



The Speaker of Parliament, Ms Anita Among entering the Chamber to preside over the First Sitting of the Second Session of the 11th Parliament. PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

Second Session: Bills passed in the 11th Parliament

38 Bills were passed into law during the 11th Parliament's second session. Key among these was the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, **Monitor reporter** writes.

One of the cardinal functions of Parliament is to pass laws for the good governance of Uganda. Throughout the Second Session of the 11th Parliament, legislators placed a key focus on, among others, laws purposed to bolster Ugandans to desired growth.

To register this very critical and highly pivotal legislation process, the Speaker of Parliament Ms Anita Annet Among pressed all units of the August House to deliver on their mandates.

She unceasingly reminded lawmakers of their cardinal duties of oversight, appropriation and pressing for accountability in Uganda. She reasoned that it is through such that the Parliament guides Uganda to development.

Anti-Homosexuality Bill

On 28 February, 2023, while opening plenary after a two-week-long recess, the Speaker expressed her immense displeasure over the increasing moral decay with a focus on homosexuality.

"We want to appreciate the promoters of homosexuality for the socio-economic development they have brought to the country. However, we do not appreciate the morals that they are killing, we do not appreciate the values of Uganda that they are destroying, and we do not appreciate the money that they are bringing to destroy our culture. We do not need their money, we need our cultures," Ms Among said.

Consequently, she steered plenary in granting the Bugiri Municipality Member of Parliament (MP), Mr Asuman Basalirwa leave of the House to process the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, 2023.

Mr Basalirwa was seconded by the Erute County South legislator, Mr Jonathan Odur and the Laroo-Peche lawmaker, Mr Charles Onen.

Fast forward, despite immense pressure from the Western world and LG-

BTQ sympathisers, the anti-homosexuality Bill 2023 was passed into law.

As he received appreciation from the student leaders at Parliament's entrance on March 31st, this year, Mr Basalirwa openly told Western powers to respect Uganda for her stand and values of Uganda as a nation.

"You [Western powers] are not going to impose a lifestyle on us because there is a difference between life and lifestyle. Homosexuality is a matter of lifestyle. It is not life and we want that to be very clear," Mr Basalirwa said and asked all leaders to "engage other people" to resist acts of homosexuality in all parts of the country.

Tax laws

At the heart of the development of any country is the need for resources. These are mobilised for implementation through avenues such as tax collection, a mandate undertaken by the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA).

Taxes are defined in the tax legislation processed in tandem with drawing the National Budget every financial year. Cognisant of such vital needs, the 11th Parliament Finance Committee then chaired by the Kiboga East MP, Mr Keefa Kiwanuka and his deputy Ms Jane Avur (Pakwach District Woman MP) processed a raft of tax bills.

Ms Avur said these are to strengthen the government's resource envelope, making it self-sustaining. As she presented the report on Income Tax Amendment Bill, 2023, Ms Avur read:

"This means that for FY2023/24, the government aims to increase revenue to Shs29.3 trillion (14.0 percent of GDP) from Shs25.5 trillion (13.4 percent of GDP) in FY2022/23. That means an additional revenue of Shs3.7 trillion (0.6 percent points of GDP)."

The Bills were referred to the Finance Committee after being tabled before Parliament by the State Minister for Finance in charge of General Duties, Mr Henry Musasizi.

These include the Income Tax Amendment, 2023, the Excise Duty Amendment Bill, 2023, the Value Added Tax (VAT) Amendment Bill, 2023, and the Tax Procedures Code Amendment Bill, 2023.

The others include the Traffic and Road Safety Act Amendment Bill, 2023 and the Lotteries and Gaming Amendment Bill, 2023. There was also the Digital Service Tax introduced by the finance ministry which government strongly believed would bolster its efforts to mobilise resources for the development of government programmes.

Despite doubts from a section of stakeholders in the digital space and tax implementation realm, officials from URA were confident the tax would progress well.

While appearing before the committee, they reasoned that a similar legislation already running in the FY 2022/2023, had borne fruits as targeted companies were fully heeding by collecting from their clients and remitting to government VAT.

Ms Tracy Akello, the Supervisor, Policy, Rulings and Interpretations Business at URA said, "You may not be aware, (but) currently, VAT is being paid by the likes of Amazon, Google, Twitter and the rest. We are confident that they will come through."

This law also got support from experts such as the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) indicating that the need for the said companies to sustain the standing image and reputation would make them comply and remit the said taxes.

"These companies have a reputation to protect, so they do not want to ap-

pear to be dodging taxes, moreover in a low-income country [like Uganda]," Mr Ausi Kibowa, an economist at the ISER said.

Energy bills

To avert the increasing vandalism to power infrastructure such as cables and power transformers, legislators tabled the Electricity Amendment Bill in April, this year. In this, lawmakers enacted provisions that would among other things prescribe a 15-year jail term or a whopping Shs1b for anyone found liable of vandalising electricity materials across the country.

National Local Content Bill

Fighting for the empowerment of local talent by international companies operating in Uganda, the Kassanda North lawmaker, Mr Patrick Nsamba introduced a Private Member's Bill. He stated that it would serve as the magic trigger to catapult a vast section of Uganda's economy to desired targets as repetitively echoed by the government.

The legislation largely demands that "a person using public money, utilising Uganda's natural resources or carrying on an activity requiring a license to prioritise Ugandan resident companies and citizens in public procurement."

First processed and passed by the 10th Parliament on May 20, 2020, the Bill was returned to Parliament by the President for redress. It was later passed into law in September 2022.

Other bills

Other proposed legislation passed into law include the Mining and Minerals Bill, 2022 passed on 3 August, 2022. There was the Computer Misuse (Amendment) Bill, 2022 that was masterminded by the Kampala Central Division Member of Parliament, Mr Muhammad Nsereko.

That is not forgetting the Museums and Monuments Bill, 2022, Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, 2021, Uganda Human Organ Donation and Transplant 2022, Parliamentary Pensions (Amendment) Bill, 2022 as well as Public Health (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

BILLS

Tax legislation

The Tax Bills were referred to the Finance Committee include the Income Tax Amendment, 2023, the Excise Duty Amendment Bill, 2023, the Value Added Tax (VAT) Amendment Bill, 2023, and the Tax Procedures Code Amendment Bill, 2023.

Presenting the report on Income Tax Amendment Bill, 2023.

House committees champion the fight against corruption

Embezzlement of funds has marred several government parastatals. Parliament has fought to weed out the vice, **Monitor reporter** writes.

Chief among Parliament's key responsibilities is to execute the oversight mandate and push for proper accountability in all government ministries, departments and agencies (MDA). These have heavily dominated the second session of the 11th Parliament.

The mandate ensures legislators perform their Parliament default duties and every lawmaker is designated to two committees; a Standing Committee and a Sectoral Committee.

It is through such committees that legislator-input is captured in addition to their views, pleas and prayers aired during plenary sittings, all of which require full attendance and participation of the Members of Parliament (MP). To ensure these duties are ably executed, the Speaker of Parliament, Ms Anita Among advised the MPs to fully attend both committee and plenary sittings. She further urged them to accord respect to taxpayers by relaying their views during all designated sittings.

"Members must know that they have to attend House. Let's not waste taxpayers' money. This is a very serious issue and I wonder why we would come at 2pm [and] other people come at 4pm."

Similar demands were made in committee sessions and as a result, major strides were registered by the various committees of Parliament. This helped to push for an end to the persistent vice



The Public Accounts Committee (Central Government) chaired by Mr Medard Lubega Sseggonna probes allegations of financial impropriety, diversion of more than Shs1.16bn, irregular recruitment of staff and improper procurement at Gulu University, recently. **PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT**

of corruption in Uganda that cripples development.

Probes cause govt shake-ups NSSF saga

Shortly after, it emerged that there were allegations of mismanagement and impropriety in the administration of the savers' funds at the National Social Security Funds (NSSF). A select com-

mittee was formed to probe into the state of affairs at NSSF, chaired by the Mbarara South Division lawmaker Mr Mwine Mpaka undertook the matter.

They conducted a marathon but well-detailed probe into the NSSF mess that later occasioned a fleet of changes at the entity.

Chief among these was that Parliament discovered that the then NSSF Executive Director, Mr Richard Byarugaba was guilty of abuse of office. As a result, the plenary sitting chaired by the Speaker debated and adopted the select committee's recommendation to dismiss Mr Byarugaba.

This was put into action and the position was filled by Mr Patrick Ayota in the NSSF top leadership shake-up implemented by the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development.

Iron sheets saga

Similarly, there was the recent iron sheets scandal that involved key government officials. These were alleged to have illegally taken iron sheets and other relief items such as goats and sheep meant for impoverished families in the Karamoja sub-region.

To plough sanity back into the Office of the Prime Minister, the Committee on Presidential Affairs, chaired by Ms Jessica Ababiku (Adjumani District Woman MP) undertook and conducted thorough investigations into the said irregularities.

In the course of digging into the said mess, the committee members also made field visits to the Karamoja sub-region in March this year where it was established that each beneficiary was supposed to get 16 goats.

However, they established that some recipients received poor-quality ani-

mals while others did not get anything. One of the crucial matters was the Shs25b allocated by government for the purchase of goats for distribution.

In May this year, the Committee deputy chairperson, Ms Naome Kabasharira revealed that the report had been finalised without a minority report. In the aftermath, government instituted action against the implicated officials.

NWSC saga

Likewise, the Parliament's Committee on Commissions, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (COSASE) also unearthed rot at the National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC).

After investigations, the committee, chaired by the Nakawa Division West MP Mr Joel Ssenyonyi established a string of irregularities within the entity's administration and financial records.

For instance, they found that NWSC officials had tampered with and wiped out the entity's financial records from the Information Technology (IT) system. The lawmakers believe it was done to escape scrutiny by the Office of the Auditor General for FY2021/2022.

As a result, Parliament adopted the committee report that among other things recommended that a fresh audit be instituted into the financial records of NWSC.

Such aforementioned successes registered in the second session mirror the giant strides that were also made in the First Session of the 11th Parliament. Key among these was the successful push for the cancellation of the controversial monopolistic deal awarded to Uganda Vinci Coffee Company (UVCC).

FINDINGS

Nasty dealings

In light of the iron sheet saga, the Committee on Presidential Affairs, investigated the Office of the Prime Minister and MPs of the Karamoja region. Apart from digging up dirt on the iron sheet misappropriation, the committee members also made field visits to the Karamoja sub-region in March, this year. It was established that each beneficiary was supposed to get 16 goats. However, they established that some recipients received poor-quality animals while others did not get anything. One of the crucial matters was the Shs25b allocated by the government for the purchase of goats for distribution.

Currently, three ministers are under prosecution. They include the minister of Karamoja Affairs, Ms Mary Gorretti Kitutu, the Junior Minister for Karamoja Affairs, Ms Agnes Nanduttu and the State Minister for Planning, Mr Amos Lugolobi.

Preceding the prosecutions, the Speaker warned other ministers against meddling in the matter, saying the issue concerns Ministers from Karamoja sub region.

Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs

The committee then chaired by the Sheema District Woman MP Ms Rosemary Nyakikongoro also registered a win when they compelled the Ministry of Internal Affairs to lay out government plan for the next National Identification card rollout.

Premised on the solid and formidable backgrounds of success, the Parliament administration plans to bolster all committees into higher levels of success. Already, the Speaker and her administration have pledged and undertaken to push all units of Parliament to deliver at the epitome of their abilities in the Third Session that commenced in July this year.



Ms Naome Kabasharira, the Deputy Chairperson, Committee on Presidential Affairs. **PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT**



Mr Joel Ssenyonyi, Nakawa Division West MP.



Legislators on the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources visit Kingfisher Oil Field in Hoima District with four oil wells. PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

Fighting for the growth of Uganda's oil and gas sector

The East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) is a step towards the exploration of Uganda's oil and gas resources. However, it has faced stiff opposition, such as the vote by the EU Parliament against its construction, **Monitor reporter** writes.

The earliest reference to oil in Uganda was about an oil seepage near Kibiro on the shores of Lake Albert which was known to the indigenous people who lived in the area.

The first contribution to the evaluation of the country's hydrocarbon potential was by E. J Wayland, a government geologist, who documented numerous hydrocarbon occurrences in the Albertine Graben in the 1920s.

Subotage

Over the years, efforts have been made towards enabling Uganda to mine and benefit from her oil. However, this has been marred with struggles.

These have among others included the backlash from a section of Western powers and associations insinuating that Uganda's drive towards pumping its first oil is a form of economic interference.

For instance, the European Union (EU) Parliament voted to endorse a resolution seeking to stop the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP).

This was under the allegation that Uganda's project would impede the observation of human rights and pose

negative environmental effects in the states of Uganda and Tanzania where the pipelines run.

In reaction, Parliament joined President Yoweri Museveni in the push for the full realisation of Uganda's black gold, largely found in the Albertine region.

This was seen when the office of the Speaker under Ms Anita Among and Deputy Speaker Mr Thomas Tayebwa went hard on Western powers for their attempt to cause economic sabotage and interference in local oil projects.

As he steered by plenary sitting on September 15, 2022, Mr Tayebwa condemned the EU move at the time.

"This motion seeks to curtail the progress of Uganda's oil and gas development and by extension, the country's socio-economic growth and development. The resolution represents the highest level of neo-colonialism and imperialism against the sovereignty of Uganda and Tanzania," he said.

In a vividly displeased tone, Mr Tayebwa indicated that the EU motion was premised on deliberate misinterpretation and misinformation of facts about human rights issues in Uganda and the East African Community. He, therefore, demanded that the EU rescind its decision and hence withdraw the motion.

"Uganda is a developing country but also a sovereign state that has its



Uganda is a developing country but also a sovereign state that has its unique development needs and priorities. I, therefore, call upon the European Union Parliament to withdraw the motion for a resolution that is against the UN Charter that provides for Uganda's right to self-determination and sovereignty over its natural resources,"

Mr Thomas Tayebwa, Deputy Speaker, Parliament of Uganda

unique development needs and priorities. I, therefore, call upon the European Union Parliament to withdraw the motion for a resolution that is against the UN Charter that provides for Ugan-

da's right to self-determination and sovereignty over its natural resources," he said.

He added: "These are individual MPs abusing their authority. Do you want to say we did not do a good job here? That they have more information about our resources than we do? This is just that they are scared of seeing an African country progressing hence no longer begging every day. You can question anything but not issues of economic sabotage and blackmail."

Other legislators threw their weight behind him, such as the Bugiri Municipality legislator Asuman Basalirwa "Do they [EU Members of Parliament] perhaps have information [that] we do not have?"

He added: "I want to propose that the Executive summon the EU Ambassador [to Uganda, Jan Sadek] and formally express the House's concerns because I do not want us to appear like we want to go into unnecessary battle and understand them. It is the companies from some of those countries that are engaged in oil exploration," Mr Basalirwa suggested at the time.

Additionally, the shadow finance minister, Mr Muhammad Muwanga Kivumbi reasoned that this is an agenda by Western countries to keep Africa impoverished and consequently demanded the said resource be carefully managed.

The Soy County legislator, Mr Fadhil Chemaswet also said that "Uganda is not part of the European Parliament.

If it was EALA discussing this, then we would be thinking about this."

Mr John Teira of Bugabula County North, termed the decision by the EU MPs as an overzealous move.

"Our colleagues are overzealous. There is nothing to fear regarding environmental issues. This is our time to also rise from the neo-colonial status," Mr

OIL PIPELINE

History

The EACOP is a buried thermally insulated 1,443km, 24-inch diameter crude oil pipeline. It will start from Kabaale, Hoima in Uganda to the Chongoleani Peninsula, Tanga in Tanzania with a Terminal and Jetty. Here crude oil will be loaded onto tankers.

The pipeline will have a manifold in Kabaale, Hoima, six pumping stations (two of which will be located in Uganda), 27 heating stations and two pressure reduction stations. 80 percent of the pipeline is in Tanzania.

The development of this pipeline is led by the licensed upstream oil companies in Uganda, with participating interests by the Governments of Uganda and Tanzania.

Uganda expects to begin pumping crude oil in 2025 and the petro-dollars it will earn will also be used to help revive the economy hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

Government geologists estimated total crude reserves discovered in the Albertine rift basin at 6 billion barrels. Uganda, Tanzania and oil firms Total and CNOOC signed agreements in April that will kick-start the construction of the pipeline.

Land acquisition is a two-phase process. Prior to 2021 the focus was on surveying and establishing valuations. During this first phase, land-users were both able to and encouraged to continue to use their land. The second implementation phase concerns the payment of compensation and establishment of in-kind support programmes. Per best practice, the compensation is calculated with a disturbance allowance and an uplift to reflect the time elapsed since the original surveys.

EACOP has regulator approved Environmental and Social Impact Assessments for both the Ugandan and Tanzanian sections. As such, its route does not go under Lake Victoria or cross any IUCN categorised sites. Some 8 percent of the pipeline length traverses designated areas covering an area of 3.5 km². The pipeline will be buried and the surface vegetation restored to be almost invisible in operation. Also, the majority of these are along the boundaries of such areas that have already been largely modified by farming and other human activity. To minimise greenhouse gas emissions from the operation of the pipeline, EACOP is planning to implement several carbon footprint reduction (CFR) measures.

1,443KM
LENGTH OF
THE EACOP
PIPELINE

11th Parliament: Legislating for

Legislation is the core mandate of the Parliament of Uganda. The 11th Parliament prioritised this role with a drive to put Ugandans first, **Monitor reporter** writes.



Speaker of Parliament, Ms Anita Among.

The administration and staff of the 11th Parliament have throughout the Second Session towered in its focus on various mandates it shoulders, chiefly serving the interests of the majority of Ugandans.

At the forefront of cherishing the needs and concerns of Ugandans is the Speaker of Parliament Ms Anita Among, her Deputy Mr Thomas Tayebwa, Government Chief Whip Mr Hamson Dennis Obua as well as the Leader of the Opposition Mr Mathias Mpuuga.

In their various capacities, the said leaders have purposely triggered and supported initiatives to highlight and push for, among others, legislations to centrally protect Ugandans as well as bolster them into growth and development.

Petitions of Ugandans addressed Road safety

Considering that road carnage is one of the leading causes of death, Parliament has on countless occasions mobilised efforts and has also pressed the

government to erect and implement measures to address the deadly crisis.

This was evidenced by the various directives issued to line ministries, departments and government agencies as well as a string of crisis meetings the Parliament's top organ convened with other government organs.

One of these was on 11 July, 2023, when Ms Among called for a meeting to find incontestable ways to address the persistent plague of road accidents in Uganda. The meeting was attended by the major transport sector stakeholders in Uganda.

These included the Executive Director of Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) Ms Allen Kagina, the Commissioner of Transport Regulation and Safety at the Ministry of Transport and Works, Mr Winstone Katushabe, Government Chief Whip, Mr Hamson Obua plus officials from Uganda Police, Ministry of Health and the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Speaker was chiefly dismayed



Prime Minister, Ms Robinah Nabbanja.

that despite having key measures in place to avert persistent accidents in Uganda, many continue to happen and claim lives.

"We cannot continue to implement traffic and road safety acts and yet nobody is there to do their work. Let's hold some people accountable for this," Ms Among said during the plenary sitting. She also noted that "The roads are bad, vehicles, especially trucks are parked on the road and nothing is being done."

This followed a series of grisly accidents within major cities and on highways to far-flung districts. These claimed several lives, including high-profile persons in business, politics, and academia.

After the three-hour-long meeting, convened in her boardroom at Parliament, Ms Among reported to the House and public on a string of measures and resolutions arrived at to purposely arrest the high road carnage in the country. Key among these was to activate some of the provisions within the Road

Safety Act.

"Whereas the Traffic and Road Safety Act, 1998 has attendant regulations that have aided its operationalisation, the Roads Act, 2019 which addresses various aspects of road safety, does not have regulations," Ms Among said as she read out the resolutions.

She added, "There is a need for regulations to operationalise sections 57, 58 and 59 of the Act on the towing and auctioning of abandoned or broken down automobiles on carriageways."

The Speaker thus directed the officials from the Ministry of Works and Transport to expedite the development of regulations.

Intern doctors

Another decisive matter was Uganda's intern doctors who had gone for months without pay. Others demanded internship deployment in various government hospitals. Though a persistent cry, it had suffered unmet pledges.

On 21 June, 2023, the Speaker directed the Prime Minister, Ms Robbinah Nab-



Members of Parliament during one of the plenary sittings.

banja to push the relevant government authorities to fast-track and implement its pledge to the intern doctors. This was also premised on a petition concerning the intern doctors' pains from the leadership and other stakeholders to the Speaker.

"Prime Minister, Ms Nabbanja, during the budget day [government promised to address cries of interns], kindly make a follow-up and ensure the 1,900 interns are deployed and paid," Ms Among said.

She added: "We will be very grateful to receive a report from you on the payment as well as deployment of those interns. After the 1,900 are paid, there is an accumulation of 4,000 interns yet to be deployed and paid. This would help the legislature to plan better on how much money should always be given to help so they can be able to save lives."

Based on the same, the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Central Government, Mr Medard Lubega Sseggonna pressed government to do more. This was before the Ministry of Health Permanent Secretary, Dr Diana Atwine responded to queries raised in the Auditor General report.

"To inform you in advance, without resolving the interns' issue, don't expect any support from Parliament. We are very resolved on the matter because we know your contribution to the health sector," Mr Sseggonna told Dr Atwine.

He added: "We are committed to helping and supporting any efforts towards



Government Chief Whip, Mr Denis Hamson Obua.



Chief Opposition Whip, Mr John Baptist Nambeshe.

Ugandans' prosperity



Plenary sittings of the 11th Parliament. PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

paying these interns both arrears as well as the current budget, because those that have not been paid are offering services and non-payment will affect them."

Consequently, the State Minister for Finance, in charge of General Duties, Mr Henry Musasizi told Parliament that

the national treasury had initiated a release of Shs22b to cover the arrears of the medical interns.

Making the revelation before the plenary convened on 22 June, Mr Musasizi indicated that the government had embarked on all processes required to have the pleas of intern doctors resolved.



Transport Minister, Mr Edward Katumba Wamala.

Teachers

Similarly, on 19 June, 2023, during the Second Session, in one of his oversight tours of the countryside, the Leader of the Opposition (LoP), Mr Mathias Mpuuga received a petition from the National Private School Teachers Association (NPSTA). These, through the NPSTA



Health Minister, Ms Jane Ruth Aceng.

PLIGHT

Unpaid doctors

On June 21, 2023, the Speaker of Parliament, Ms Anita Among directed the Prime Minister, Ms Robbinah Nabbanja to push the relevant government authorities to fast-track and implement its pledge to the intern doctors. This was also premised on a petition concerning the intern doctors' pains from the leadership and other stakeholders to the Speaker. "We will be very grateful to receive a report from you on the payment as well as deployment of those interns. After the 1,900 are paid, there is an accumulation of 4,000 interns yet to be deployed and paid. This would help legislature to plan better on how much money should always be given to help so they can be able to save lives," the Speaker said.

Secretary General, Mr Faisal Ssenono Zaake at Wamatovu SEED Muslim Secondary School in Mpigi District, demanded that Mr Mpuuga presses for the release of their Shs20m Covid-19 pledge by the President.

"We had hoped to use the money to overcome the Covid-19 effects because we were equally affected by the pandemic," the petition partially read.

This directly resonates with the promise Mr Mpuuga made in January this year to take Parliament to the people in their various constituencies.

"We are the people's voice. A voice is as good as what it communicates and these issues are from the citizenry," Mr Mpuuga stated during the Second Session, "Ugandans are suffering, [and] need to be heard."

Human rights abuse condemned

Several legislators have been at the forefront of pushing the observation and respect of people's human rights, a major pronouncement in the Second Session.

Some of the instances registered dur-



It is very appalling. I don't know what the police thinks, what goes on in their mind and how they are trained. We will not allow, not today or any other time, for anyone to illegally take our space. We will continue to express ourselves. We will continue to demonstrate,"

Ms Joyce Bagala, Mityana District Woman MP

ing the bigger part of April, in the Second Session was when a section of opposition women legislators mounted pressure on security organs to cease brutal arrests.

Led by Ms Joyce Bagala, the Mityana District Woman MP, on 27 April, 2023, in front of Parliament, they showed their disapproval of the actions and approach of officials from security organs and the Uganda Police Force.

"It is very appalling. I do not know what the police thinks, what goes on in their mind and how they are trained. We will not allow, not today or any other time, for anyone to illegally take our space. We will continue to express ourselves. We will continue to demonstrate," Ms Bagala said.

The 11-member team also included Ms Joan Namutawe (Masaka District), Ms Juliet Nakakande (Masaka City), Ms Hanifa Nabukeera (Mukono), Ms Stella Isodo Apolot (Ngora) and Ms Joan Alobo (Soroti).

The others were Ms Florence Kabugho (Kasese), Ms Ethel Betty Naluyima (Wakiso), Ms Manjeri Tabakutika (Jinja City), Ms Nyakato Asinansi (Hoima City) and Ms Hellen Nakimuli (Kalangala).

While it was a peaceful demonstration, the aforementioned women MPs were also brutally arrested and thrown into cells at the Central Police Station (CPS) in Kampala.

This was heavily condemned by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Mr Thomas Tayebwa who consequently demanded that the persons involved be investigated and whipped for their actions.

"If you can shamelessly do it at the gates of Parliament, I do not know if we are safe. I do not know if they were considered being as powerful as robots and therefore the need to strangle, undress and humiliate them," Mr Tayebwa told the plenary sitting that was also attended by Ministry of Internal Affairs officials who were camped in the gallery.

Before this, a heated high-level meeting was held and steered by Mr Tayebwa to urgently resolve the persistent brutal arrests inflicted on Ugandans.

The meeting was attended by the Government Chief Whip, the LoP, Opposition Whip (Mr John Baptist Nambeshe)

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and officials from the Prime Minister.

"My question is, who are these people working for? I think the government needs to go back (and establish) who is behind this. I do not think these are people who are working to protect the government or to promote the image of the government. I do not think so," Mr Tayebwa said.

In a bid to openly express Parliament's displeasure over the said actions, Mr Tayebwa adjourned the plenary sitting demanding that the government put an end to the brutal arrests by security organs.

In another part of town, the Speaker stormed Central Police Station in Kampala to champion the release of the 11 arrested female MPs and also cau-

Legislating for Uganda's prosperity

tioned Police officers against the brutal methods used.

"I want to request, as the head of Parliament, that next time you are going to arrest any of my MPs, courtesy calls that you tell me, I am going to arrest so and so. You may not even need to arrest [but] you could tell me to deliver them because these women are mothers and people's wives," Ms Among told the CPS leadership.

Proper utilisation of taxpayers' money

The final months of the second Parliament session were heavily dominated by ensuring the cardinal roles of MPs were executed. These were clustered oversight, legislation, appropriation

and passing of the national budget.

MPs were also constantly reminded to unwaveringly attend plenary and committee sessions. In that vein, Speaker Among stated that it is through this that the pleas and concerns of their constituent members would not only be made known to other government organs but also addressed for a harmonious society.

To achieve this, Ms Among vowed that a tougher whip on absentee MPs would be cracked. For instance, her administration promised to slash allowances of absentee MPs, something she reasoned would not only save but also attach immense respect to the taxpayers' money from which their salaries are drawn.

"Members must know that they have to attend the House sittings. Short of that, we will decide as a Business Committee on what should be done. Let us not waste taxpayers' money."

This was supported by several lawmakers including the Chairperson of the House Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs, Mr Wilson Kajwengye, also Nyabushozi County MP.

"Every time we attend plenary and are deliberating on laws and policies, we are representing our people and we earn for that. So if an MP is not in the field or on duty officially outside [Parliament], why would he or she skip plenary sitting? I support the Speaker," Mr Kajwengye said.

Committed to serve

BY MONITOR REPORTER
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

For two years, Uganda's economy was shut down owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. When business resumed upon the lockdown lifting, the economy was limping, only trying to work towards normalcy. At the August House, business had to continue despite unprecedented times.

Just as Parliament was trying find its feet, the legislature suffered the loss of the now former Speaker, Mr Jacob Oulanyah who died while on treatment in the United States. Mr Oulanyah lost his battle in a Seattle-based hospital to undisclosed health complications and had served in that capacity for only nine months.

This negatively impacted Parliament works, stalling some activities within the law making processes.

Therefore, as the Second Session commenced, the current Speaker, Ms Anita Among reenergised the legislators convened at the Kololo Ceremonial Grounds at State-of-the-Nation Address (SONA) that the Parliament had to deliver at full capacity.

"I implore the committees to ensure that at the end of this session, whose commencement we mark today, will register 100 percent legislation performance," she said.

Consequently, despite the tough circumstances, such as budget cuts that compelled most government installations including Parliament to cut back on expenses, they delivered quality work.

This was seen in the areas of legislation, accountability, and oversight work, among others.

That called for innovative ways to allow for collective legislating. For instance, the administration continued the use of Zoom technologies in all sittings.

This technology was adopted in the committee sessions and plenary, something that consequently allowed all Members of Parliament (MPs) to deliberate remotely.

It also allowed for a fluid flow of committees proceedings. Such work involves processing Bills and also interrogating various matters such as petitions and irregular concerns in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

The same energy was devoted to oversight work in the various constituencies, something the Speaker persistently demanded that all MPs execute.

On several occasions, she sent all MPs to traverse their respective constituencies, push for implementation of government programmes and accommodate pleas made by their electorate.

TECHNOLOGY

When Parliament resumed House sittings, only 100 MPs were allowed in each sitting. The rest attended online which was enabled by the iPads they received. That enabled them to continue legislating amid Covid-19 nationwide recovery.



Ugandan athletes from the World Athletics Championships stand for recognition in the Parliament Gallery, shortly after returning from Budapest, Hungary.
PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

Beacon of hope for Uganda's sports sector

President Yoweri Museveni signed the National Sports Bill into law. It brings hope to the health of sports in Uganda, **Monitor reporter** writes

Seeking to regulate the operation and administration of national sports associations, federations and community sports clubs, Budiope East County Member of Parliament, Mr Moses Magogo tabled the National Sports Bill.

He added that the Bill proposed the creation of a Sports Fund to provide sustainable means of supporting sports in Uganda.

With sports, on a whole bringing Ugandans together, lawmakers in the have throughout the Second Session

thrown off their political party affiliations to chiefly contribute to the growth of sports in the country.

AFCON bid

At the heart of these efforts is the office of the Speaker and that of the Deputy Speaker steered by Ms Anita Among and Mr Thomas Tayebwa respectively.

They have been pivotal in ensuring that Uganda blossoms in her endeavours across all sports disciplines.

Such initiatives are evident in the push for sufficient and or additional resource mobilisation as well as allocation to the sports sector catered for under the Ministry of Education and Sports.

These funds and resources will be critical in the bettering of Uganda's preparation plans and chances of winning the joint bid to host the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) in 2027.

The compassion for sports development, for instance, football in Uganda and the region at large as witnessed Parliament undertake various campaigns which have at times involved canvass-

ing the East African region for desired support for the sector.

Uganda alongside Kenya and Tanza-

LEGISLATION

Bill passed

In mid-June, the National Sports Bill, 2023 was passed and it empowered the National Council of Sports (NCS) to assume full possession of all land on which public sports facilities are found throughout the country.

While endorsing Section 75 the said Bill, lawmakers hope that this would shield such sports facilities from encroachment from local government authorities or other unscrupulous persons that would otherwise misuse them.

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National Sports Bill

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The legislation that was engineered by Mr Magogo was first processed and passed on 2 March, 2023. It was however returned after the President in a letter dated 17 May addressed to the Speaker demanded that some provisions of the Bill be revisited, with key changes required on several sections including Section 75. The Bill has since been assented to by the President.



The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Mathias Mpuuga (in jacket), interacts with residents of Kinoni Town Council. PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

LoP legislates at the grassroots

After several consultations, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Mr Mathias Mpuuga embarked on the agenda of taking the Parliament to the grassroots. **Monitor reporter** writes.

Just weeks into the Second Session of the 11th Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition (LoP), Mr Mathias Mpuuga and his team resolved to stand for the people and embark on activities and processes to ensure their concerns are succinctly addressed.

Having held several meetings with his team and counterparts in the opposition camp, Mr Mpuuga revealed he would embark on taking Parliament to the people.

In this, Mr Mpuuga was fully cognisant of a plethora of hurdles, cries and pleas shouldered by vast Ugandans in distant districts who would otherwise wish to call out for action but remain unheard due to extreme circumstances such as poverty.

He, therefore, purposed and set out to purposefully traverse the country to not only collect views but also have a first-hand experience of the hustles weathered by residents in the countryside.

He went on to also pledge that his office would work with all grass-root leadership units to ensure that the views of constituent members have their actual pains and pleas accommodated.

He pledged that these would later on be used to feed into the final contents of the various forms of legislation to govern the country and the citizenry at large.

Health

In a stopover at the Mityana General Hospital, Mr Mpuuga accompanied by the area Woman MP, Ms Joyce Bagala learned from the hospital's Medical Superintendent Dr Timothy Ssentamu that the medical facility was ailing away and struggling to avail sufficient medical supplies and services to residents.

Dr Ssentamu revealed that the facility was experiencing a breakdown of key hospital supplies including but not limited to patient monitors, beds, and anaesthetic machines thereby impeding sufficient medical redress to locals within the district.

Before Mr Mpuuga's visit, the LoP press had learned that the State Minister for Primary Health-Care Ms Margaret Muhanga had also been at the facility earlier in the day (23 June).

He therefore reached out to Minister Muhanga to ensure her ministry avails the adequate medical supplies and staff at the various facilities.

He noted that it is through such countrywide visits that legislators, especially the opposition have a clear idea of the particular concerns to address.

"We are Members of Parliament (MPs), we have a critical duty of leg-

islation, appropriation and oversight. And in that critical duty, we do undertake on behalf of our people, to do that on their behalf. So we are here in the enhancement of that critical public duty," Mr Mpuuga said.

Road infrastructure

Moving on to the mineral-rich districts, the LoP was overly dismayed that the likes of Kassanda are characterised by deplorable road infrastructure. This was after the Kassanda LCV chairperson, Mr Zimula Kasirye stated that a whopping Shs1.5b is washed away in losses through artisanal and small-scale gold miners in various mines within the district.

As he pressed government leaders to cause positive change in service delivery, Mr Mpuuga also urged the youth who comprise the majority of Uganda's population to engage in productive activities and later plough dividends gained into money-generating activities like coffee farming.

"Land is wealth. However, not when sold, but when developed. You cannot sell land and go to town

to ride a boda boda. You are putting yourself into poverty," Mr Mpuuga said.

Justice

Spirited fights have on countless occasions been mounted on the government by LoP to ensure that justice is served and delivered to the families of the affected persons.

For instance, mindful of the void created when the two of his MPs were arrested and detained at Kitulya Prison, Mr Mpuuga unceasingly demanded that the Makindye Division West MP, Mr Allan Ssewanyana and Kawempe Division North MP, Mr Muhammad Ssegirinya be released.

The LoP constantly noted that the constituencies represented by the aforementioned duo were being denied fairness as their voices in Parliament could not therefore legislate or air out their views.

Such pronounced instances of high-end pressing calls on the government were registered instances when Mr Mpuuga demanded the release of missing persons and also answers to be availed to fami-

AGENDA

Justice

Mr Mathias Mpuuga, the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) was mindful of the void created when the two of his MPs were arrested and detained at Kitulya Prison, Mr Mpuuga unceasingly demanded that the Makindye Division West MP, Mr Allan Ssewanyana and Kawempe Division North MP, Mr Muhammad Ssegirinya be released.

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lies whose relatives were said to be missing.

Mr Mpuuga's constant demands that were made during plenary and at various media addresses were mostly channelled to the Executive and Judiciary arms of government. He consistently noted that the two arms of government needed to iron out the alleged irregularities to enable citizens as those unfairly arrested and detained in government detention facilities to be released.

These demands were in addition to the other forms of displeasure done by the opposition side. For instance, on at least two occasions, Mr Mpuuga mobilised the opposition camp to storm out of Parliament in protest of the continued incarceration of MPs and other Ugandans who were believed to be unfairly jailed.

These were equally supported by the majority of the opposition MPs of the 11th Parliament.

"We have moved out as a sign that we are uncomfortable as some people may presume because we believe we cannot sit to make laws that are going to better the lives of Ugandans when the people we are fighting for are being abducted and missing," the Kassanda County South MP, Mr Frank Kabuye said then.

"We are aware that this is a bush government that came into power by war. We have no bush to go to but shall use the constitutional mandate and the peaceful demonstration means to fight for the freedom of Ugandans," the Bbale County MP, Mr Charles Tebandeke said.



A section of Opposition and Independent Members of Parliament in Plenary.

MPs lead in decent budgeting, push for proper allocations



L-R: Finance minister, Mr Matia Kasaija, Chairperson of the Budget Committee, Mr Patrick Isiagi and the shadow finance minister, Mr Muhammad Muwanga Kivumbi. PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

The budget making process is cumbersome and is sometimes marred with opposition from various players, **Monitor reporter** writes.

Fully cognisant of the value nested within the National Budget, Parliament has without a doubt undertaken all critical measures to not only ensure that the key element is delivered on time but also delivered in ways that are procedurally provided for. The National Budget, which is a key document, is among other things important in defining the major funding priorities of the government for a stretch of 12 months and how such programmes will be funded.

It is against this background that the administration of the 11th Parliament during the second session tasked all concerned government entities to ensure that particular processes and documents are made available for a smooth and timely budget deliberation.

Therefore, Speaker of Parliament, Ms Anita Among during the final bend of the bud-

geting process in the second session spoke tough, openly expressing her displeasure after she learnt that a section of undisclosed persons attempted to obstruct the budgeting process.

Heated plenary opening

During the May 17th session, minutes after starting the plenary, majorly scheduled to deliberate on the details of the budget report, Ms Among stated that she had learnt some mercenaries had hijacked the budget in an attempt to influence appropriations on some of the items of their interests. These persons were never named.

“That there are mercenaries (in the Budget Committee) advocating for particular entities. They are people disorganising the committee,” Among said.

This prompted her to shift the item to the afternoon session as opposed to deliberating upon it that morning as had been scheduled. It took a tough warning issued to the suspects that were believed to be masterminding the irregularity, before the matter could be handled.

“If I do not get a [the budget] report by 2:30pm, I will name and shame the members who are disorganising the committee and we

shall disband the committee. We are not going to continue working like this,” she said.

Adding, “I am told that some ministers have also gone to the committee [Budget] to sit and lobby as Members of Parliament. I am going to go to that Committee myself.”

As members of the Budget Committee moved to reconvene on the same, Kiira Municipality lawmaker, Mr Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda attempted to have the suspected persons named.

“I do not know which members want to misbehave over what. Can we be told which members want to misbehave, what is the matter?” Mr Ssemujju demanded of the Speaker but these names were never made public.

In his view, Mr Ssemujju reasoned that this would serve as a deterrent measure to insulate the budgeting process from a repeat of the same.

Opposition support

In a supportive move to Ms Among’s efforts, the Leader of Opposition (LOP), Mr Mathias Mpuuga pledged to deploy a section of wing, particularly the technical staff and legislators, to investigate the matter in the Budget Committee.

“The Chairperson (of the Budget Committee) must hedge the country against those small non-core interests and make sure that the broader agenda national interests are not circumvented,” Mpuuga said.

He added: “I am interested and I have already sounded out my teams and my team leader [Shadow Minister Finance Mr Muhammad Muwanga Kivumbi] in the committee. We are now following how these events are evolving.”

This eventually allowed the budget committee, chaired by Mr Patrick Isiagi, an amicable environment that consequently allowed him to finalise, compile and deliver the budget report to Parliament for final deliberation before it could be adopted and passed.

The process

The budgeting process commences before the fall of the first two quarters of every financial year. This critical process has informed input from the government Minis-

tries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) preparing their policy statements that are later submitted to Parliament through their line committees.

Chief among other things, the policy statements highlight the major areas that these MDAs want government to fund in the following Financial Year. Specific amounts of funds required for the said planned for programmes are also defined by MDAs in the same policy statements.

Once prepared, leaders of the various MDAs are invited by the leadership of their line committees to speak to and defend the planned items. It is upon conviction, premised on the submissions from the MDAs that various Parliament committees thereafter appear before the Budget Committee to present the budget estimates for respective MDAs and later inform the final Budget Committee decisions.

These decisions are distilled and carried in the National Budget Report which is tabled before Parliament for final deliberation and or debate. After these deliberations, Parliament moves to adopt the budget report and later pass the national budget. Then the final Budget report contents are prepared and presented to Ugandans in June before the open



Ms Rosemary Nyakikongoro, the former Chairperson of the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs. Her sector is often allocated a huge chunk of the national budget.

BUDGET MAKING

Committee roles

The Budget Committee is mandated with monitoring the budgetary actions of government ministries and departments, including local governments and parastatal bodies that derive funding from government’s Consolidated Fund. The committee was created by the Budget Act and considers preliminary budget estimates and the macro-economic plan and programmes. It also looks at the national budget and refers amendments to relevant committees.