition. In which case, I would have obtained the authorisation from the Leader of the Opposition giving the shadow minister the authority to act in his place and give that statement; in which case, it would have attracted a one-hour debate.

The other alternative is rule 54(2) in which it would come as a personal statement from a Member, and I am going to treat it as a statement from a Member. The shadow minister will keep it in the background, which now gives me the advantage of only allowing a 15-minute debate and debate starts now on this matter.

I am going by the number of people who want to debate it and then I will just divide the time; so 15 divided by seven equals to two minutes.

5.08

**MR MICHAEL TIMUZIGU (NRM, Kajara County, Ntungamo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Shadow Minister for bringing this motion to this House. When we got information that we were going to be tracked - whoever has a vehicle or anything that moves at a speed, starting from a motorcycle - we were worried. But of course -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, it is not you going to be tracked, it is the vehicle. *(Laughter)*

**MR TIMUZIGU:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. But of course, when I am riding a motorcycle or driving a car, they are being tracked and I am on board. Nevertheless, we appreciate the job being done by the Government to provide security to this country.

However, when you look at what is happening in this country, it is a matter of treating the behaviour of Ugandans and the Government needs to find out why Ugandans are behaving the way they are behaving but not keeping on spending more money while Uganda is one of the poorest countries. Going down to the taxpayer who has a vehicle but paid tax for it and now is going to pay for the vehicle to be tracked.

I propose that Government should go back to the drawing board, do research and find out why Ugandans are behaving like this instead of spending a lot of money to track vehicles and even put the expenditure on the taxpayer who has already paid tax for the same vehicle. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

5.10

**MR JOHN AMOS OKOT (NRM, Agago North County, Agago):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Shadow Minister for the report. It is true we live in Uganda and I appreciate the Government for coming out with measures to curb insecurity.

However, a bigger question should be asked; we are 42 million Ugandans, some own vehicles and motorcycles. I read that during the British time, for you to own a bicycle, you needed to get a licence to the extent that owning a bicycle was becoming a problem.

However, these days, people own bicycles freely. The cost implication is the question, which Ugandans are trying to ask; what could be cost? Who is going to bear this cost? You might find someone with a fleet of vehicles to that nature. Are we targeting the right people who are causing insecurity to our country? We might try to target some issues but end up mixing it up.

Ugandans appreciate the Government’s effort to curb insecurity but it would be better to move in a direction where Ugandans say “Yes, this is the right direction we are taking.”

However, if you just say that you want to put tracking devices on all the motorcycles and vehicles - in a way, we might put a lot of cost on Ugandans just like we wanted to do vehicle inspections to find out if the shock absorbers or the seatbelts work, among others. In the end, all the things that Ugandans bought, did not even solve the problem that was at hand.

I implore Government to reconsider this kind of move because if it fails to do so, it might not hit the right target. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

5.13

**MR MILTON MUWUMA (NRM, Kigulu County South, Iganga):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Shadow Minister for Internal Affairs for the statement. The spirit of the Government coming up with this intervention is good. However, I think modalities have not been put in place.

I remember when we were passing the loan that constructed Entebbe Expressway - the terms of repaying the loan, the House was informed that road tolls will be put and toll centres be constructed along that expressway and road users who were being inconvenienced by traffic jam on the old Entebbe Road were to pay that money.

The Government and the Minister of Works, then, assured this House that they were coming up with a policy and a law that would implement the recovery and the repayment of this money. Mr Speaker, to date, that law has never come to the Floor of Parliament and the road has begun depreciating before we begin enforcing and having this law in place.

I want to appeal to Government to bring a law that will help to operationalise this. It might turn out to be a witch-hunt of some sort. If Mr A is not faring well with Mr B, somebody can fix or can parade you along a certain car that Mr X stepped on this live wire at a particular moment.

Mr Speaker, in good faith, we all want to ensure that Ugandans are safe and secure. In fact, the other incident when an Indian was attacked by goons on boda bodas, we all got concerned that there is a lot of lawlessness in our country and we need to do something. But how can this be done? I think our Government and the minister responsible should come and update Parliament on how we are to enforce this.

Thank you Mr Speaker. I have good will as far as this policy is concerned. I am in for it but we should be addressing the “how” question.

5.16

**MR GILBERT OLANYA (FDC, Kilak South County, Amuru):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank my colleague, the Shadow Minister, for the wonderful statement. As far as security is concerned in this country, I remember H.E. the President came up with 10 points that he said if addressed, would improve on the security of this country. Among the 10, I saw they started implementing the installation of cameras in all the big towns and cities.

Mr Speaker, before Government comes up with any other intervention, let it come and explain to Ugandans the success and the failures of those 10 points raised by the President. They should tell us the impact of installing cameras within the cities and how it has helped Ugandans before jumping and leaving

what the President spoke about?

Mr Speaker, installing track devices on vehicles and motorcycles - I think the Government should abandon this idea because it is not a good idea at all. People need to enjoy their privacy. When I am moving in my private car or motorbike, there is no need for the Government to follow wherever I am going. More so, if thugs want to execute any dangerous mission, they may go with a vehicle or motorbike, which is numberless.

Therefore, I really feel that installing tracking devices may not help at all in improving security in this country. I request the Government to abandon this since it plans to extend the cost to the individual motor vehicle owners and motorbike owners. If the costs were to be paid by the Government, it would be somehow reasonable. However, we have already registered our cars with the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and URA has got all our details. There is no need for fresh registration again. Ugandans should not be added burdens on burdens. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

5.18

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to move a motion under rule 59(1)(k) of our Rules of Procedure in which the opinion of the Speaker is a matter of emergency under motion without notice.

**THE SPEAKER:** Proceed. Which rule again? Members are asking.

**MR MPUUGA:** Rule 59(1)(k). The motion reads:

*“I would like to move that Parliament, having listened to the statement made by the honourable member from Mukono North and the shadow Minister for Internal Affairs;*

*AND HAVING LISTENED to the statement, which drew the attention of Parliament on the fact that they have procedural flaws and legal challenges in the Government programme of installing tracking devices on motor vehicles and motorcycles;*

*BEARING IN MIND the fact that the said devices will infringe on the constitutional rights of Ugandans;*

*AWARE THAT Parliament has not been fully briefed on the procedure and stage at which this procurement is, including the funding mechanism;*

*THAT PARLIAMENT moves and resolves that the said procurement be halted until Government complies with the legal requirements under which such procurement should have been undertaken;*

*That the minister concerned appears before Parliament and explains the steps so far taken to ensure that the said arrangement is compliant with the laws of the land;*

*AND THAT in view of that, Mr Speaker, the minister follows the right steps and the right legal framework before implementing the said arrangement.”*

I beg to move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the rule under which the Leader of the Opposition has chosen to move requires the Speaker to examine the motion and the Speaker must come to the conclusion that it is a matter of emergency. The case of emergency has not been made by the proposer of the motion. Therefore, the proposal collapses because I do not see any emergency as he says. *(Applause)*

You did not tell me there is such an emergency that I must allow you to proceed with this motion, no. Procedure again? Proceed.

**MR MPUUGA:** Mr Speaker, you are the custodian of the rules and at your discretion, you can choose how to allow the rules to operate. This House is in a blackout and before we know it, we are going to be faced with a very serious constitutional challenge because the Government is moving *ultra vires* to the law. Somehow when the minister appeared before Parliament, he only made a statement of personal explanation, as the honourable member submitted in his statement; distancing himself from the illegality for which he has been accused as a minister.

Mr Speaker, the reason why I am seeking your intervention procedurally is to arouse curiosity on the emergence of the matter before this House buys the statement of the honourable member.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable members, the Executive arm of Government is represented on the Front Bench and they have listened. As for Parliament and in the opinion of the Speaker, no emergency has been adduced to make me come to that conclusion.

However, they have heard and if the minister wants to respond to this particular statement, he has the latitude to respond. As of now, debate continues.

5.24

**MR RICHARD SEBAMALA (DP, Bukoto County Central, Masaka):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you, honourable colleague, for the statement that you have presented.

On 31 July 2021, I wrote about this particular issue on my website; Sebamala.com. I highlighted section 27 of our Constitution on infringement on privacy; is sincerely being attacked by the tracking opinion. I also highlighted that if we are to benchmark in the United Kingdom, they have refined their Human Rights Act, 1998; the Data Protection Act, 1998; the Protection from Harassment Act, 1997; the Regulations of Investigatory Powers Act, 2000; and the General Data Protection Regulation in order to accommodate this particular tracking record or what the honourable member is proposing.

Furthermore, I also highlighted *–(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, we agreed on two minutes.

5.26

**MR HASSAN KIRUMIRA (NUP, Katikamu County South, Luweero):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The safety of our people is of paramount importance and the concern for Ugandans is installation of those tracking devices because the devices are going to provide a lot of data. That data can be used positively or negatively.

The challenge we have is that if that data goes into the wrong hands, it is going to put the security of our people in a very bad way. We are aware that people move for different reasons: to meet doctors; people move to meet their families; people move to meet their friends. All this data put together and ending up in the wrong hands is going to be bad news for our country.

Mr Speaker, in countries where tracking devices have been installed, it has been done for accessibility on the roads and possibly to pay taxes, not for security reasons.

In China where it happened, it happened in an area – I think it is in the Western area – where there are terrorists. The reason why they installed car tracking devices was to protect the Chinese from terrorist attacks.

So, I concur with our Leader of the Opposition to halt the whole process of installing tracking devices in the cars of Ugandans because it contravenes the laws and the Constitution of Uganda, specifically privacy and freedom of movement. I submit, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. You cannot concur with the Leader of the Opposition because he proposed a Motion that was not successful. *(Laughter)*

5.28

**MR GEOFREY EKANYA (FDC, Tororo County North, Tororo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Government can achieve its objective but in a much neater way and without really bringing unnecessary costs, in compliance with the Constitution and in appreciation by the citizens of this country.

The consensus is we all need peace and security. Nobody really loves to be attacked but then, the way we are moving is in total contravention of the Constitution. The Public Private Partnership Act is categorical; it is borrowing.

So, you need to be neat. You need to avoid unnecessary costs. Government can just pass a public policy to say all vehicles and motorcycles to be imported in Uganda must come with tracking devices. We can achieve this in a much neater way, without bringing costs under classified –*(Interruption)*

**MS TAAKA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Whereas I appreciate the statement from the Shadow Minister, I am constrained by rule 80, whereby we are debating a matter as if Government has introduced a Bill, regarding the installation of tracking devices on vehicles.

Mr Speaker, are we proceeding well, now that the Bill is not yet in Parliament and yet, we are saying Government is not moving rightly? I beg for your indulgence.

**THE SPEAKER:** I had given guidance earlier on how I allowed this debate. The Shadow Minister has a right, under our rules, to proceed under rule 25(2)(l) of our Rules of Procedure. After he has proceeded, the rules are silent about how we process his statement.

I ruled out the possibility of proceeding under rule 53, which would be for the Leader of the Opposition. I ruled that out because I did not receive any notification that he had been authorised to act on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition; in which case, the debate would have taken one hour.

I then moved to rule 54 (2) to allow the Member to process the Member’s statement as a statement of a Member, which attracts a debate of 15 minutes. The matter that he has raised is important and it has been before this House.

So, are we proceeding well in debating it? Oh yes, we are. *(Applause)* That will be the last person, then I will have the – hon. Isabirye, no – response but I will give some direction on how to handle this particular statement.

**MR EKANYA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** But your time was up anyway. Thank you. *(Laughter)*

**MR EKANYA:** Sir, may I just conclude?

**THE SPEAKER:** Conclude.

**MR EKANYA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. My advice to Government is that, please, go back to the drawing board and rethink about the entire security arrangement using the ICT development. Rethink about the cost. Rethink about complying with the Constitution. Rethink about public expenditure. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. There is a short response from the Government Chief Whip and then, I will give guidance on how we will handle this statement.

5.33

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Thomas Tayebwa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank our colleague for raising this matter.

Firstly, Mr Speaker, it is the duty of Government of Uganda to protect its citizens. On that one, Government will categorically do it within the limits of the law. So, rest assured that whatever we are doing, we are doing it within the limits of the law.

Secondly, if you know that you do not engage or do not intend to engage in criminal activities, do not be scared of this. However, if you know that you are going to be engaging in criminal activities, please, be scared.

Thirdly, I have heard the Shadow Minister saying that the minister distanced himself and all that. I would like to clarify that the minister made a personal statement because he was being accused that it is his personal deal. So, he came here to show you that a certain due process was followed, in as far as procurement was concerned and he never benefitted or engaged himself at a personal level.

With that, Mr Speaker, I want to inform colleagues that whatever has been done by Government and the process, which is still ongoing has been approved by the Attorney-General. We have followed the due process of the law.

Because of that, the Minister of Security, in consultation with the Attorney-General, is going to prepare a comprehensive statement regarding this matter and present it to this House, showing clearly that whatever the Shadow Minister of Security has presented as illegalities was a mere opinion of his but not what is written in the law. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Actually, you picked that as if you were listening to my brain because I wanted to say – which now, I will say – that we do not want to extend this discussion, based on a Government activity but raised from the Shadow Minister and neither do we want to base it on a minister’s personal statement; in which case, we would now be discussing as if it is a personal matter.

The substance of the subject is crucial and like the Government Chief Whip has said, we need a statement under rule 52, which attracts a one-hour debate and then, we see how to process it. Minister responsible for this matter, please, communicate to that minister that we need a statement next week because these matters have been in the public domain.

Next week, on Wednesday, we want that statement to come. We have a debate for one hour and see how to move it from there. We have heard information from this side; we have heard information from the personal statement of the honourable minister. We now want a formal statement from the minister, under rule 52.

Thank you; next item.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT URGING GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN UGANDA

**THE SPEAKER:** Who is moving the motion? Honourable members, as hon. Otaala comes here, you know that we had a debate on the issues of climate when the minister of state in charge of the sector made a statement. I had also made a reference that we should bring something from the committee so that we have a fairly comprehensive debate, with clear recommendations of what the Government needs to do in regards to mitigating the impact of degradation but also issues of climate change. I am going to listen to this motion and then we see how to process it. Thank you.

5.37

**Mr EMMANUEL OTAALA (NRM, West Budama County South, Tororo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am moving this motion under rule 56 of our Rules of Procedure. This is a motion for a resolution of Parliament urging the Government to implement measures to mitigate the effects of climate change in Uganda. The motion reads:

*“WHEREAS objective XXVII (i) and (ii) of the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy obligate the state to promote sustainable development and public awareness of the need to manage land, air and water resources in a balanced and sustainable manner for the present and future generations;*

*AWARE that the Republic of Uganda is a signatory to international treaties on climate change such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992, the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1997 and the Paris Agreement, which obligate the state to take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimise the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects;*

*FURTHER AWARE that on 27 April 2021, this august House passed into law the National Climate Change Act, 2020, whose object is to domesticate Uganda’s international obligations on climate change and provides institutional arrangements for coordinating and implementing climate change response measures and provide for financing for climate change;*

*NOTING that according to the Climate Change Department of the Ministry of Water and Environment, Uganda is one of the countries that are greatly vulnerable to climate change impacts and climate variability which, if not mitigated, has potential to irreversibly damage Uganda’s fragile ecosystems, negatively impact people’s livelihoods, cause national and regional insecurity and ultimately reverse Uganda’s social and economic transformation and development efforts;*

*FURTHER NOTING that Uganda is currently experiencing negative effects of climate change which are exemplified by higher than usual average temperatures of 1oC to 2.5oC, changes in rainfall patterns, increased frequency and intensity of rainfall events and heat waves, decrease in rainfall, significantly  
wetter or drier seasons, increased aridity, increased severity and length of the dry season, reduction in the natural water table and extreme variation in water levels in lakes and rivers in Uganda;*

*RECOGNISING that the negative effects of climate change have resulted in increased food insecurity and low productivity, extreme weather events which lead to mudslides, landslides, soil erosion, land degradation, heat waves, aridity and flooding, increase in the occurrence and spread of diseases like malaria and cholera, damage and destruction of infrastructure and settlements, shifts in the productivity of agricultural and natural resources and if left unmitigated, will reverse the social, cultural and economic development of the country;*

*FURTHER RECOGNISING that according to the World Bank Climate Risk Country Profile Report, 2020, Uganda’s vulnerability to climate change is aggravated by its high level of poverty and high dependence on climate sensitive sectors such as rain-fed agriculture, water, fisheries, tourism and forestry and yet these sectors form the backbone of Uganda’s economy and greatly contribute to Uganda’s export earnings and gross domestic product;*

*CONCERNED that the adoption of mitigating measures to overt the negative effects of climate change are impacted by lack of adequate resources, rapid and unplanned urbanisation, environmental degradation such as depletion of natural forest cover and reclamation of wetlands, over reliance on firewood and charcoal for cooking, underdeveloped irrigation systems, near-absence of disaster preparedness of the community level, lack of coordinated disaster response strategies, high transaction costs and limited indigenous capacity to adopt climate change mitigation measures;*

*COGNISANT that unless measures are put in place to safeguard the environment, slow climate change and prevent further environmental damage, Uganda is likely to suffer irreversible climatic changes which in turn will reverse the country's development trajectory;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by this Parliament that;*

1. *Government urgently commences the Climate Change Act, 2020 and expedites its implementation;*
2. *Government strictly implements all environmental laws enacted by Parliament, including the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2008, the National Environment Act, 2019;*
3. *Government undertakes measures to mitigate the effects of climate in Uganda, including encouraging recycling, control the emission of greenhouse gasses, afforestation and the use of clean from renewable sources;*
4. *Government urgently implements climate change mitigation and resilience measures, including building disaster response preparedness and coordination strategies of the community, national and regional level;*
5. *Government encourages the development of local solutions and technologies as a means of mitigating climate change in Uganda.”*

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**THE SPEAKER:** Is the motion seconded? Okay, it is seconded by the Members for Bugiri Municipality, Manjiya, Kyankwanzi, Gomba West and Ora County. Who is the seconder of the motion?

Honourable member, I hope your justification is going to be short. Do you know why I am saying this? It is because we had a debate of this nature yesterday. I made some guidance about how we should process this and structure it better so that it takes care of all the issues so that when we come to debate, we do not instruct piecemeal because this is only one aspect of what is at stake. There are other aspects that should be brought in. My guidance was that we handle these things through the Committee on Climate Change and the one responsible for the environment sector for us to have a good debate.

Nonetheless, this motion has come. We had a debate yesterday and so, I want your justification to be brief so that I can allow the seconder of the motion to proceed as we see how to proceed.

**MR OTAALA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am going to be very brief. Just yesterday, we discussed issues concerning the environment and natural resources.

Today, I have come here again to stress the matter of urgency, which is acting now or rather that we should have acted upon yesterday.

This august House passed the National Climate Change Act way back in April. It is now five months down the road but this Act has not seen the light of day. As the Chairperson of the Committee on Environment, I am working closely with my colleague on climate change; we felt we needed to urge the Government to act immediately.

We have very many laws on environmental issues. The problem is implementation. When I asked about the National Climate Change Act, I was told that it has not even been published in the Uganda Gazette. The reason I got is that some official from the ministry was mandated to go and pay money and get the Act published but up to now, that has not been done.

I would like to reignite the steam of my honourable sister, whom all of you know very well, because she has been very enthusiastic about environmental matters, to continue walking the talk that she used to. *(Applause)*

I ask Parliament to urge her to expedite the process of putting this Act in place so that we begin to implement all the provisions in that Act, including other environmental laws.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, I hear *Mama Mabira* saying “give me money” but I would just like to remind her that under the National Environment Act, there is an environmental levy that they have been charging. We want her to get this money - we need to buy tree seedlings for each of the Members of Parliament because we are now in a rainy season. Each Member of Parliament should take over 2,000 tree seedlings to plant to help address the effects of climate change. *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, this is a bipartisan matter because water is life. Environment is health. We either protect our environment or we perish with it.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move. *(Applause)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Can I have the seconder of the motion briefly? You all have responsibilities.

5.52

**MR LAWRENCE SONGA (NRM, Ora County, Zombo):** Mr Speaker, I rise to second the motion on the following grounds: one, whenever we see a shift in weather or temperatures, whether caused by human or natural, we know that climate change is taking place.

Like I said yesterday, Uganda’s economy is climate change dependent because it is an agro-based economy relying on rain-fed agriculture. Sixty-eight of the farmers are actually small holder farmers living on less favoured land. Of the 68, 20 per cent are women. This is a reality that we are confronting.

When you look at the development pathway of Uganda in the NDP III, you will realize that we are prioritising energy, which heavily relies on the environment. That is a factor that we should give attention to - climate change. We should help to address sustainable agriculture, water management and develop resilient infrastructure.

Just imagine if our bridge in Jinja was washed away by the waters because of increased rainfall brought about by climate change. What will happen to the economy? What will happen to the electricity and the industrial sectors?

The tourism sector, which attracts a lot of money to Uganda, relies heavily on the management of the natural resources. The dams are built on the rivers but the forests are getting degraded. We are borrowing high interest loans to build the dams. In future, if we destroy the watershed, then there will be no water in the rivers yet we have to pay the loan. What will happen to the economy? These are realities.

Our industries are mainly agro-based though we shall have some industries in the mineral sector. However, for us to have agro-based industries everywhere in Uganda to address the unemployment rate, we must double production in agriculture. However, we cannot double production in agriculture unless we implement sustainable land management, strengthen and increase irrigation systems so that we can have food for home use, market and emergency. That is when we can have serious agro-based industries here.

This climate change brings a lot of severe droughts, increased water scarcity, fires and catastrophic storms. Just this afternoon, we raised issues of hailstones as a result of climate change and it is affecting many parts of the country, including my district in Zombo.

There are also biodiversity laws yet most of our medicines, including some of those used for the treatment of COVID, come from the forests or the biodiversity.

There is an increase in floods, landslides and the impact is even greater for the people in the small islands. We have people in the small islands here like Kome, in Lake Victoria, who are also suffering the brunt of climate change to the extent that it has caused environmental refugees. Some people are relocating because of landslides and other catastrophes; in the mountains, we have relocated people to Bulambuli- so these are all challenges.

The other is heath. It is also affecting our health and there is high mortality of mothers and children under five because of indoor air pollution. They are burning firewood, charcoal and lighting using kerosene; this is a reality.

It has also made the cost of living high. Because of too much waste generated and dust, our water is polluted and the cost of treatment even for National Water is very high and the bill is transferred onto the population. Therefore, how can that kind of economy develop? The loss and damage caused by climate change is so high. We need to work together to address it.

All these factors combined can bring local, national, regional and even global conflict. That is why I support this Motion so that we can develop adaptation, resilience capacity of our population so that we can live with this climate change while achieving social economic, empowerment and development. I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. The two chairpersons have supported each other. One is the Chairperson of the environment and the other is the Chairperson of the Climate Change. This matter falls squarely within your docket.

I made a referral yesterday on the minister’s statement on the state of environment in Uganda and which attracted a lengthy debate of two hours. Now that that matter has been substantially referred, I am going to refer this Motion to those committees; draw a central theme, have discussion with ministers and come back with a more comprehensive- because this only touched one aspect, a more comprehensive motion and then we have a full debate and give guidance on the other side of the House.

Therefore, this Motion is referred to the Committee on Climate Change and that on Environment; please, harmonise since you are together on these motions, draw a more comprehensive motion capturing both aspects so that we can have a good debate. Yesterday, we debated for two hours, when this Motion comes, we could do more.

We had Rio+20, you have COP26 coming up next month and these discussions are going on globally. As our delegates - if they are going, if we have the systems to support them to go for this meeting, they must go with this very comprehensive Motion and also be able to exhibit in the international meetings that will be targeting issues on environment. It will make us stronger. So it is referred.

Honourable members, I have two more Motions, which I am not going to be able to process now. One is urging Government to protect and conserve Bugoma Forest in Kikube District and the other one is on the plan to help put in mitigation factors to assist private schools in the problems that they face. We will not be able to handle those two Motions now, we shall handle them on Tuesday and the second one on private schools is from hon. Ssendawula Christine Bukenya from Kyamkwanzi, we will handle this on Tuesday. But now, let us receive the statement under item 9.

RESPONSE BY MINISTER TO URGENT QUESTION OVER THE RAMPANT POWER OUTAGES IN KANUNGU INDUSTRIAL AREA

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister?

6.02

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Mr Sidronius Okaasai):** Mr Speaker, during the plenary of Wednesday 01 September 2021, hon. James Ruugi Kaberuka, MP Kinkiizi West raised concern over the rampant power outages in Kanungu Industrial Area where out of the 720 hours in a month, power was only available for 200 hours which is 80 per cent power outage.

I wish to make the following statement on the matter;

Kanungu is part of South West Region. This region is supplied through one UETCL l32/33kV substation at Mbarara North. This is supported by Ishasha hydro power plant with 6.4 MW installed capacity, and Muvumbe in Kabale with 6.5 MW installed capacity.

Distribution lines which carry the power; the South West region is supplied from two backbone 33kV lines namely:

l. Mbarara North - lshaka - Rukungiri (ll7km) on a 33kV line

2. Mbarara North - Kabale (l27km) 33kV lines.

These lines are quite long and they lose a lot of power. To effectively supply the area, these lines are troublesome.

Planned interventions required to improve power reliability in the area. The Government through UETCL is extending l32kV transmission line from Mirama to Kabale so that Kanungu and environs will be supplied power directly from Kabale Sub-Station. The project is expected to be completed in June 2023.

In the short term, the distribution company will install gadgets such as auto-reclosers in mid October 2021, to cut off sections of the two power lines when faults occur to minimize power interruptions. So there is long term, taking power through a transmission line to Kabale Sub-station and then for immediate, putting out-reclosers in mid October 2021.

Mr Speaker, the ultimate solution to power reliability in the entire Kigezi subregion requires extension of transmission infrastructure to the region to reduce the lengths of the distribution networks. As I said, the lines are more than 100 km long and when you have long lines, there are many problems that arise in between.

The distribution network can improve on system voltages, which causes outrages. This will be achieved substantially when we get the transmission and a sub-station in Kabale. I wish to observe that this project is going on but we have challenges of getting land where the sub-station will be located.

This is where I will request the Members, especially those coming from the region, to work with the ministry and locate the land where we can put the sub-station. Otherwise, the transmission line is already in Mirama Hills. I wish to submit, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable minister. Is hon. Kaberuka here? He is not here.

Honourable members, looking at the time and matters that have been deferred to Tuesday, this House is adjourned to Tuesday at 2 o’clock.

*(The House rose at 6.07 p.m. and adjourned until Tuesday, 28 September 2021 at 2.00 p.m.)*