

**STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT BY FIRST LADY & MINISTER OF
EDUCATION AND SPORTS
ON
PUPILS WHO MISSED THE
2018 PRIMARY LEAVING EXAMINATION (PLE)**

Rt Hon Speaker,
Honourable Members,

1. The 2018 Primary Leaving Examination was smoothly conducted on 5th and 6th November, 2018 with no major incidents recorded. A total of 671,923 candidates registered to take the examination of whom 346,963 are girls (51.6%) and 324,960 are boys(48.4%). More girls than boys registered for the examination. Out of these 476,131 (70.9%) candidates were under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme while 195,712 were from non-UPE schools.
2. The number of candidates that did not sit the examination for various reasons such as drop-out after registration and ill-health will be known after attendance records from all 13,027 centres are analysed. However some pupils did not take the examination because they were not registered. A case in point is Bahrain Nursey and Primary School in Iganga district where it was discovered that 20 (twenty) pupils were not registered to sit the examination. This is a school that is not registered by UNEB as an examination centre and therefore this problem could not have been detected. The media carried a story of unregistered pupils from two other schools in Butambala district: Busenya Junior School 5 (five) pupils and St Peter's Primary School Kibunga 6 (six) pupils. This information is being verified.
3. As to whether another examination can be prepared and administered, it should be noted that
 - (i) The examination process starts with registration of candidates from March to end of July; and then

preparation of the examination (setting, moderation, typesetting, printing and packing, distribution and field conduct of the examination).

- (ii) Candidates of a particular year should be assessed using the same instruments to ensure uniformity in grading awards. Administering a different examination to a group that did not sit is creating another examination within the main examination. It is not a good practice internationally. Giving another examination with its attendant costs can only be done when the examination body cancels/withdraws the entire original examination due to factors that render that examination invalid e.g. serious errors or widespread malpractice.
 - (iii) Giving another examination sets a dangerous precedent as school heads and directors will be emboldened to swindle funds in the knowledge that another examination is possible. Schools can start creating excuses for not presenting candidates if they know there is always another chance. The whole process will be seriously abused.
 - (iv) There are time and cost implications too:-
 - when is the examination to be done;
 - who meets the costs; and
 - will those who take the examination not have an unfair advantage over the others since they will have had more time to prepare for the examination ?
4. At the end of registration, UNEB sends out information using various media including print-newspapers, electronic - Television and local FM radios countrywide; informing the public about the end of the registration exercise. UNEB also gives simple ways through which registration status of any pupil can be checked e.g. by use of Short Messaging Service (SMS). Those pupils discovered unregistered before the printing and packing of examination papers are registered. No

such arrangements are possible for those discovered immediately before or during the conduct of the examination.

5. The UNEB Bill, coming before Cabinet soon, has very stiff penalties for such heads of schools/directors who will swindle registration fees. Meanwhile parents are encouraged to check whether the schools to which they enroll their children are registered by both the Ministry of Education & Sports and, Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB).

I beg to submit

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JK Museveni', with a stylized flourish above the name.

Janet. K. Museveni

FIRST LADY AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

8th November 2018