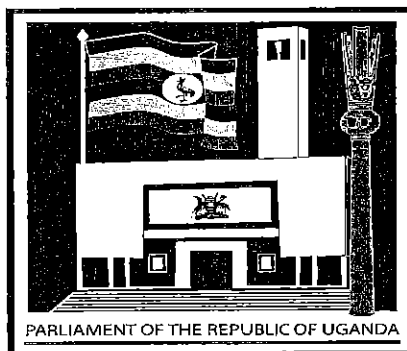


PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA



REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL ECONOMY ON THE
PROPOSAL BY GOVERNMENT TO BORROW UP TO US \$ 482,578,142.32
FROM THE EXPORT - IMPORT BANK OF CHINA TO FINANCE THE
CONSTRUCTION OF THE 183 MW ISIMBA HYDROPOWER PROJECT AND
THE ISIMBA - BUJAGALI INTERCONNECTION PROJECT.

MARCH 2015

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Rt. Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, the Committee on National Economy considered the request by Government to borrow US\$ \$ 482,578,142.32 from the Export – Import Bank of China, to finance the construction of Isimba Hydropower Project and Isimba – Bujagali Interconnection Line Project in accordance with Rule 166 (2) (b) of the Parliamentary Rules of Procedure. The request was presented to this House by the Hon. Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development on 8th October 2014 and accordingly referred to the Committee for consideration.

The Committee considered and scrutinized the request and now begs to report.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The Committee held meetings with;

- i. The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development;
- ii. The Minister of Energy and Mineral Development;
- iii. The Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited;
- iv. The Uganda Electricity Transmission Company;
- v. The Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Authority;
- vi. The Office of the Solicitor General; and
- vii. The National Planning Authority

2.1 The Committee studied and made reference to the following Documents;

- i. The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development's brief on the loan request;
- ii. The feasibility study report for the Development of Isimba Hydro Power Plant and the Isimba –Bujagali Interconnection Project;

- iii. The commercial contract for the Engineering Procurement and Construction(EPC) of the 183 MW Isimba hydropower project and the Isimba –Bujagali Interconnection project;
- iv. Minutes of the MEMD contracts committee meeting on consideration of an EPC contractor for the construction of the 183 MW Isimba Hydro Power Plant and Isimba-Bujagali Interconnection Line;
- v. The draft Financing Agreement between the Republic of Uganda and the Exim Bank of China;
- vi. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)between Government of Uganda and China International Water and Electric Corporation (CWE) for construction of Isimba Dam and the Isimba – Bujagali interconnection Electric power line

The Committee also undertook a field and inspection visit to the proposed implementation site of the project in the district of Kayunga

3.0 BACKGROUND

Over the last fifteen years, many Sub-Saharan African countries have made progress in improving their infrastructure, but results have been mixed across sectors and country groups. The African Infrastructure Development Index (AIDI) shows some overall progress between 2000 and 2010. Improvements in the overall index were mostly driven by enhancements in information communications technology (ICT), and to a lesser extent, better access to water and sanitation. By contrast, electricity production stagnated, and transport development has been limited.

While the rest of the world improved electricity supply in the last two decades, Sub-Saharan Africa's per capita electricity production remained low and largely stagnant. The 48 Sub-Saharan African countries, with a population of about

1.1 billion, generate roughly the same power as Spain with a population of 47.27 million (World Bank and African Development Bank, 2013).

In the case of Uganda, the country is currently faced with an acute electricity supply shortage, despite the existing substantial power resources. As a result, the total installed capacity of Uganda's energy system was about 822MW at end of 2013. This capacity is still inadequate given that the need to provide reliable, cost effective electricity supply is still very low visa viz the growing demands of the economy. For any country, an adequate supply of electricity is a necessary condition for continued development.

Addressing this infrastructure bottleneck is evident in many Sub-Saharan African countries and is important for several reasons. It is needed to engender a stronger supply response and raise potential growth; An added consideration for many low-income developing countries is the importance of improved supply of electricity infrastructure to foster economic diversification and structural transformation—for example in the absence of reliable electricity supply, it is difficult for economies to transition from low to high productivity activities. At the center of Uganda's, growth and development strategy is the program of infrastructure investment in electricity projects to address the electricity production infrastructure gap as envisaged in its Vision 2040.

The NDP sets a Power Sector Development target of annual per Capita consumption increasing from 75kWh/Capita to 674kWh/Capita. This target requires an additional 3,500MW to Uganda's existing National Grid. With the Bujagali Hydropower Project (BHPP) now in operation, the National Grid has a capacity of 850MW. In addition, the Isimba Hydro Power project is also one of the hydropower projects earmarked under the National Development Plan (NDP 1) for development by Government.

Access to electricity enhances the socio- economic development of the population through better access to Education, Health Care and Personal Security as it facilitates development of small scale industrial and commercial enterprises thus providing an added incentive to larger scale industrial and commercial investment in the country.

4.0 PROJECT LINKAGE TO COUNTRY STRATEGY

The project is in line with;

- i. The Uganda Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan (NDP) (2010/2011 - 2014/2015) that identifies construction of large hydropower plants through Public and Private investments as one key strategic intervention to catalyze economic development;
- ii. The Power Sector Investment Plan (PSIP) that examined supply options to meet demand under different economic growth scenarios; and
- iii. The Hydropower Master Plan for large hydro power plants

5.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECTS

The main objective of the Isimba Hydropower Station (183MW) and the Isimba – Bujagali Transmission line projects is to increase the hydro power generation capacity and supply locally and regionally. This will contribute to satisfying the domestic power demand, lower the cost of power to the consumer in the long run and the ability of the country to export power regionally. The specific objectives of these 2 projects are to;

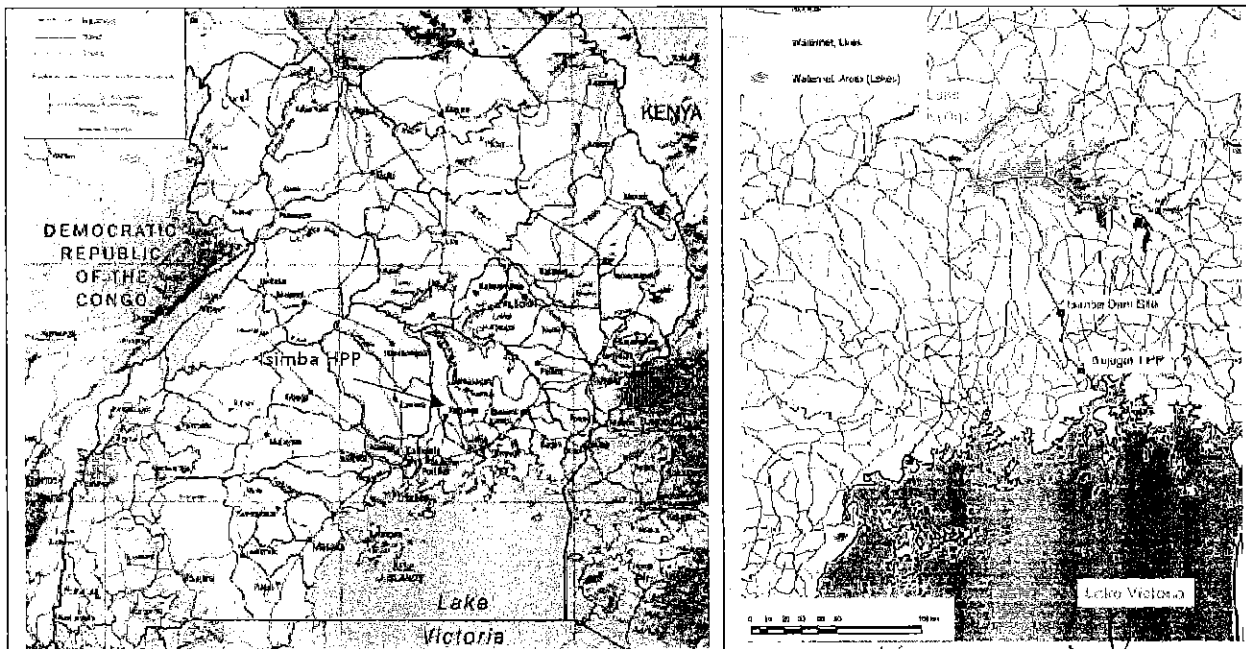
- i. Increase the country's hydro power generation capacity.
- ii. Increase the length and strength of the electricity transmission network in the country.
- iii. Increase power supply locally and regionally.
- iv. Increase electricity access in the country.
- v. Increase the affordability of electricity in the country.

- vi. To satisfy the fast growing electricity demand in the country and the region.
- vii. To improve on transport connectivity between the districts of Kamuli and Kayunga.

5.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The Isimba Hydropower Station (183MW) project and the Isimba – Bujagali Transmission line are located along Victoria Nile downstream of Bujagali Hydropower Station. The Power Station will be located 40 kilometres, downstream of Bujagali Power Station at the village of Isimba, on the Victoria Nile, in Kayunga and Kamuli Districts. The Isimba – Bujagali transmission line will start at the substation of Bujagali Hydropower Plant on the western bank of the river Nile and end at the Isimba Hydropower Plant.

Figure 1: Location of Isimba Hydropower Station (183MW) and the Isimba – Bujagali Transmission line Project



Source: Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development

5.2 EXPECTED OUTPUTS FOR THE PROJECTS

The expected outputs for these 2 projects are as follows;

- i. Constructed 183MW Isimba Hydro power plant.
- ii. Constructed 4x45.8 MW Isimba Hydro power plant
- iii. Constructed 132kv Isimba power substation.
- iv. Constructed 132KV Isimba-Bujagali, double circuit steel tower power transmission line (approximately 41km).

5.3 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE PROJECTS

The performance indicators for these 2 projects are as follows;

- i. Isimba hydro power generation plant constructed, tested, commissioned and fully operational within 5 years
- ii. Isimba power substation constructed, tested, commissioned and fully operational within 5 years.
- iii. Isimba-Bujagali electricity transmission line constructed, tested, commissioned and fully operational within 5 years.
- iv. Isimba bridge in place and fully opened for the public (motorists) within 5 years.

5.4 PROJECT COMPONENTS

The 2 projects are composed of the following 3 components;

- i. Isimba Hydropower Plant
- ii. Isimba Substation
- iii. Isimba – Bujagali Transmission Line

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6.0 TOTAL INVESTMENT COSTS AND FINANCING FOR THE TWO PROJECTS ARRANGEMENTS

The total investment costs of these 2 projects based on the feasibility study of the projects is estimated at **USD\$ 633.45 million** (see table 1 below). The construction cost of the projects is estimated at **US\$ 567.739 million** of which **US\$ 482.58 million** will be provided through external financing (85%) through a loan from the Exim Bank of China , while the balance will be provided by Government of Uganda (15%). The table 1 below shows the project construction costs per component.

Table 1: Summary of total investment costs of the projects

Item	USD \$ Million
Construction Costs of the Projects	567.74
Financial Fees	2.56
Interest during construction period	16.89
Trial -Operating working Capital	1.64
Additional Cost from Government	44.62
Total Investment Cost of the Projects	633.45

Source: Feasibility study report for the Projects

From table 1 above, the construction costs of the projects are estimated at US\$ 567.739 million and their breakdown is shown in table 2 below. The financial fees (financing cost) includes the management fees (USD \$1.21 million) and commitment fees (USD \$1.35 million) payable to the Exim Bank of China with rates of 0.25% and 0.25% respectively. 85% of the construction costs that will be obtained from the Exim Bank of China through this proposed loan will attract an interest rate of 2% and its estimated that this interest will amount to USD \$ 16.89 million. Additional costs from the government include resettlement action plan implementation, consultant of construction supervision among others.

Table 2: Construction costs of the 2 projects by Component

1	Isimba Hydropower Plant	USDS Million	% Contribution
1.1	Civil Works	223,456,854.30	39.36%
1.2	Hydro-Mechanical Works	131,272,731.82	23.12%
1.3	Gates and Accessories	26,941,188.04	4.75%
1.4	Electrical Works	169,200,640.32	29.80%
	Sub total Hydropower Plant	550,871,414.48	97.03%
2	Isimba Substation		
2.1	Civil Works of Isimba Substation	2,192,159.14	0.39%
2.2	132 kV Isimba Substation	2,889,765.00	0.51%
	Subtotal Isimba Substation	5,081,924.14	0.90%
3	Transmission Line to Bujagali		
3.1	Transmission Line to Bujagali	9,521,804.00	1.68%
3.2	Extension of Bujagali Substation	2,263,848.34	0.40%
	Subtotal Transmission Line and	11,785,652.34	2.08%
	Total Project Costs	567,738,990.96	

Source: Brief to Parliament (MoFPED)

From table 2 above, it can be noted that **97.03% (USD \$550,871,414.48)** of the total project construction cost will finance the construction of the Isimba hydro power plant, while **2.08% (USD \$11,785,652.34)** will finance the construction of the Isimba – Bujagali transmission line. The rest of the funds **USD \$5,081,924.14 (0.90%)** will finance the construction of the Isimba Power Sub-station.

7.0 LOAN TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. **The terms** of the loan (China EXIM Bank) are as follows:

- Loan amount : US\$482,578,142.32 million
- Loan period : 20 years including 5 years of grace
- Interest Charge : 2% per annum fixed
- Management Fee : 0.25% of the Loan (One-off and payable in first year of grace period)

- Commitment Fee : 0.25% on undisbursed but available amount per annum.

7.1 Other Conditions

- Provision to EXIM Bank of China of the legal opinion of the Attorney General on the legal validity of the loan documents to the Republic of Uganda.
- On lending by Government to UEGCL and UETCL of the entire proceeds of the financing on terms and conditions acceptable to the EXIM Bank of China.
- Establishment by Government of an Escrow account in a commercial bank in Uganda and acceptable to the EXIM Bank of China, to which the revenues generated from the project are deposited as a direct stream for servicing the debt obligations arising from the operation.
- Government to ensure that UETCL and UEGCL conclude a Power Purchase Agreement (on take or pay basis) for the project, and that UETCL and UEDCL and UMEME (or its successors in title or assignees) conclude a Power Sale Agreement on take or pay basis, in which UMEME or its successor is obliged to make deposits of revenues generated from the project to the Escrow Account above. Any shortfall in collections and for debt service would be topped up by Government.
- Government to ensure that unresolved land acquisition issues at the Isimba - Bujagali Interconnection Line are sorted out plus the recommendations of the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) for the project are implemented.
- Submission to EXIM Bank of China of the requisite financial reports including but not limited to Quarterly Progress Reports, Annual Reports and Audited financial statements.

7.2 Implications of Financing Conditionality

The borrowing procedures from the EXIM bank of China under the Preferential Buyer's Credit (PBC) require a signed commercial contract to be part of the loan application to the EXIM bank of China. A Preferential Buyers Credit refers to the medium to the long term credit with preferential terms and conditions aimed at promoting China's trade and economic cooperation.

The terms under the Preferential Buyer's Credit attract a fixed interest of 2 % per annum, management fees and commitment fees.

The loan terms indicate a market interest rate of slightly above 2%, and the repayment of interest starts from the first disbursement. The interest to be paid on first disbursement will amount to US\$ 9.65 million. A one off management fee US\$ 1.21 million will also be paid in the first year of the loan.

Commitment fees will be paid on undisbursed resources while the disbursed resources will also attract interest of 2% per annum. Such terms are non-concessional (market based loans).

The table below indicates that the interest costs of the loan at 2% per annum on the loan outstanding and disbursed is lower than the standard discount rate used of 5% recommended by IMF and World Bank. This implies that the present value of the loan (US\$ 355.69 million) is typically smaller than the nominal value of the loan contracted (US\$ 482.58 million). This implies that the country's total future payment for this loan is cheaper than the proposed amount to be borrowed in present terms.

Table 1: Level of Concessionality of the loan

Item	Value/rate
Maturity	20 years
Grace period	5 years
Present value of the loan (PV)	US \$ 355.69 million
Total Debt Service of the loan	US \$ 511.80 million
Grant Element (%)	26%
Discount Rate	5%

Source: Project contract documents and PBO computations

The loan is non concessional, since its grant element (26%) is lower than the threshold of 35%, recommended by IMF/World Bank. However, it's within the threshold of 25% of non- concessional financing under the Public Debt Management Framework, 2013. The non-concessionality of this loan is further influenced by a short maturity (15 years) and grace period (5 years).

8.0 Economic and Financial Rate Of Return

The financial rate of return of these 2 projects is positive given that a tariff will be charged at the start of the project to repay the loan and for the government to recoup its investment after the repayment period. Similarly the economic rate of return of these 2 projects is positive due to the projected benefits resulting from additional power to the national grid.

9.0 PROJECT INSTITUTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The project will be implemented over a period of 5 years by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development has also hired a consultant, Energy Infratech Ltd, to back stop its supervision role especially in areas of construction supervision.

10.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. **Loan application procedure for funding of the 2 projects.** The committee observed that under the Preferential Export Buyer's line of credit, the China EXIM loan application procedure requires that a commercial contract is concluded between the borrowing country and a Chinese contractor prior to loan negotiations. As a result, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Uganda and China International Water and Electric Corporation (CWE) dated July 22, 2013 was undertaken to facilitate the process of securing the funding for the implementation of these 2 projects.

Procurement of the Contractor for the 2 projects.

The committee learnt that H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda in a letter dated 24th July, 2013 directed that the construction of Isimba Hydro Power Project and Isimba-Bujagali Transmission line be done by China Water and Electric Corporation (CWE).

The Committee observed that the direct procurement method used to procure the contractor was in line with Section 85 of the PPDA Act and at the time the committee visited the site, the works had commenced.

Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should take full responsibility of ensuring that the contractor delivers these 2 projects on time. Parliament should further ensure the timely monitoring of the implementation of these 2 projects through its relevant Parliamentary committees.

- ii. **Concessionality of the China EXIM Bank loan.** The committee observed that this loan for the financing of the Isimba Hydro Power and Isimba – Bujagali Transmission Line projects is non-concessional, since its grant element i.e. 26% is lower than the threshold of 35%, recommended by IMF/World Bank. However, it's within the threshold of 25% of non- concessional financing under the Public Debt Management Framework, 2013. The non-concessionality of this loan is further influenced by a short maturity (15 years) and grace period (5 years).

Recommendation:

1. **The committee recommends that Government should ensure the timely implementation of these projects to be able to achieve returns on investment (financial) in the medium term to repay the loan without eroding the ability of the end users to consume cheaper electric power.**

2. **Government should endeavor to obtain concessional loans for its projects**

- iii. **Debt Sustainability.** The committee observed that striking an appropriate balance between scaling up public investment in infrastructure and avoiding an unsustainable buildup of public debt has become one of the main policy challenges facing Government and policy makers. These 2 projects will contribute to the rise in debt accumulation in the short to medium term, where external debt is projected to rise from 6.9% of GDP in FY 2013/14 to 13.5% of GDP in FY 2017/18. As a result the ability to repay external debt using export revenues has weakened in the short to medium term; although they are projected to improve in the long run.

While external debt indicators remain sustainable over the medium to long term, they are dependent upon realized exports, domestic revenue and GDP growth rates above the current levels.

The committee recommends that government should ensure the borrowed resources generate high rates of both economic and financial returns to boost exports and domestic revenues to be able to repay with minimal difficulty when debt falls due. This will call for policy adjustments to boost exports in areas of value addition; and improve tax administration to mobilize domestic revenues plus the need to ensure that the revenue stream from the operations of these projects is separated from other transactions of the electricity companies in order to guarantee commercial viability of this project.

- iv. **Economic spillovers of this loan.** The committee observed that one of the most controversial issues afflicting the Africa-China relationship is the general perception that Chinese companies drag down labour standards by bringing their own workers on overseas projects and by exploiting local workers they hire. This import of their own labour limits the economic spillover effects of these projects, as observed during the committee field visit to the Isimba Hydro Power project site in Kayunga District where most of the workers are employed as unskilled casual workers with Chinese nationals clustered in technical and management positions. At the time of the joint Parliamentary committees field visit in October, 2014, the manpower strength of Isimba HPP was about 155 Chinese and 392 Ugandans.

The committee recommends that the MEMD and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Affairs should ensure that China International Water and Electric Corporation, adheres to the

domestic labour laws of Uganda, through the existence of good working conditions for the local people that are employed for the implementation of these projects. Overall, tense labour relations, hostile attitudes towards labour unions, various violations of worker's rights, poor working conditions and instances of discrimination and unfair labour practices should be avoided during the implementation of these projects.

- v. **Connectivity between Kayunga and Kamuli.** The committee noted that on completion of the Isimba Hydro Power Plant, the access road to the Isimba Hydro power plant will be used as an alternative to the Mbulambuti ferry connecting the districts of Kamuli to Kayunga through the provision of a bridge on top of the hydro power plant. However, the project documents are silent on the actual cost of the bridge that will be constructed on top of the Isimba dam as the costs are embedded in the civil works of the power plant.

The committee recommends that MEMD and the MoWT/UNRA ensure that the costs of the bridge are determined and the subsequent approval of its design by MoWT/UNRA is done.

- vi. **Private sector investment and growth.** The committee notes that one of the binding constraints to private sector growth is the high cost of energy. The current rate of electricity for the end users is US\$ 18 cents. However, the committee is not certain of the end user tariff accrued to the construction of the Isimba power plant.

The committee recommends that Government should assure the August House that the tariff as a result of this project will decline over the medium to long term in order to promote private sector investment and growth.

- vii. **Isimba Hydro Power plant and power generation tariff.** The committee noted that the cost per unit (plant tariff) of electricity for the Isimba Hydro Power plant will be at US\$ 4.8 cents which is lower than that of Bujagali Hydro power plant of US\$ 11 cents. This is attributed to the difference in the financing modalities of the two projects.

The committee welcomes government's initiative of financing this capital intensive hydro power plant through public ownership financing model with the view of ensuring that the end user tariff becomes cheaper and affordable in order to improve on the ease of doing business in the country in the medium to long term.

- viii. **Existing operating losses of the electricity generation and transmission companies.** The committee noted the existing electricity distribution losses (technical and commercial) especially for energy purchased from UETCL by UMEME but not billed to end users, that is still very high (21.6% as at June 2014). As a result, these losses will continue to negatively affect the revenue projections for these 2 projects if concerted efforts to bring these losses down, by government and all stakeholders are not undertaken.

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should ensure immediate interventions to drastically bring down operating losses of the electricity generation and transmission companies and report to Parliament the output from the interventions within two months of adoption of this report. The Ministry should also expedite the efforts of amending the electricity Act (1999), to provide for more punitive measures against commercial losses of energy largely caused by the vandalism of public electricity infrastructure and power theft.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should further explore the option of creation of a performance-oriented special unit within UEGCL and UETCL to manage these 2 projects and ensure their viability.

- ix. **Roll out strategy of planned infrastructure investment plans.** The committee observed that Uganda's infrastructure investment needs remain considerable. Government plans to boost these investments amid stepped up efforts toward regional integration, the coming on stream of oil production, and actions to improve the business environment.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that Government should ensure that the strategy to implement other pipeline investment projects needs to include project selection on the basis of strong feasibility studies and commercial viability analysis; and sequencing that takes into account the impact on debt sustainability, the ability of the economy to absorb investments without generating inflation or crowding out the private sector, and the implementation capacity.

- x. **Impact of the Isimba Hydro Power Project on the Kalagala White water rafters.**

The Committee noted that the white water rafters at Kalagala were concerned about the effect of the Isimba Hydro Power Project on the environment specifically white water rafting which is a popular tourism activity in the area. The Committee was informed that the Isimba Hydro Dam would be constructed 20km away from Kalagala and in the event of any negative effect, the white water rafters would be compensated for loss of business.

Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that:

- The implementation of the Kalagala Sustainable Management Plan around the Isimba Project area should be expedited.
- New tourism activities should be created at the stretch of the river/ rapids that shall not be affected by the reservoir.
- Thorough assessment should be done to ensure that the compensation to be awarded would be commensurate to the loss of business.

xi. Compensation

The Committee observed that 85% of the project- affected persons had been compensated.

Recommendation:

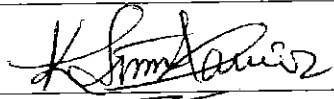
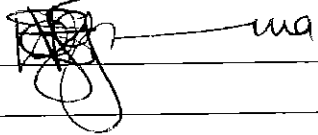
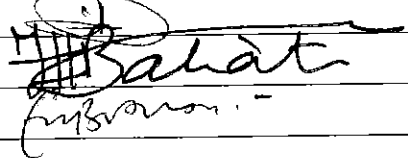
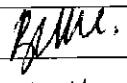
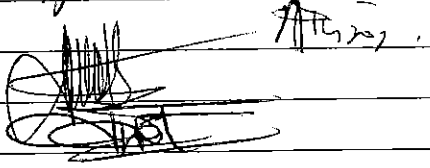
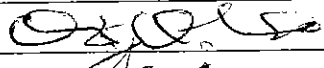
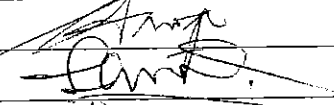
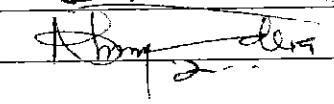
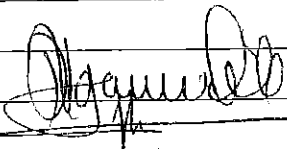
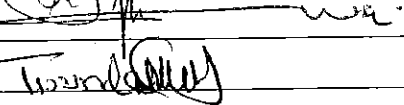
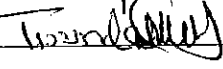
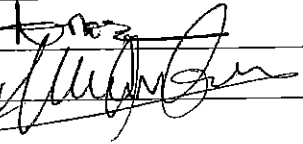
Government should expedite the compensation of the remaining 15% of the project- affected persons before the closure of the project.

11.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee recommends that the request by Government to borrow US\$ \$ 482,578,142.32 from the Export – Import Bank of China, to finance the construction of Isimba Hydropower Project and Isimba – Bujagali Interconnection Line Project be approved.

I beg to move.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL ECONOMY ON THE REQUEST BY
GOVERNMENT TO BORROW UP TO US \$ 482,578,142.32 FROM THE EXPORT - IMPORT
BANK OF CHINA TO FINANCE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE 183 MW ISIMBA
HYDROPOWER PROJECT AND THE ISIMBA - BUJAGALI INTERCONNECTION PROJECT**

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2.	Hon. Evelyn Kabuule Mpagi - Vice Chairperson	Luuka District	
3.	Hon. Akena Jimmy	Lira Municipality	
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