

THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

**REPORT OF THE SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND
INTERNAL AFFAIRS ON THE PETITION AND OVERSIGHT VISITS ON
OPERATIONS OF THE NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND
REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NIRA)**

OFFICE OF THE CLERK TO PARLIAMENT,
JANUARY, 2019

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

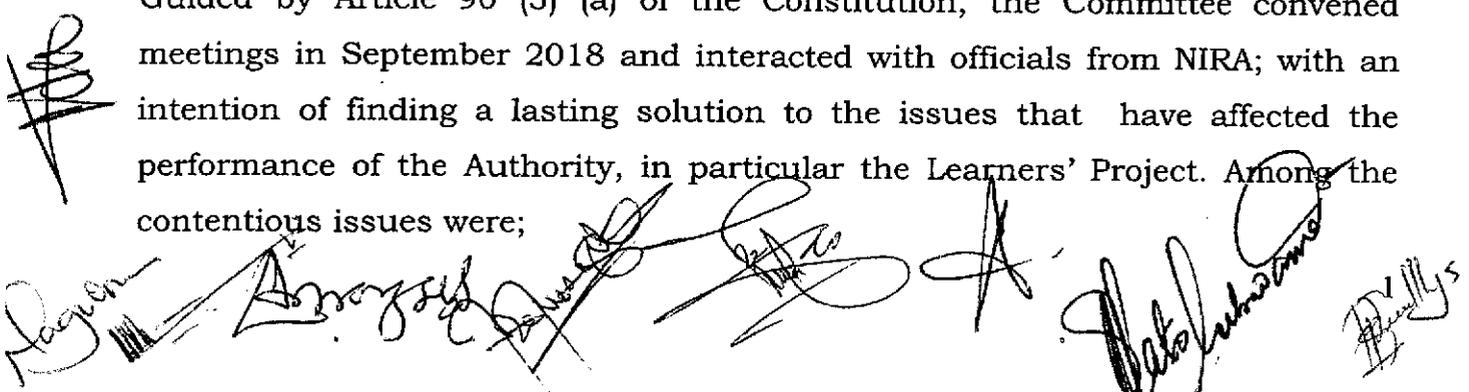
Pursuant to Article 90 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and Rule 185 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs conducted an oversight visit in October 2018 to appraise the Learner's Project through which the National Identification Registration Authority (NIRA) seeks to register all learners in the country aged between five (5) and sixteen (16) years. covered the districts of Amolatar, Lira, Gulu, Amuru and Kiryandongo.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) was established by the Registration of Persons Act, 2015. Its principle mandate and responsibility is to create, manage, maintain and operationalize the National Identification Register. NIRA is expected to achieve this mandate by among others; registering all citizens of Uganda, registering non-citizens who are lawful residents in Uganda, assigning a National Identification Number for all registered persons and assigning National Identification Cards and Alien Identification Cards to all registered persons, including Refugees.

During a retreat of Government Ministers and Permanent Secretaries in February 2017 in Kyankwanzi, a resolution was passed to operationalize the idea of the Learners' Project whose aim was to register all learners in the country aged between five (5) and sixteen (16) years. The Project officially commenced in May 2017 and was expected to run until August 2018, but encountered challenges and an extension was sought up to December, **2017**.

Guided by Article 90 (3) (a) of the Constitution, the Committee convened meetings in September 2018 and interacted with officials from NIRA; with an intention of finding a lasting solution to the issues that have affected the performance of the Authority, in particular the Learners' Project. Among the contentious issues were;



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- i) The composition of the Board of Directors who are very busy, with demanding schedules from their Substantive offices of appointment and have left a leadership in the board of NIRA vacuum,
- ii) Implementation of staff-structure,
- iii) Gross irregularities in the functions of NIRA by the Executive Director, and
- iv) The need to construct a home for NIRA.

A brief was presented to the Committee on the operations of NIRA, the status of the Learners Project and the general challenges faced by the Authority. The Committee resolved to undertake an oversight visit to the field offices in Northern Uganda to ascertain the status of the Learners' Project, to interact with the Officers who facilitated the registration of Learners who are disgruntled and have petitioned Parliament; and the extent of implementation of the recommendations Parliament passed in March, 2018.

The Committee had received a copy of the letter written by the Rt. Hon. Speaker to the Minister of Internal Affairs, asking for an explanation regarding the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee in March 2018. Attached to the Speaker's letter were copies of petitions from almost all over the country. The petitions mainly came from the District Registration Officers, the Assistant District Registration Officers, the District Information Technology Officers, Enrolment Officers and concerned citizens protesting the way the Learners' Project was conducted and poor facilitation for such a hectic exercise.

The Committee was also interested in ascertaining the conditions under which the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) Officers operate and staffing at the different levels.

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3.0 METHODOLOGY

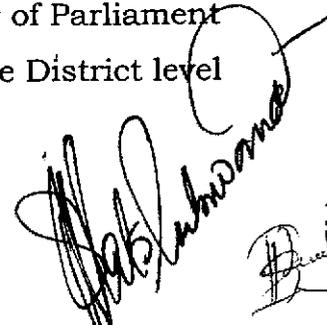
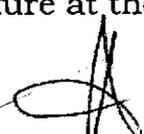
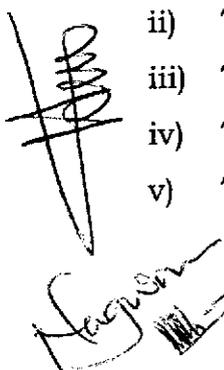
During the field visit, the Committee;

- a) interacted with;
 - i) Members of the District Coordination Committees who included the Resident District Commissioners, the Chief Administrative Officers, the District Chairpersons, the District Inspectors of Schools, representatives from the Electoral Commission and the District Internal Security Officers.
 - ii) Staff members of the schools visited, Members of the School Boards and the Community leaders in the different districts that were sampled.
 - iii) Staff at NIRA field offices that included the District Registration Officers, District Information and Technology Officers and the Assistant Registration Officers.
 - iv) NIRA technocrats in meetings at Parliament building.
- b) Reviewed and/or made reference to the following documents;
 - i) The Registration of Persons Act 2015,
 - ii) The National Budget 2018/2019
 - iii) The Ministry of Internal Affairs Ministerial Policy Statement for Financial Year 2018/2019
 - iv) The Report of the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs on the Learners' Project, March 2018

4.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee was guided by the following terms of reference;

- i) To assess the performance of Registration of the Learners Project.
- ii) To assess the status of office accommodation at district offices.
- iii) To investigate claims of the petitioners to the Speaker of Parliament
- iv) To assess the relevance of five (5) staff structure at the District level
- v) To assess the general operations of NIRA



5.0 FINDINGS

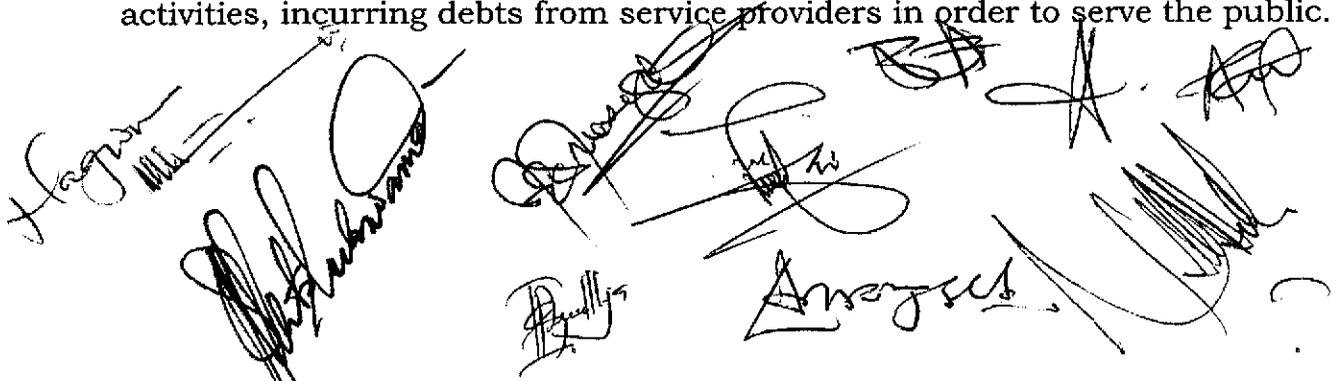
A comparative review of the Committee's previous findings in March 2018 and October 2018 reveals that most of the challenges that existed during the first oversight visit still persist, namely; inadequate equipment, poor coordination between NIRA staff and the District Coordination Committee members, limited facilitation, limited office accommodation, unbalanced and unfavorable payment structures, inadequate understanding of NIRA activities and services by the local communities, and a considerable disparity between the approved budget and the overall performance of the project.

5.1 Performance of Registration of the Learners Project.

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, the Committee observed that; much as funds were injected into the Learners Project with a reported 9.6m pupils registered out of the projected 10m, there is still a big number of pupils who are not yet registered. This is because the initial registration exercise excluded some schools in hard to reach areas and some private schools, which NIRA attributed to insufficient funds for the registration exercise. The Committee notes that an accurate projection of the magnitude of unregistered learners will require liaison with the Ministry of Education and Sports.

The Committee further notes that additional funding would be required to facilitate another phase of registration of the pupils who were not covered in the previous phases.

The Committee further established that funds for project activities during the Learners Project were not released in time. This caused a set-back in beating deadlines of activities that had been budgeted for by the regional offices and approved by officials at NIRA headquarters. This affected implementation of planned activities and officers were left with no option but to conduct the activities, incurring debts from service providers in order to serve the public.

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Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, the Committee further established that some of the officers still demand for a refund from the Authority. The affected officers resorted to personal payments to the service providers expecting that the Authority would reimburse them. A year later, this has not been honored by NIRA. The Committee was informed that a total of 1.2 billion was used by the field Registration Officers and DITOs but so far NIRA has reimbursed 60% remaining to clear the 40% after an internal audit has been inspected to ascertain the authenticity of the claim. This however, contravenes Section 79 (1) m, of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 which stipulates that “no officer should incur unauthorized commitments”.

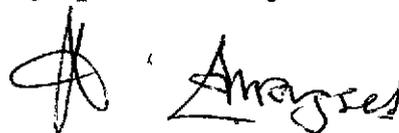
The Committee also learnt that payments of remuneration and office allowances (imprest) to the NIRA staff are inconsistently availed and mainly paid in arrears. This has affected the operations in the Regional and District Offices.

The Committee further established the following:

- It is impossible to register children born as a result of war activities, children with single parents and those who do not have parents because their parents' identification numbers are a prerequisite.
- A section of people living in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement camp were registered and others were not.
- Child headed families are not featuring anywhere in the program of NIRA registration
- There was a big challenge in registering persons without figures

Recommendation:

The Committee recommends Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and Ministry of Internal Affairs should ensure that projects of such nature should always have planned detailed budget so as to avoid under budgeting and untimely release of operational funds.



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Ministry of Internal Affairs and NIRA should find alternatives for registering children from child headed families, children without parents and children with single parents

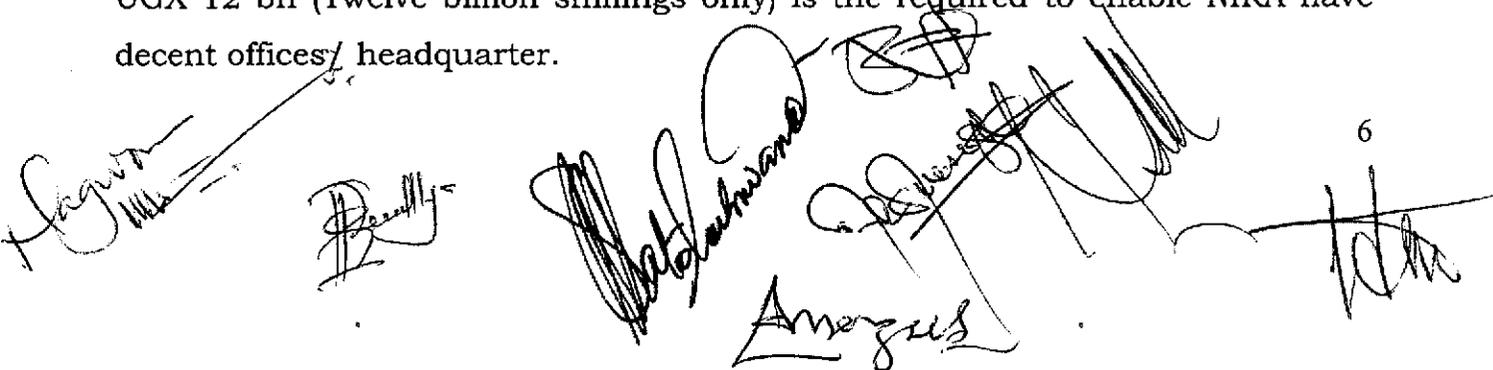
5.2 To Assess the Status of Office Accommodation at District Offices.

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, the Committee observed that all NIRA offices visited lacked adequate accommodation. They all share offices either with the Electoral Commission or housed in the District Headquarter Offices which is limiting and has affected the operations of NIRA. The Committee was informed that during the peak of the electoral season, NIRA officers are thrown out until the Electoral Commission activities are concluded.

The Committee further observed that some NIRA offices were housed in corridors and in very tiny rooms while other officers had their tables outside on the verandahs. This is not only embarrassing to the Government as the employer but also affects the morale for work by the officers. The equipment used in the registration of Persons is expensive and delicate in nature, the information stored is sensitive, all this require organized environment for safe custody. This calls for urgent permanent homes for NIRA activities as the equipment and the information stored are at a risk of being stolen or tampered with.

In the same vein, NIRA Headquarter Offices is accommodated in the premises of Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs at a cost of 56 million per month. This also requires urgent attention as it is on the higher side and costly for the government.

A review of NIRA's investment plan that relates to accommodation, estimates UGX 12 bn (Twelve billion shillings only) is the required to enable NIRA have decent offices/ headquarter.



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The Committee observed that Uganda Police Force has vacant land of about 140 and that it was suitable for NIRA headoffice to be given the strategic security necessary for NIRA .

Recommendation

- **Uganda Police should give out some of the 140 acres of land in Naguru to NIRA for construction of permanent offices.**
- **The Committee recommends that Parliament should appropriate more funds to the Authority to enable the acquisition of permanent offices to house their activities in a phased manner. This is projected to in turn address the issue of limited office space/ accommodation and improve delivery of services to the public.**

5.3 Investigations into Claims of the Numerous Petitioners

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, the Committee engaged the District Information and Technology Officers (DITOs) and established that they have been working in interim positions for the Authority since 2014 and are paid a meager UGX. 945,000= which is very little, in comparison to the tasks assigned to them. Further to this, these officers are not on the NIRA approved structures and are presently working without appointment letters. The approved structure has Assistant Registration Officers (AROs) who are directly under the supervision of the DITOs and yet they earn UGX. 1,800,000=. The discrepancy in remuneration between these two positions has further caused disgruntlement and uncertainty to the District Information and Technology Officers, and the Committee believes that this is the reason they have been petitioning Parliament for a remedy.

(Copy of the letter from the Rt. Hon. Speaker to the Minister of Internal Affairs copied to the Chairperson Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs asking for action to be taken is herewith attached as Annex II)

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The Committee observed that the DITOs have held office since the National Security Information System (NSIS) project in 2014 that gave birth to National Identification and Registration Authority in May 2015 to date but the Authority failed to absorb them in the new structure.

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, the Committee further established that most of the DITOs endured the harsh conditions of working for low pay without any allowances in anticipation that they would be considered for the massive recruitment to fill up NIRA vacancies in the approved structures. One of the DITOs intimated to the Committee that he acts as a District Registration Officer but only earning UGX. 945,000= . He sat for interviews to be upgraded to a District Registration Officer, passed but he has never been appointed. This has led to frustration of the DITOs and has resulted into a general laxity in service delivery.

The Committee further observed most of the petitions to Parliament were filed by former enrollment officers and DITOs who accused the Authority of holding on to their payments and/or delaying it.

The previous inquiry had ascertained that most of these payments were effected using Mobile Money, which in itself is irregular as a means of paying salaries.

Recommendations:

- **The Committee recommends that a revision of the current allowance structure of the DITOS should match the current economic environment and cost of living in the country.**

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- **District Information and Technology Officers (DITOs) who have the require qualifications and have acted for a period of 6 months and above should be absorbed in NIRA service as Assistant Registration Officers (AROs)**
- **The Committee further recommends that for future projects, NIRA should fully prepare for implementation of these activities and only roll out when fully certain that sufficient resources in terms of human resource, equipment and transportation are available to sustain the project in the different areas where the projects are being implemented.**

5.4 Relevance of the five (5) staff structure at the District Level

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, the Committee observed that of the approved structure of five staff in every district office, some districts have got two staff and others one. This has strained on the posted officers leading to failure to achieve the set targets. The workload has caused a strain on the existing staff who have to work extra hours to meet the needs of the public. The Committee was informed that some officers serve two districts; a case in point was the Gulu Office that serves both Gulu and Omoro districts.

The Committee observed that NIRA headoffice faces serious problem of understaffing and in most cases staffs were performing more than one job hence affecting the efficient and effective service delivery

Recommendation:

- **The Committee recommends that Ministry for Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Public Service and Ministry**

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of Internal Affairs should availed funds to the Authority for recruitment

- The District Information Technology Officers should be included on the approved NIRA structure.*
- The Committee further recommends that NIRA should address the concerns of the District Information and Technology Officers by revising the remuneration paid out to them to match the revised salary structures in the Authority.*

5.5 Implementation of Parliamentary resolution on Registration of Learners Project

The Committee carried out an oversight visit in the Districts of Kampala, Wakiso and Entebbe after the commencement of the Project; following negative reports that awash the print media regarding the Project. A report was presented in March, 2018 and was adopted by the Whole House, and resolutions were sent to the Office of the Prime Minister, however, to date they have not been implemented.

(Copy of the resolutions of March, 2018 is herewith attached as Annex 1)

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the Office of the Prime Minister should coordinate the implementation of the Parliamentary resolutions on the Registration of Learners Project.

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5.6 General Operations of NIRA

a) NIRA Board

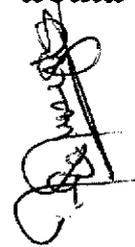
Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, the Committee held meetings and interacted with NIRA officials on matters pertaining to the Authority and observed that the Board of Directors occupy other pre-existing busy offices that demand most of their time away from NIRA; and, very often fail to make quorum during important meetings where substantial resolutions are taken implying that they cannot effectively carry out the Board's oversight function.

The Committee noted that some important decisions pertaining to the Authority had been taken without a substantive meeting taking place.

The Committee further observed that the positions of Board Chairperson and Board Secretary are still vacant and this has affected the operation of NIRA

Recommendation:

- ***NIRA should ensure that the Board secretary is recruited immediately***
- ***Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and NIRA Executive should ensure that the Chairperson of the board is appointed***
- ***The Committee recommends that representatives to the Board should not necessarily be the Principal Executives of the Agencies, but rather any other person at the level of a Commissioner of the entitled Agency can be a Board Member. This would ensure effective oversight of the Authority.***



b) Need to be Self-reliant

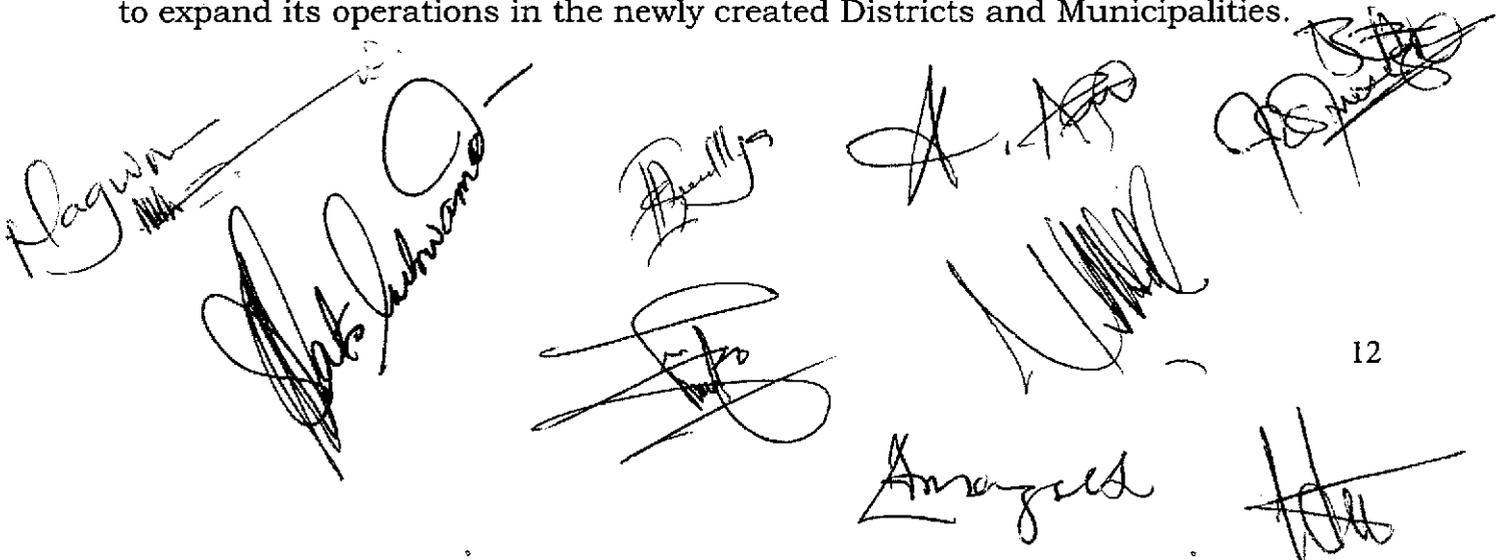
Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, the Committee further observed that the Authority does not charge any fee upon sharing information with the Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and other private companies, notably the telecom companies. As a plan to become self-reliant in terms of funding, NIRA should stipulate or charge a specific fee upon sharing information with the various MDAs and private companies. The laxity to levy such fees denies government the Non Tax Revenue (NTR), and the Authority would be able to generate funds that would help in the acquisition of their own home.

Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that as a matter of urgency, NIRA should start levying a fee on the Ministries, Departments and Agencies, plus the telecom companies that benefit from the information shared by NIRA. In so doing, government would also realize NTR.

c) Number of approved service points for NIRA Operations

The Committee further observed that the approved service points for NIRA across the country are 123 out of which 117 for Districts and 5 for the 5 Kampala Divisions. These service points are constant regardless of the increase in the number of Districts. In view of the government policy of taking services near to the people, it would be logical that the service points are adjusted to match the number of district. The Committee noted that there is need for NIRA to expand its operations in the newly created Districts and Municipalities.



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Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that NIRA service points should be increased to match the number of Districts in the country to date subject to review in case of further increment.

6.0 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Like in the earlier report, the challenges of NIRA seem to be increasing rather than reducing. The Committee therefore reiterates some of the recommendations that;

- 1. The Auditor General should conduct a Forensic Audit on the entire Learners Project including the procurement processes, method of recruitment, level of facilitation and mode of payment to the field Staff.**

- 3. The remuneration of implementers of NIRA activities should be in tandem with the prevailing economic situation and structures should be in place to guide the payment of this remuneration to the beneficiaries.**

- 4. Due to the sensitivity of the mandate of NIRA, Cabinet should review the decision taken to streamline the Authority in the Mother Ministry (Ministry of Internal Affairs).**

7.0 CONCLUSION

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, more needs to be done by Government to address the emerging issues and challenges to NIRA and the successful management of NIRA as an authority and its activities among which is the Learners Project requires a combination of strategies including but not limited to; strengthening the legal framework, increased monitoring and evaluation of

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these activities by Parliament, regular audits by the Office of the Auditor General, increased appropriation of funds as well as sensitization of the public on NIRA activities and finally; improving the welfare of the staff in the Authority as highlighted in this Report so as to improve the operation of NIRA

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members, allow me appreciate the Contribution of Members of the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs and the technical staffs in the production of this report and I pray that the report of the Committee on Defence & Internal Affairs on the Petition and Oversight Visits on operations of the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) be considered by this House and recommendations therein be adopted

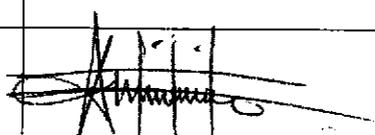
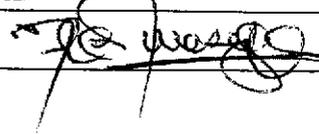
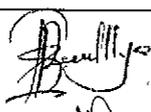
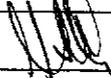
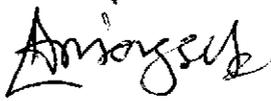
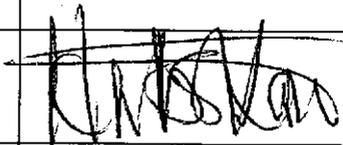


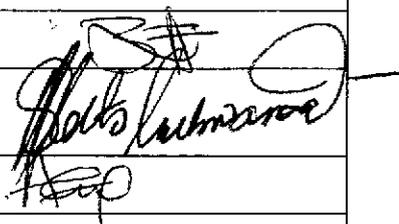
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SIGNATURE OF MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS ON REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PETITION ON OPERATIONS OF THE NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NIRA)

No	NAME	DESIGNATION	PARTY	SIGNATURE
1	Hon. Amule Doreen Ruth	CHAIRPERSON	NRM	
2	Hon. Nagwomu Moses	VICE C/P	NRM	
3.	Hon. Mwesigye Fred	MEMBER	NRM	
4.	Hon. Oseku Richard Oriebo	MEMBER	NRM	
5.	Hon. Mugabe Kahonda Dononzio	MEMBER	NRM	
6.	Hon. Lokwang Hillary	MEMBER	NRM	
7.	Hon. Rwemulikya Ibanda	MEMBER	NRM	
8.	Hon. Muyanja Mbabaali	MEMBER	NRM	
9.	Hon. Lamwaka Margaret	MEMBER	NRM	
10.	Hon. Babirye Judith	MEMBER	NRM	
11.	Hon. Ssekikubo Theodore	MEMBER	NRM	
12.	Hon. Kabafunzaki Herbert	MEMBER	NRM	
13.	Hon. Najjuma Sarah	MEMBER	NRM	
14.	Hon. Mukisa Robina	MEMBER	NRM	

	Hope			
15.	Hon. Munyagwa Mubarak	MEMBER	FDC	
16.	Hon. Gilbert Olanya	MEMBER	FDC	
17.	Hon. Fungaroo Hassan Kaps	MEMBER	FDC	
18.	Hon. Muwanga M. Kivumbi	MEMBER	DP	
19.	Hon. Zaake Francis	MEMBER	INDEP.	
20.	Hon. Kato Lubwama	MEMBER	DP	
21.	Hon. Aciro Lucy Otim	MEMBER	INDEP.	
22.	Hon. Kulayigye Felix	MEMBER	UPDF	