



PHOTO BY MIRIAM NAMUTEBI



SECOND SESSION PARLIAMENT PASSES 38 BILLS

By Vision Reporter

In June 2022, President Yoweri Museveni unveiled to Parliament 62 Bills to be handled and processed during the second session of the 11th Parliament, which ended in May 2023.

According to the Parliamentary Hansard, which is the official report of Parliament, the House held 105 plenary proceedings during the second session from June 7, 2022, to May 25, 2023.

During this period, a total of 38 Bills were enacted, and 39 resolutions of Parliament were passed, out of which 10 were to grant leave to private members to introduce private members' Bills.

Parliament also adopted 67 reports, concluded

three petitions, debated 73 ministerial statements from ministers responding to MPs' concerns and also seven statements from the Opposition. On top of the 38 Bills, the House considered private members' Bills such as the National Local Content Bill, 2022 and the Anti Homosexuality Bill, 2023, among others.

PEOPLE'S CONCERNS

According to the Speaker of Parliament, Anita Among, what underpinned debates on these Bills was the promise that MPs made to be a people-centred Parliament. For instance, on April 13, 2022, Parliament passed the Electricity Amendment Bill, which among other things, provides tough penalties of a sh1b fine or a 15 years jail term for anyone found guilty of vandalising

BILLS SIGNED INTO LAW

President Yoweri Museveni signed nine Bills into law, which include:

1. The National Sports Act, 2023
2. The Stamp Duty (Amendment) Act, 2023
3. The Foreign Exchange (Amendment) Act, 2023
4. The Value Added Tax (Amendment) No 2) Act, 2023
5. The Excise Duty (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 2023
6. The Financial Institutions (Amendment) Act, 2023
7. The Income Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023
8. The Income Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023
9. The Tax Procedures Code (Amendment) Act, 2023

electricity infrastructure.

The Bill also permits generation and transmission licences to supply electricity in bulk directly to industries and other users without going through Umeme.

Before the Bill was passed, President Museveni issued a directive that power should

be sold directly to industries at a tariff that eliminates the expensive distribution costs of Umeme.

The President also argued that this would spur economic growth through industrialisation. Indeed, the need to propel industrialisation and enhance job creation for

citizens inspired MPs to enact the Bill.

In May 2022, Parliament also passed various tax Bills which included the Income Tax Amendment Bill, the Stamp Duty Act, the Tax Appeals Tribunal, the Excise Duty Amendment Bill, Value Added Tax Amendment Bill, the Tax Procedures Code Amendment Bill and the Traffic and the Road Safety Amendment Bill.

Apart from the Income Tax Amendment Bill which sought to grant Bujagali Hydro Power Project a tax exemption of five years, the other Bills contained minor technical amendments.

Explaining that due to the strategy of facilitating economic recovery, government had resolved not to introduce new taxes in the 2022/2023 financial year, the finance ministry director for revenue

collection, Moses Kaggwa, said:

"Therefore, the proposed amendments in the various tax laws mainly provide clarifications of ambiguous provisions, close loopholes in the tax laws and simplify the tax laws, to support tax administration and promote voluntary taxpayer compliance, which will ultimately enhance revenue mobilisation and collection."

Although government in the Income Amendment Bill had proposed to extend Bujagali's tax exemption for five years, the Parliament Finance Committee and later the whole Parliament, resolved to reduce the extension to one-year pending investigations on why, despite the tax exemptions power tariffs on electricity from Bujagali had continued to be high.



HOUSE ADOPTED 67 REPORTS

PHOTOS BY PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

Continued from page 29

MINING BILL

The other key law that MPs enacted was the Mining and Minerals Bill, 2022.

It was passed on August 3, 2022. The law introduces a progressive artisanal and small-scale mining licensing scheme for empowering area communities where minerals exist.

Parliament rejected several proposals that government had put in the Bill, like the creation of a Minerals Protection Force and the inclusion of building substances such as sand, clay and murram, among other minerals.

During the second session, MPs also enacted the Kampala Capital City (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Parliament amended the Kampala Capital City Authority Act, 2010 to allow the responsible minister to determine emoluments payable to the authority speaker and deputy speaker, as well as their urban division speakers and deputy speakers.

The amendment which was supported by legislators from across the political divide empowered the Kampala Capital City Authority minister to, in consultation with the ministers for finance and public service, to determine the emoluments payable to the leaders. The amendment was also given a February 2020 retrospective application to cater for former speakers who served, but did not get emoluments.

On August 30, 2022, Parliament also passed the Excise Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2022 scrapping taxes on sugar confectionery, sweets, gums and chocolates.

The Bill was earlier passed in May 2022, but returned to Parliament for reconsideration by the President.

He asked Parliament to reconsider its decision to introduce an excise duty of 20% on sugar confectionery, gums, chocolates and sweets against government's decision not to do so in the current financial year.

Museveni was concerned that the decision was detrimental to local manufacturers because their products were being out competed by imported low-quality products and



The Government Chief Whip, Hon. Denis Obua



Dokolo Woman MP, Hon. Cecilia Ogwal



Hon. Martin Ojara Mapeenzi, MP Bardege- Layibi Division

that the move was working against government's initiative to allow the economy to recover from the devastating effects of COVID-19. On the same day, seven Bills were passed which were required to adhere to international requirements for fighting illicit financial transactions, especially illicit transactions for money laundering and financing of terrorism.

The Bills included the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the Cooperatives Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the Anti-Money Laundering (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the Trustees Incorporation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the Insolvency (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the Partnerships (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

The Attorney General, Kiryowa Kiwanuka, said that all seven Bills are about addressing the issue of beneficial ownership to create more transparency in disclosing beneficial ownership of various financial entities.

The Attorney General further noted that the amendments sought to create more transparency in disclosing those who have a right to some share of a legal entity's income or assets and, therefore, will greatly help the country in fighting corruption.

On March 29, this year, Parliament passed the National Local Content Bill, 2022, which is a private member's Bill, presented by Kassanda County North MP Patrick Oshabe Nsamba.

MUSEUMS, MONUMENTS BILL

On September 14, Parliament passed the Museums and Monuments Bill, 2022 which is aimed at protecting and developing tourism sites as part of the necessary interventions for developing the country's tourism sector. The Bill introduces new provisions, which among other interventions, seek to ensure the protection of cultural and natural heritage resources and the environment. It also provides for public-private partnerships in the conservation, preservation and development of cultural and natural heritage sites.

Through the Bill, government is, among other things, seeking compulsory acquisition of tourist sites like cultural sites. Clause 26 of the Bill states: "The department may, where a monument of national importance or significance is in danger of being destroyed, compulsorily acquire the monument by article 26 (2) b of the Constitution."



Hon. Muhammad Nsereko

The Bill was first passed into law on September 6, 2022, but President Museveni returned it to Parliament for amendments.

In the amendments as required by the President, the MPs considered Museveni's recommendation on prioritisation of procurement of East African goods, works and services under the National Local Content Bill, 2022.

President Museveni, however, returned the

Bill arguing that giving preferential treatment to Ugandan goods, works and services is contrary to the East African Community (EAC) Protocol of free movement of goods and services and the East African Monetary Union.

During the second session, on September 8, 2022, Parliament also passed the Computer Misuse (Amendment) Bill, 2022. The Bill was tabled by the Kampala Central Division Member of Parliament, Muhammad Nsereko.

RETURNING OF BILLS

The Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, 2021, which seeks to make the fisheries sector more organised and more developed, is the other law that MPs enacted.

The Bill was first passed on May 3, 2022, but President Museveni declined to assent to it, noting several changes

that MPs must address.

Returning Bills, the Speaker of Parliament said, is part of the legislation process. The President opposed the Parliament decision in clause 13 to put the surveillance unit on water bodies under the control, training and command of Uganda Police Force and in clause 4, the proposed chief fisheries officer to be the licensing officer. The President suggested that the surveillance unit organisation, command, control and training should be domiciled under the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and Uganda Police Force (UPF).

The other key Bill that MPs passed is the Uganda Human Organ Donation and Transplant Bill, 2022.

The donation and transplant law prohibits any commercial dealings in human organs and tissues.

The law also provides for tougher penalties, including life imprisonment and stiff fines for those found contravening the provisions in the Act. In 2022, Parliament also passed the Parliamentary Pensions (Amendment) Bill, 2022. The Bill was initially passed on September 7, 2022, but the President declined to sign it and reversed Parliament's decision to increase government pension contribution for each MP from 30% to 40%.

The other Bill that Parliament passed was the Public Health (Amendment) Bill, which provides for the criminalisation concealment

of infectious diseases like COVID-19 and Ebola.

Explaining the rationale for the Bill, the health minister, Dr Jane Ruth Aceng, said: "The amendment will facilitate implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) in Uganda by supporting the prevention, protection against and control of the international spread of disease while avoiding unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade."

The minister explained that the Bill would also align the public laws with the current public health surveillance and response structure and procedures outlined in the National Technical Guidelines for Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response.

ANTI-GAY LAW

On March 21, 2023, the House passed the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, 2023 into law, providing for the death penalty in cases of aggravated homosexuality and a 20-year sentence for promoting homosexuality, among other punishments.

The Bill was returned to Parliament after the President asked for the amendment of five clauses before he could assent. Some of the issues that the President wanted Parliament to make clear in the Bill are 'being homosexual and engaging in acts of homosexuality'.

The House considered his concerns and passed the Bill into law again, on May 2.

AMONG, TAYEBWA STEER HOUSE TO EFFICIENCY, MAJOR MILESTONES

By Vision Reporter

The 11th Parliament has been more efficient and effective under the stewardship of the Speaker, Anita Among and her deputy, Thomas Tayebwa.

After her election as Speaker on March 25, last year, Among said the leadership of the 11th Parliament would continue to be guided by vision of being a people-centred House that is anchored on evidence-based debates.

"We shall base all our decisions on facts as presented to the House. Reason and sound logic shall be exercised in tabling our positions," she said in her acceptance speech.

True to her word, the 11th Parliament has already made its mark under her stewardship and has worked harmoniously with the Executive to achieve its goal of serving the people and the nation.

One of Parliament's main functions is to pass laws for the good governance of Uganda and, as such, it has been hailed by the President for a record high number of laws enacted.

The Speaker said the Bills passed in the second session exceeded the 23 that were passed in the first session by 15 and that this was testimony of the efficiency and effectiveness of the 11th Parliament.

She added that MPs in the second session which ran from June 7 2022 to May 25, 2023, were able to process all the Bills introduced by the Executive and the six introduced by private members.

Among made the remarks while welcoming President Yoweri Museveni to officiate at the opening of the third session and to also deliver the State-of-the-Nation Address at the Kololo Ceremonial Grounds on June 7, 2023.

Some of the Bills passed in the second session



PHOTO BY MIRIAM NAMUTEBI

Members of Parliament during plenary on March 21, 2023



The Speaker of Parliament, Anita Among with her deputy, Thomas Tayebwa. They have steered the House efficiently

and assented to by the President include the Mining and Minerals Bill, 2021, Computer Misuse (Amendment) Bill, 2022, Kampala Capital City Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and Physical Planners Registration Bill, 2021.

The Speaker noted some of the critical pieces of legislation which she said addressed existential needs of their society.

The aforementioned include the Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2023; the Markets Act, 2023; the Human Organ Donation and Transplant Act, 2023; the Law Revision (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act, 2022 and the Competition Act, 2023.

In enacting the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, the 11th Parliament strengthened



Adolf Mwesige Kasajja, the Clerk to Parliament

the legal regime to erect what the Speaker called "a moral firewall" to protect and conserve their cherished cultural values as a people.

The Markets law will, among others, help resolve unending conflicts among market operators and vendors countrywide and improve their welfare, while the Human Organ Donation and Transplant law sets

tough penalties for dealing in human organs for commercial purposes.

Other Bills that were passed in the second session include the Excise Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2022, The Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, 2021 and The Public Health (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Among was, however, concerned that whereas the Executive had committed to introduce 55 Bills in the second session, Parliament received only 17 Bills, representing barely 31%. The House normally gives priority to the Government Bills.

The Speaker also said the House debated and adopted 56 reports, passed 37 resolutions, discussed 73 ministerial statements and concluded three petitions. While declaring the third session of the 11th Parliament open on June 7, the President thanked the Speaker and the entire House and hoped that the session would be fruitful.

PERFORMING BEYOND TARGET

The Clerk to Parliament, Adolf Mwesige Kasajja, told *New Vision* that he performed beyond their target.

"On appropriation, as at the end of the last session, we considered the national budget and completed it on time - May 1 - and by the time of the budget reading in June, everything was complete and that is why the budget execution on July 1 began in earnest.

Our accountability committees continue to examine the Auditor General's reports which are now normally submitted on time," he said.

Kasajja added that during the budget reading, the Speaker said the 11th Parliament had timely considered almost all the Auditor General's reports and that they were going to send them to the Executive to take action on the issues raised on ministries, departments and agencies.

He noted that among the petitions they handled in the last session include the one presented by the pre-medical interns over delayed deployment.

"They brought a petition to the Speaker and that petition was debated on the Floor of Parliament and, to a greater extent, a win-win solution was reached by the Government. And so, because we get complaints from the public which are handled through our committees and they end up in the plenary, we are a people-centred House," he said. Kasajja further noted that they have been organising outreach programmes.

"In the last session, we held two outreach programmes in Mbale District in the eastern region and Fort Portal City in the western. In this session, we intend to go to the north and even north-west and when we have these programmes, the entire leadership of Parliament led by the Speaker and technical team

ACCOUNTABILITY

As a way of improving the MPs' participation and performance in plenary and committees and addressing persistent absenteeism, the Speaker promised in June that they would start publishing the MPs' attendance register using the biometric register.

The Speaker noted that this would be a standard measure of performance and a tool for ensuring the MPs' accountability to their constituents.

"We are here to register accountability for people we represent; we should be accountable for whatever we do in this House," Among said.

"We have only two years left to work towards achieving a people-centred Parliament.

We also have to work towards coming back to Parliament," she told the House on June 20.

According to information from Parliament, absenteeism has, sometimes, led to Parliament business stalling due to the unavailability of sector ministers to respond to reports or statements and/or the presiding officers in a few cases being forced to adjourn the sittings prematurely.

come along to interact with local government leaders there," he explained.

He, for example, said when they were in Fort Portal, they interacted with all the councillors from all the districts of mid-western region for two days.

"These councillors exchanged ideas with their area MPs and the Speaker as well as staff. We got their feelings about Parliament and we also communicated what we do," the clerk added. He also stated that all their proceedings are telecast and broadcast live for the public to view and assess the MPs' performance.

He added that in some cases, they have organised orientation courses for local council leaders because the administration of the Parliament Act as amended in 2022, now gives them powers to orient these leaders.

By Vision Reporter

The Opposition in Parliament is charged with a broad and collective mandate of keeping government in check.

To ably champion and execute this mandate, Mathias Mpuuga, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Nyendo-Mukungwe MP, says Article 82(A) of the Constitution and the Administration of Parliament (Amendment) Act bestows leadership upon the National Unity Platform (NUP) party and subsequently, the Leader of the Opposition.

This is because NUP is the largest Opposition party in the 11th Parliament.

Mpuuga says it is against this background that in August 2021 they identified key issues to inform their legislative aspiration of accountability and service delivery to the citizenry.

"Uganda's politics has known the role of initiating legislative policy-making mainly as a preserve of the Executive, while the opposition has mostly been associated with the intention to prevent rather than shape policy," he said in August 2021 while launching his legislative agenda.

Mpuuga stated that the social contract with the citizenry enjoins them to legislate not in their interest but in the interest of their constituencies and the nation as a whole. "This requires, whenever possible, seeking bipartisan support and consensus in pursuit of improved governance and service delivery," he said.

In the spirit of accountability and service, he said key legislative pursuits will be championed, anchoring on the aspirations of the citizenry.

These include electoral reforms, curbing wasteful expenditure, improvement of service delivery and performance of Opposition MPs.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

Since the beginning of the second session on June 7 last year, Mpuuga and his Opposition team has been demanding accountability on several issues, including the high cost of living, missing persons and the state of their two imprisoned colleagues, Muhammad Ssegirinya (Kawempe Division North) and Allan Ssewanyana (Makindye Division West).

OPPOSITION SHAPING POLICY IN PARLIAMENT

Their efforts paid off on February 13 when the Masaka High Court released the their two ailing colleagues on bail after spending about 17 months on remand at Kigo Prison in Wakiso district over allegations of being behind the spate of killings in the Greater Masaka area.

The killings saw about 26 residents murdered between March and June 2021 by machete-wielding assailants.

In the Second Session of the 11th Parliament, the Government and Opposition leaders met twice in the office of the Deputy Speaker, Thomas Tayebwa, over the alleged abductions of mainly NUP supporters by the security agencies.

Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja led the Government team and Mpuuga, led that of the Opposition.

The heads of the security agencies attended those meetings and presented reports about these people who have been missing for two years.

LAUNCHES CONSULTATIONS

Mpuuga announced in his end-of-the year press conference that they were going to prioritise considering constitutional reforms that they hope would improve Uganda's political landscape. Indeed in early June, Mpuuga launched consultations on proposals for the amendment of the Constitution to introduce these reforms.

He organised a three-day consultative workshop on these constitutional and electoral reforms at Speke Resort Munyonyo, where he said the process was intended to energise and refocus efforts of all change-seeking forces in Uganda to make the Constitution matter and all legislations that derive from it. "The Opposition in and outside Parliament needs to find the necessary motivation and drive to make these areas for reform rallying points for the entire country and all stakeholders in Uganda's democratic process," he told the workshop.

The Opposition is pursuing electoral reforms related



PHOTO BY PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

The Leader of the Opposition, Mathias Mpuuga (centre) chairing a Shadow Cabinet meeting in his boardroom at Parliament House

The opposition-led accountability committees of Parliament have been playing what Mpuuga says is a critical role in holding government ministries, departments and agencies accountable for the funds that have been appropriated to them

to key amendments to the Electoral Commission to play its constitutional mandate during the transition process and have powers over an incumbent president.

Other reforms related to the competitive recruitment of leaders of constitutional bodies, registration of Ugandans in the diaspora and prisons, reviewing the mode of political representation, fixing terms of office for commissioners in Electoral Commission, reduction of the size of Parliament and reduction of special interest groups.

They also want to re-introduce the Presidential Transition Bill that was presented by Dr Lulume Bayigga in 2014 with the intent of broadening its scope.

His Shadow Cabinet has been working on a number of what they call pro-people

Mpuuga said they would mobilise the Opposition in Parliament to work more coherently together

legislations.

For example, Ndoorwa County East MP, also Shadow Attorney General, Wilfred Niwagaba has already presented the Constitutional (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and Mpuuga said while efforts

will be made to pass it, another private member's Bill will be developed to realise their aspirations.

Other Opposition MPs that have drafted Bills include Dr Abed Bwanika (Kimaanya-Kabonera) and Hillary Kiyaga (Mawokona North). Bwanika's Bill is titled 'The Contract Farming Bill' while that of Kiyaga is titled 'The Amendment Bill to the Copyright Law and Neighbouring Act' which aims at strengthening the bargain of creators and artists.

Mpuuga told the media early this year that in this session they would mobilise the Opposition in Parliament to work more coherently together because the last sessions they just met and lived in an environment of mutual suspicion and probably never had enough time to understand each other's objectives.

He said in this session they are more inclined to work closely together and minimise "departing points."

OVERSIGHT TOURS

The Administration of Parliament (Amendment) Act empowers the Leader of the Opposition with the support of the Shadow Cabinet to keep the Government in check and offer credible alternatives to its policies.

Mpuuga has been on a countrywide oversight tour to evaluate the Government projects and improve service delivery.

He visited several health centres and schools in districts such as Nakaseke, Luwero, Wakiso, Mukono, Buvuma and Kayunga, among others.

Many of these government institutions were in a sorry state and lacked equipment. Mpuuga called for decentralisation of power by devolution of power from the centre to the local areas to enable the people to participate in the running and development of their areas.

He said they will propose this devolution of powers once there is an opportunity to amend the Constitution.

Mpuuga also told the media early this year that they were going to have "a lot of Parliament outside Parliament," because they are the people's voice.

"A voice is as good as the issues it communicates and these issues live and obtain from the citizenry. I am going to be working a lot with my team in Parliament to make sure that we devote and commit more time with the citizens," he said. He stressed that they will be doing a lot of community consultations to hear from the people and generate their consensus in what they do in Parliament as their legislative framework.

The opposition-led accountability committees of Parliament have been playing what Mpuuga says is a critical role in holding government ministries, departments and agencies accountable for the funds that have been appropriated to them.

By Vision Reporter

Amidst international pressure, Bugiri Municipality legislator Asuman Basalirwa (JEEMA) has heaped praise on Parliament for passing the Anti-Homosexuality Act, of 2023, which according to him, remains a monumental inscription in the history of the 11th Parliament.

The law which curbs the promotion of same-sex relationships was passed during the second session of Parliament that ended in May, this year.

"This has been the most popular and bi-partisan piece of legislation in the history of the Parliament of Uganda. So, what happened was an expression of the feelings, views, and aspirations of the people of Uganda. So, we cannot regret doing the right thing and the interests of the people. Even if you carried out a referendum now, Ugandans are not in for homosexuality and the World Bank and these friends of ours must respect that," Basalirwa said.

"The way polygamy is unacceptable in America is the way homosexuality is unacceptable in Uganda. So, this calls for mutual respect and understanding because, at the end of it all, we need each other," he added.

Although the law has triggered threats to cut aid, with the World Bank leading the crusade, Basalirwa said the time has come for Uganda to look elsewhere for funding.

Other lawmakers, such as the Nakawa Division East MP, Eng Ronald Balimwezo (NUP), said the need to be frugal and tighten the nuts on corruption, will be timely as the country navigates the emerging funding challenges occasioned by the enactment of the Anti-Gay Bill.

"President Yoweri Museveni and his government must toughen against corruption. We lose sh10 trillion every year to corruption alone even with a budget of sh52 trillion," Balimwezo said.

Commenting on the general conduct of business during the second session, Busujju County MP David Kawanga Lukyamuzi, said despite what he described as the 'perennial absence' of ministers in the House, the 11th Parliament has made huge strides during the session.

"Perennial absence of

PARLIAMENT BUSINESS: ANTI-HOMOSEXUALITY ACT STOOD OUT



Hon. Basalirwa



Hon. Nyakikongoro



Hon. Ayume



Hon. Balimwezo



Lawmakers said the need to tighten the nuts on corruption will be timely

ministers in the House affects the effective discharge of our duties. This means that certain matters on the order paper cannot be handled since ministers are not available to give responses which derail our work," he said.

COMMITTEES

During the period under review, the health committee, headed by Koboko Municipality MP Charles Ayume (NRM), is one of the committees that were outstanding, especially when it came to issues touching the remuneration of health workers.

"You cannot replace the health sector with robotics or artificial intelligence and it has to be human beings who need to be trained," Ayume said.

"Amidst the challenges and resource constraints. We thank the Government



Hon. Aceng

for committing money to pay the backlog of interns. This is a step in the right direction," Ayume added, noting the fact that Parliament stood out during the second session when it came to pro-people issues.

Regarding health infrastructure, Ayume said Parliament also piled pressure on government, adding that this led to a directive to kick-start the construction of new maternal wards across various referral hospitals nationwide.

A new loan request worth about \$73m (about sh266b), he added, was also passed to build a new heart institute in Naguru, Kampala.

Ayume added that the passing of the Public Health

Other milestones

Parliament also supported the procurement of defence equipment, which MPs said has helped the country deal with terrorism.

The recruitment of more UPDF soldiers to increase the control of insecurity from within and to secure our territorial borders is the other milestone that MPs said was registered during the second session.

"We have continued to support the construction of Mbuya Army National Referral Hospital to enable our gallant soldiers to have access to quality health care but also to reduce referrals outside Uganda. We have supported *usalama kwa wote* (peace for all) for fighting cattle rustling and criminality in Karamoja and also supported *Operation Shujaa* and monitored operations in Somalia in a bid to streamline and support our gallant soldiers in Somalia," Sheema District Woman MP Rosemary Nyakikongoro said.

(Amendment) Bill, 2021 and the Human Organ Donation and Transplant Bill, 2021 was the other milestone that the 11th Parliament underscored during the second session.

"We have a lot of hope that the National Health Insurance Bill will come," Ayume said.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Rwampara County MP and Deputy Chairperson of the finance committee, Amos Kankunda, who holds a Bachelor of Commerce from Makerere University, believes that the committee has accomplished its tasks on record time.

"My colleagues come on time and address issues," Kankunda said, noting that during the second session, MPs worked hard to clear

all the heavy workload.

"So far we have handled eight Bills and two reports. What is pending is an analysis of the Single Treasury Account (TSA) where we look at the cash expenditures, cash limits, and warrants and how they affect the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)," he added.

SECURITY COMMITTEE

The parliamentary defence and internal affairs committee oversees the operations of the two sectors; the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs and all their departments.

According to Sheema District Woman MP, Rosemary Nyakikongoro, the former chairperson

Parliament passed the Anti-Homosexuality Act, which according to MPs, remains a monumental inscription in the history of the 11th Parliament. The law which curbs the promotion of same-sex relationships was passed during the second session of Parliament that ended in May

of the committee, in the last two years the committee has approved two supplementary budgets, one for salary enhancement and the other for Operation Shujaa which is poised at eliminating terror cells in neighbouring DR Congo.

In terms of transport logistics, Nyakikongoro said the committee been very constructive in securing Police patrol vehicles for judges.

"We also championed the enhancement of CCTV cameras, water and electricity for the sectors we oversee," she said.

Nyakikongoro said the committee also advocated for the establishment of the National Defence College. The college, she added, will improve on building the capacities of senior officers and men of the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces.

"We were very active in the establishment National Forensic Science University of Uganda. This facility is the first of its kind in Africa. It will deal with cyber security, digital forensics, behavioural forensics and it will also assist in maintaining the national forensic database, voice, deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA), firearms, counterfeit currency, narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and internal security," she said.



SCORECARD: MPS IMPROVED

By Vision Reporter

Legislators have improved their performance during the second session of the 11th Parliament. Parliament has the powers to make laws on any matter for peace, order, development and good governance of Uganda.

The Bills passed in the second session exceed the 23 passed in the first by 15. This, according to MPs, is testimony of the efficiency and effectiveness of the 11th Parliament.

Speaker of Parliament and Bukedea District Woman MP, Anita Among, commended legislators for their improved performance during the second session of the 11th Parliament.

Among said MPs in the second session which ran from July 2021 to June 2023, were able to process all Bills introduced by the executive and another six Bills introduced by private members.

Some of the legislation include the Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2023, the Markets Act, 2023, the Human Organ Donation and Transplant Act, 2023, the Law Revision (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act, 2022 and the Competition Act, 2023.

Among noted that whereas the Government had committed to introduce 55 Bills in the concluded session, Parliament received only 17.

She added that in the last State-of-the-Nation Address, President Yoweri Museveni listed 62 items comprising the government's legislative agenda for the second session. Of these, 55 were Bills, while others were reports. She indicated that only 17 Bills were actually introduced, representing barely 31%.

She urged the Leader of Government Business in Parliament to whip Cabinet members so as more business is introduced in the third session which commenced with the State-of-the-Nation Address.

The Speaker enlisted other strides registered by Parliament in the previous session to include 56 reports debated and adopted, 37 resolutions passed, 73 ministerial statements discussed and



Members of Parliament during the Second Reading of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill at Parliament on March 21, 2023

three petitions concluded. She hoped that the third session would perform better than the second and called on legislators to improve on attendance for plenary sittings and committee meetings.

"As we embark on the third session, we are duty bound to effectively serve the electorate that we represent through regular attendance and participation in both the House and committees. We owe it to our electorates, as a people-centred Parliament, to play the roles for which we were elected," Among said.

Legislators have been urged to go beyond their role of

appropriating and approving the budget and ensure that oversight is carried out.

"Oversight is one of our roles and as we give out money, we must do oversight on how the money we approved is disbursed. There should not be an aspect of conflicting oversight roles. The only institution mandated by the Constitution to do so is the Parliament of Uganda," Among said.

A TOTAL OF 33 BILLS WERE PASSED BY PARLIAMENT IN 2022. IN THE PAST, PARLIAMENT WAS ACCUSED OF DELAYING THE PASSING OF BILLS

She urged committees of Parliament to scale up their oversight role at the beginning of the new financial year on July 1, 2023, in accordance with Article 79 of the Constitution that prescribes the functions of Parliament.

The Speaker commended the Public Accounts Committees for their timely consideration of reports of the Auditor General in accordance with Articles 164 (3) and 196 of the Constitution and section

16 of the National Audit Act, 2008.

"As Parliament, we will continue to effectively play our role of oversight, appropriation, representation and legislation," Among added.

She observed that local government financing in the national budget continues to stagnate, making the budgets of local governments insufficient.

"The capacity of local authorities to raise local revenue remains dismally low.

The continued roll-out of the Parish Development Model requires addressing existent challenges which this Parliament adequately echoed during its debates,"

Among said. The Speaker

cited increased domestic borrowing, continued accumulation of domestic arrears by government and the high unit cost of implementing public infrastructure projects.

She urged the Executive to expand the tax base through investing public resources in productive growth areas to enable adequate financing of our national priorities.

The Speaker appealed to accounting officers to ensure effective budget execution through plugging budget leakages, strengthening internal controls and ensuring value for money.

Among tasked the Executive with tabling regulations for the Bills that have been assented to make them Acts and laws.

She revealed that many of the Acts that have been processed by the 11th Parliament and assented to by the President lack regulations that are supposed to enable their operationalisation and enforcement.

Among noted that a lot of time is spent processing Bills, but what is not discussed are the details of their implementation and enforcement.

She tasked the Attorney General, Kiryowa Kiwanuka, with always examining the various laws passed in the



Speaker Among

DURING SECOND SESSION

PHOTOS: PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

recent past to ascertain those that are without regulations. Kiwanuka, the Speaker added, should ensure that the latter regulations are duly formulated and a report presented to the House.

MPS PASSED KEY BILLS
One of the key Bills that defined the character of the 11th Parliament in 2022 was the approval of the controversial National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Amendment Bill 2022 that has been passed into law.

The Bill faced a lot of divergence of opinion in relation to midterm access for NSSF members. The Bill was returned initially after it was passed. But due to the tenacity of the late Speaker, Jacob Oulanyah, it was passed and assented to by President Museveni.

A total of 33 Bills were passed by Parliament in 2022. In the past, Parliament was accused of delaying the passing of Bills.

Consequently, this made the law-making process tedious and curtailing national development. Some political analysts and technocrats estimate that on average, it takes seven to nine years to pass a law in Uganda.

Even after the law is passed, issues around their implementation hinder the execution of the law. While the public has commended the speed at which Bills are being passed, some now say the focus should be on the quality of the Bills.

MPs expressed disappointment over the silence on several Bills that are passed without being assented to or returned after the 30-day period required for their assent.

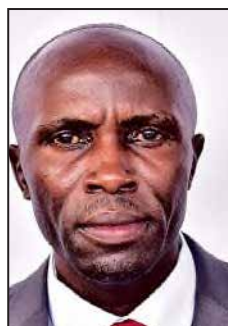
Maruzi County MP Maxwell Akora said the NSSF Bill remains one of the most controversial ones.

He said the NSSF management treats it like a provident fund which is supposed to provide retirement benefits estimated to last 15 years.

Akora argued that if you grant midterm access, it might reduce the availability of retirement benefits and growth of the fund. He noted that the 20% allowed for midterm access was small. One can spend it on an investment which can go bad.



MPs Margaret Makhoha (Namayingo District Woman Rep.) and Stephen Kisa (Luuka South County) addressing prisoners in Bushenyi District



Hon. Denis Nyangweso

Akora reasoned that the best alternative for social security benefits was for one to get it on a monthly basis over many years.

However, he agreed that it was the choice of Ugandans to have the midterm access to help people during the difficult COVID-19 period.

Akora called for the reduction of wastage in expenditure of resources by NSSF top management. He cited reports showing that the NSSF top management were living lavishly and taking expensive team

building training. This, he said, reduces the margin of payment of interest to members.

Akora said last year, Parliament passed many Bills, adding that the quality of the Bills now needs to be taken into account. He cited the Parliamentary Pensions Bill, (Amendment) 2022 which had to be returned by the President, adding that the increase in pension provided for in the bill meant that the salaries of MPs was equally increased.

Tororo Municipality MP Apolo Yeri Ofwono said two Bills – the Mining and

Minerals Bill 2022 and the Electricity Amendment Bill 2022 were very important.

“One thing about the Bills is their implementation,” Ofwono said.

He said the Minerals Bill should be helping the mining sector. He cited the problems faced by mining investors, such as the Guangzhou Dongsong Energy Group-owned industrial complex in Tororo district.

Ofwono said the company has failed to produce fertilisers, thus failing to create employment in the district.

“The Guangzhou project is abandoned. The investors were given free land, but have failed. It looks like they were interested in getting free land,” he said.

Parliament created more cities that do not have substantial urban plans to support infrastructure development, which is linked to the lack of accredited physical plans and physical planners.

One of the legislators said physical plans are needed for the new cities to minimise sprouting slums and unplanned housing structures.

Kigulu County South MP Milton Muwuma said the Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, 2022 was passed, but has not been assented to.

“The fisheries community has been complaining of army involvement in the sector. The role the army can play has been defined to include protection when the sector is under attack in local waters,” Muwuma said.

The president is expected to assent to a Bill within 30 days after it is passed by the House. MPs have



Hon. Maxwell Akora

become edgy over the Museveni’s delay to assent to the Bill.

Busia Central MP Denis Nyangweso noted that many Bills were passed, but have not been assented to or have been returned, casting some doubt on their future.

Nyangweso said while Parliament has made efforts to pass many Bills, there is need for information about them when they are not assented to within 30 days as stipulated by law.

ABOUT PARLIAMENT

The Parliament is the national legislative body where elected and appointed members from all over the country meet to draft, debate and pass laws/legislation through which the institutions of government endeavour to guide the country’s progress.

It derives its roles/functions from Chapter Six (6) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. The establishment, composition and functions of Parliament are derived from the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. Article 77 (1) states that “there shall be a Parliament of Uganda”. Parliament conducts its business in both plenary and committees.



By Vision Reporter

During the second session, Parliament passed 39 resolutions, out of which 10 were to grant leave to private members to introduce Bills of private members.

A resolution of Parliament is a formal statement of an opinion or decision agreed upon by the House or any of its committees.

While the former Speaker, Jacob Oulanyah (RIP), said on numerous occasions that resolutions or recommendations made by Parliament are advisory, the Executive can use its discretion to either adopt or dismiss them.

He said the only resolutions binding are those directed by the Constitution or the financial ones.

For the past years, his statement seemed to hold water for the Executive who, on many occasions, seemed reluctant to implement several resolutions that were made by Parliament, that at one time, the then Speaker, Rebecca Kadaga, who is currently the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for East African Community Affairs, had to complain about government's reluctance to implement the resolutions.

In 2019, while at a dinner organised for the delegates attending the ninth Commonwealth Regional Meeting of Heads of Anti-corruption agencies in Africa at Serena Golf Resort, Kadaga said Parliament passes many resolutions against corrupt officials, but government was reluctant to implement them.

"Our committee in Parliament carried out investigations three years ago concerning some road works.



Buvuma District Woman MP, Hon. Susan Mugabi, with MPs on the Committee on Agriculture during consultations on the Fisheries Bill



Speaker Anita Among and Deputy Speaker, Thomas Tayebwa

PHOTOS BY PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

of Parliament enjoin a minister to submit to the House an action point taken following the resolutions and recommendations of the institution.

To ensure that Parliament walks the talk and that the Executive takes action on the decisions made by Parliament, Among, last year in November, put the top-most arm of government to task to present to the house action reports on decisions made by her body.

"Leadership should be tailored towards solutions and not mere rhetoric lamentation. As people's representatives, Parliament must be seen to be walking the talk and the Executive taking action on the decisions made. It's not a matter of us coming here and just talking. We must account to the public," she said.

Among dedicated two weeks of plenary sitting to allow ministers to present to Parliament actions taken on various reports that the House came up with and related recommendations.

During the session, each sector was also given time on the Order Paper to present actions taken on the various resolutions. MPs also debated the report.

Among explained that when action is taken on various reports from Parliament, it enables the House to identify challenges faced by Government and subsequently provide appropriate interventions.

"We come here to debate for the good of our people. How shall we be evaluated? Even if you go to school, you can always be evaluated by your performance," she added.

HOUSE MUST WALK THE TALK, SAYS SPEAKER

It was established that money we had appropriated to pay project-affected persons was handed over by Uganda National Roads Authority to the contractors who put the money on fixed accounts for two years," she noted.

Kadaga said there is also a lot of frustration from the public which expect Parliament to act and bring the perpetrators to book.

AMONG TIGHTENS GRIP

However, with the Speaker of Parliament, Anita Among, who is also the Bukedea District Woman MP, the tides seem to be changing.

As a people-centred Parliament, Among said

WHAT MPS SAY

According to Bugabula County South MP, Maurice Kibalya (NRM), there is no reason why MPs should continue holding proceedings when action is not taken on their reports. On his part, Bugiri Municipality MP, Asuman Basalirwa (JEEMA), said if Parliamentary reports are not prioritised, then there was a risk that they will be over taken by events. "Each time a resolution is made, a report is presented, action is promised by the Government. They even give themselves time-lines which they never fulfil. Are we proceeding well, if we concede to the request by the Prime Minister that we wait and a full report comes regarding the various actions?" Basalirwa asked.

the recommendations and resolutions of Parliament must be taken seriously and implemented for the benefit of the masses.

During the second session, key out of the 39 resolutions of Parliament that were passed, covered several sectors of ministries such as education, works, gender, Office of the Prime Minister, defence, internal affairs, justice, ICT and water

Speaking at the opening of the third session of Parliament, Among said during the second session of the 11th Parliament, which started on June 07, last year and ended on May 25, that Rule 220 of the Rules of Procedure

OTHER RESOLUTIONS THAT WERE PASSED

- On July 21, last year, Parliament passed a resolution allowing government to acquire 150,000 preference shares worth approximately sh207.1b in ROKO Construction Limited to recapitalise the company.
- On June 7, last year, Parliament passed a resolution to prioritise investment in Health Centres IV, which had limited funding.
- On July 7, last year, Parliament passed a resolution to harmonise and enhance the remuneration of public officers.
- On July 20, last year, a resolution urging government to prioritise interventions into the Nodding Disease syndrome in Northern Uganda was passed.

- On August 4, last year, Parliament passed a resolution to appreciate the President for the clear and precise exposition of Government Policy contained in the State of the Nation address to the Parliament.
- On August 9, a resolution to prioritise the state of the youth in Uganda was passed.
- On August 11, last year, Parliament passed a resolution for Government to address the electricity supply challenges in West Nile.
- On August 18, last year, Parliament passed a resolution urging government to respond to

- the plight of Karamojong children enslaved on the streets begging and child labour.
- On September 27, last year, Parliament passed a resolution urging government to prioritise and improve mental health and psychiatric care in Uganda.
- On the same day, Parliament passed a resolution for the government to establish the National Agricultural Bank to give low cost credit to farmers.
- On September 28, last year, Parliament passed a resolution to commemorate 100 years of the existence of Makerere University in

- which the house implored the executive to increase funding for Uganda's oldest public university.
- While appearing before the Public Accounts Committee in August 2022, the leadership of Makerere University proposed the need for additional funding, including sh100b required to renovate the dilapidated halls of residence and increasing the daily feeding budget for each government-sponsored student from sh4,500 to sh10,000, among others.
- On August 6, last year, Parliament adopted a report on the state of health care services delivery in selected health

- facilities in Busoga, Elgon, Bukedi, Ankole and Buganda sub-regions.
- On July 13, last year, Parliament adopted a report on the petition of unsatisfactory and unfair service delivery by various telecommunication service providers in Uganda.
- On August 18, last year, Parliament adopted a report the status of human rights and human rights violations in the country.
- In November last year, Parliament passed a resolution urging government to address the challenges facing the girl child and children in general in the digital era. The resolution adopted

- by Parliament was for the government to implement the Trafficking in Persons Act, 2019 and the Anti-Pornography Act, 2014.
- Parliament further passed a resolution urging government to verify and pay compensation to the people who have lost lives, livestock and property to the cattle rustlers.
- On December 7, last year, Parliament adopted a report on the inquiry into allegations of misconduct and misbehaviour made against Parliament by lands state minister Persis Namuganza.
- On December 8, last year, Parliament adopted a report on the petition on salary enhancement discrepancies for nurses and interns, to standardise and harmonise salaries of all government workers.