

BUDGET COMMITTEE PUSHES FOR BETTER WELFARE OF UGANDANS

By Our Reporter

The Budget Committee which plays a leading role in the national budgeting process, has initiated so many interventions for improving the socio-economic welfare of Ugandans since the 11th Parliament started.

The Constitution, the Budget Act, and the Public Finance Management Act give the ultimate authority to distribute resources in the national budget to Parliament.

Underfunded entities

While processing the sh48.1trillion national budget for the 2022/2023 financial year, the Budget Committee identified underfunded or unfunded interventions and provided those interventions with extra resources.

Based on the recommendations of the Budget Committee, Parliament has reallocated a total of sh1.6trillion in the sh48.1trillion budget for the 2022/2023 financial year and allocated the money to entities with pressing unfunded priorities.

These include several critical government entities with fewer staff that needed to recruit more to operate effectively.

Additional allocations

Following recommendations from the Budget Committee led by Hon. Patrick Isiagi (MP Kachumbala County), Parliament has allocated an additional total of sh20b for six government entities.

These entities include the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), the Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA), the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA), the Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB), and the National Animal Genetic Resources Centre (NAGRIC). FIA has been allocated



Ugandans in downtown Kampala. Parliament has allocated more funds to boost the welfare of the citizenry



Rt Hon. Speaker, Anita Annet Among

sh5b for recruitment of additional staff, especially the contract staff, PPDA has been allocated



Rt Hon. Deputy Speaker, Thomas Tayebwa

sh4.9b for recruitment of additional staff, UBOS has been allocated sh3.2b, UNBS sh2.5b, and NAGRIC



Hon. Patrick Isiagi, Chair, Budget Committee

has been allocated sh1.1b. Explaining the allocation of sh5b to the FIA, the Parliament Budget

WHILE PROCESSING THE SH48.1TRILLION NATIONAL BUDGET FOR THE 2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR, THE BUDGET COMMITTEE IDENTIFIED UNDERFUNDED OR UNFUNDED INTERVENTIONS AND PROVIDED THOSE INTERVENTIONS WITH EXTRA RESOURCES

Committee argued in its report that the FIA is currently operating at a capacity of 49% which is extremely risky for the country given the dynamic nature of the finance sector.

The UEPB was also been allocated sh3.3b out of which sh1.3b is for the recruitment of additional staff and the remaining sh2b is to be

used on initiatives for the promotion of Uganda's exports.

Salary enhancement

The Office of the Auditor General was also allocated an additional sh9b for the implementation of the restructuring of the entity, salary enhancement, and revision of staff benefits.



From page 31

In addition, the funds go towards the acquisition of laboratory equipment, construction of more buildings, and support of research and innovation initiatives.

The Budget Committee legislators allocated an additional sh20b to the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) to equip agricultural research laboratories and retool institutions with research machinery and transport equipment.

Another additional sh27b has been allocated to the National Agriculture Genetic Research Centre and Data Bank for the introduction, multiplication, and production of superior breeding stock on government farms.

Parliament resolved that the animals, including cattle, goats, sheep, and pigs which will come out of the above breeding initiative will be distributed to the farmers.

Members of Parliament resolved to allocate another sh10b for the establishment of a pig breeding centre/facility at the Njeru Stock Farm.

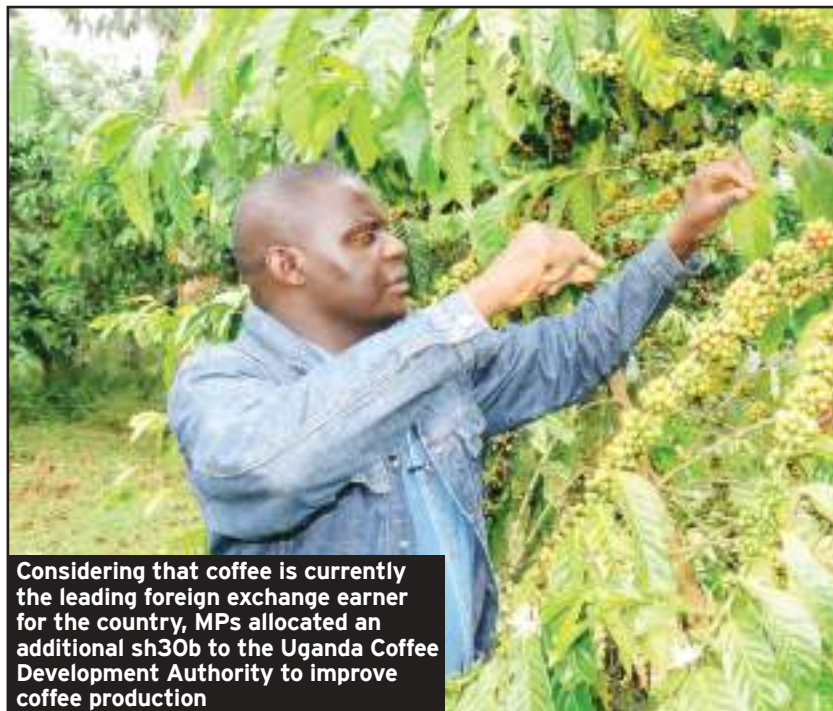
Emphasis on research

The Budget Committee Chairperson, Patrick Isiagi, argued that the realisation of the targets put in the third National Development Plan (NDP III) requires the country to significantly invest in research.

Considering that the health sector is still greatly underfunded, Parliament provided additional funds for various interventions in the health sector, including the provision of an additional sh20b to the health ministry to upgrade health centres III to health centres IV and renovation of Kabwohe Health Centre IV and sh20b additional funding to Mulago National Referral Hospital for drugs, medical supplies, dialysis, equipment, maintenance, and civil works.

The House further provided an additional sh10b for the construction of 10 buildings for the CT scans and sh3b for tuberculosis drugs after getting information that Global Fund which has been providing that support is pulling out its support.

To address the poor state of roads in the 16 new districts which lack road maintenance equipment, sh27b has been provided by Parliament to salvage the situation.



Considering that coffee is currently the leading foreign exchange earner for the country, MPs allocated an additional sh30b to the Uganda Coffee Development Authority to improve coffee production



Parliament has provided an additional sh20b to the agriculture ministry for procuring additional agricultural tractors and equipment

AGRICULTURE BOOSTED



Timothy Kasule, a veterinary doctor at NARO, preparing cattle for artificial insemination. Additional sh27b has been allocated to the National Agriculture Genetic Research Centre and Data Bank for the introduction, multiplication and production of superior breeding stock on government farms

Agriculture mechanisation

As part of the necessary interventions to promote mechanisation of agriculture and commercial farming, Parliament has provided an additional sh20b to the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries for procuring additional

agricultural tractors and equipment.

The Budget Committee provided another sh6b for the establishment of three regional mechanisation centres.

Out of the reallocated funds, Parliament has provided an additional sh20b to Uganda Police Force to cater

for the acquisition of their classified assets, sh15b to the Internal Security Organisation (ISO) to improve internal intelligence collection, sh20b to the External Security Organisation (ESO) to strengthen foreign intelligence gathering, and sh12b to enable ISO to procure half of the 345 vehicles and 1048 motorcycles it required.

To improve electricity connection under rural electrification, Parliament has provided an additional sh38.2b.

Sh30b for coffee

Considering that coffee is currently the leading foreign exchange earner for the country, MPs allocated an additional sh30b to the Uganda Coffee Development Authority to improve coffee production.

Cognisant of the fact that cooperatives will play a fundamental role in the implementation of the Parish Development Model, Parliament has provided sh20b as compensation for war losses to cooperatives in various regions of the country.

As a continuation of recovery interventions, Parliament has provided an additional sh30b to cater for cattle restocking in the regions of Teso, Acholi, and Lango.

In the current financial year of 2021/2022, sh150b was provided by the government for the same initiative of cattle



Committee Deputy Chairperson, Hon. Ignatius Wamakuyu

of water facilities, and improving water and sanitation facilities. Additionally, sh20b has been provided to support access to clean water for slum dwellers, sh20b provided for drilling more boreholes in unserved areas, and sh20b for supporting the Presidential directive for taking a clean water supply source to every village, especially the most critical areas below the 50% safe water coverage.

Cuts for budget reallocation

The funds Parliament reallocated were generated from various government allocations that legislators rejected which included sh319.5b meant for Lubowa Hospital construction, sh900b over the provision of funds for treasury bond costs, sh70.5b reduction from the budget for bank charges in the issuance of treasury securities, and among others, sh86.4b which had been allocated to the Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort Hotel.

Parliament rejected the allocation of funds for the construction of Lubowa Hospital due to the failure of the proprietor to make progress from previously allocated funds; and the Munyonyo Hotel allocation was rejected because the Government has not been receiving dividends from the funds it previously invested in it.

NO FUNDING FOR LUBOWA HOSPITAL

Parliament rejected the allocation of funds for the construction of Lubowa Hospital due to the failure of the proprietor to make progress from previously allocated funds; and the Munyonyo Hotel allocation was rejected because the Government has not been receiving dividends from the funds it previously invested in it.

restocking in the three sub-regions.

Responding to demands for clean water in various parts of the country, the committee allocated funds to various interventions for taking clean water close to the people including sh20b for 10,000 new connections, an extension

'THE EACOP BILL UNLOCKED \$10B INVESTMENT IN THE SECTOR'



Artisanal mining: A local at work in a mine in Wakiso district. The Mining and Minerals Bill favours small-scale local miners as well

By Our Reporter

The Parliament Committee on Environment and Natural Resources hit the ground running almost as soon as the 11th Parliament was sworn in.

The Committee has a wide mandate as it supervises two huge sectors – the water and environment sector and the energy and minerals development sector.

Both Committees on Environment and Natural Resources and Finance, commenced serious business earlier as they were required to urgently process other Bills.

The natural resources committee was given the task of processing the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) Bill, which was very crucial for the final investment decision in the sector by the investors.

Commenting on the committee work of processing the EACOP Bill, the committee chairperson, Dr Emmanuel Otaala, said: "The passing of that Bill provided for the final investment decision. Without that Bill, the final investment deal would not have been realised. It unlocked the investment of \$10b in the sector."

THE EACOP BILL

This paves way for the

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MAKES ADMIRABLE GAINS



Gold is one of the common minerals mined in Uganda

implementation of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline by facilitating the execution of Uganda's obligations under

the Intergovernmental Agreement and the Host Government Agreement. The Act provides for the

MINING AND MINERALS BILL

The committee processed the Mining and Minerals Bill, which Parliament passed on February 17, 2022, during an unusually prolonged plenary sitting that started at 2:00pm and ended at 10:30 pm.

It is important to note that gold, which is one of the common minerals mined in Uganda, is currently the country's leading foreign exchange earner among all exports, fetching an average of \$180m (sh648b) per month.

The Bill seeks to organise, register, licence, regulate and transform artisanal and small-scale mining in Uganda.

The new law introduces a progressive artisanal and small-scale mining licensing scheme for empowering area communities where minerals exist.

Small-scale mining is often used interchangeably with artisanal mining,

with the acceptance that there is no consistent global definition for the terms. Broadly, small-scale mining refers to the exploitation of marginal or small deposits of minerals by individuals, groups or organisations with minimal or no mechanisation.

This means that while issuing mining licences, local communities that are involved in mining would also be eligible. In the past, mining licences were a preserve of foreign companies at the expense of local communities where such mineral fields are found.

Parliament rejected a number of proposals the Government had put in the Bill, such as the creation of a minerals protection force and the inclusion of building substances such as sand, clay and murram.

tariff regime applicable to the project during the different phases of operation, including the

construction and operation period. The EACOP law empowers the Government and the Uganda National

Oil Company (UNOC) to pay the transportation tariff in kind, ensure that the



SOME MPS ON THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

EXTRA SH 20B FOR



Hon. Paska Aciro, Woman Representative, Pader district



Hon. John Baptist Nambeshe, Manjiya County, Bududa district



Hon. Mwine Mpaka, Mbarara South Division, Mbarara City



Hon. John Baptist, Matheniko County, Moroto district



Hon. Cissy Namujju, Woman Representative, Lwengo district



Parliament provided an additional sh20b to the health ministry to upgrade Health Centres III to Health Centres IV and renovation of Kabwohe Health Centre IV

The Budget Committee, in its report on the national budget, made various recommendations on what the government ought to do for better allocation and utilisation of public resources.

The committee proposed the need for government to allocate more resources to the productive sectors of the economy such as agriculture, manufacturing, ICT, tourism, and others whose return on investment is very high.

The Budget Committee processed the sh3.8trillion supplementary budget, which Parliament approved in November 2021 for COVID-19-related interventions, stimulus packages for the economy, security interventions, and other interventions.

The supplementary budget also involved sh108b in additional support for the Atiak Sugar factory which is one of the strategic investments that the government has been supporting.



Parliament has provided an additional sh38.2b to the electricity sector, which is critical for development

The government had earlier supported it with sh170b.

Fiscal responsibility
The Budget Committee meets

various stakeholders while scrutinising the government charter of fiscal responsibility. As required by the Public Finance Management Act, the Government on September

9, 2021, tabled before Parliament the charter of fiscal responsibility for the next five years (2021/2022 to 2025/2026) in which it outlines plans for expanding the tax base, controlling the public debt, eliminating wasteful government expenditure and prudent management of public finances.

The committee, in its report, which Parliament approved, adopted a proposal that came from the Civil Society Advocacy Budget Group (CSBAG) calling for the creation of a National Fiscal Council to monitor and regulate the management of public finances including management of public debt.

The committee also handled the motion for the transfer of funds for the Rural Electrification



Hon. Paul Omara, Otuke County, Otuke district



Hon. Dennis Nyangweso Samia-Bugwe Central County, Busia



Hon. Maxwell Akora, Maruzi County, Apac district



Hon. Dicksons Kateshumbwa, Sheema Municipality

HEALTH SECTOR

PDM KEY

During the budgeting process, the Budget Committee chairperson, Hon. Patrick Isiagi, announced they would not approve the budget until the Government increases the PDM funding. The committee argued that with PDM being the main vehicle for improving the economic welfare of Ugandans, allocating only sh465b out of a total budget of sh48trillion was a reflection of the Executive lacking seriousness in formulating a people-centred budget.

Commenting on what they have so far done, the Budget Committee Deputy Chairperson, Hon. Ignatius Wamakuyu said, "We have delivered what was expected of us. We do not have any backlog. All the members of our committee are very committed."

Speaking to the challenges they have, Wamakuyu said, "We do not have enough funds for committee work. The Budget Committee has 44 members and when you add on chairpersons of sectoral committees, it comes to about 70 members. The committee needs to be allocated enough resources."

Talking about some of their plans, Wamakuyu said, "It is in our plan to make several oversight visits to the entities allocated funds in the national budget to assess the execution of the budget."



Mulago National Referral Hospital in the capital, Kampala

Agency (REA) to the Ministry of Energy and Minerals Development and the transfer of funds for the Ministry of Science and Technology to the State House. The merger of REA with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals Development is part of the Government's rationalisation and downsizing of government to eliminate duplication and wastage of public resources.

NDP III

The committee scrutinised the Certificate of Compliance with the third National Development Plan (NDP III) from the National Planning Authority (NPA).

The NPA certificate faulted the Government for allocating production sectors like agriculture, ICT, industry, and tourism

less than what had been proposed in NDP III. In course of making adjustments in the budget allocations of the 2022/2023 national budget, the Budget Committee was guided by the NPA certificate.

The committee carried out several oversight visits including one to the Uganda Industrial Research Institute in Namanve, and the National Agricultural Genetic Resources Centre and Data Bank.

The committee also had foreign trips to Nairobi to tour Kenya's special export zones and to Mombasa to assess the facilities of the Uganda Revenue Authority.

The Budget Committee has played a key role in shaping the Parish Development Model (PDM). Through the interactions

the committee had with the finance ministry and other players in the implementation of the programme, more changes were made to ensure the initiative effectively serves

its purpose of improving the economic welfare of Ugandans. Whereas the government had allocated only sh465b as the budget for the PDM, the Parliament Budget Committee

made a strong recommendation requiring the Government to increase the budget to sh1,050b so that each parish receive sh100m.



Hon. David Kabanda
Kasambya County, Mubende district



Hon. Mourine Oloru, Woman Representative, Arua City



Hon. Barnabas Tinkasiimire,
Buyaga West County, Kagadi district



Hon. Catheline Atwakiire
Ndamira, Woman Representative, Kabale district



Hon. Muhammad Muwanga
Kivumbi, Butambala County, Butambala district



Hon. Gorreth Namugga,
Mawogola County South, Ssembabule district



Hon. Allan Ssewanyana,
Makindye Division West, Kampala City



Hon. Paul Akamba, Busiki County, Namutumba district



Hon. Apollo Yeri Ofwono, Tororo Municipality, Tororo district



Continued from page 33

project obtains required authorisations in a timely manner, as well as grants and protects land rights of the project, including land acquisition.

The shareholders in the East African Crude Oil Pipeline project are TotalEnergies (62%), Uganda National Oil Company (15%), Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (15%) and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (8%).

The committee innovatively added a clause in the law, which requires the energy minister to annually report to Parliament on the status of the Decommissioning Fund for the implementation of the EACOP project. Otaala said this was intended to support the oversight role of Parliament over the Fund, which is essentially a public fund.

Otaala said the committee was recently in Tanga and Dar es salaam to assess the progress of work being done in the construction of the pipeline.

"We were told that by the end of August, they would have started construction of the pipeline from different sites within Uganda and Tanzania," he stated.

Otaala said Tanzania had already completed compensating all the project-affected persons and Uganda has been left with only 2% of the project-affected persons that are yet to be compensated.

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT BILL

The committee has also processed the Electricity Amendment Bill, which was tabled by the energy minister, Ruth Nankabirwa,



Otaala said Uganda is only left with 2% of the project-affected persons to compensate under the oil pipeline project

EACOP BILL PROVIDED FOR



The finance ministry permanent secretary, Ramadhan Ggoobi (right), and other officials visiting one of the oil well pads managed by CNOOC

THE EACOP LAW EMPOWERS GOVERNMENT AND THE UGANDA NATIONAL OIL COMPANY (UNOC) TO PAY THE TRANSPORTATION TARIFF IN KIND, ENSURE THAT THE PROJECT OBTAINS REQUIRED AUTHORISATIONS IN A TIMELY MANNER, AS WELL AS GRANTS AND PROTECTS LAND RIGHTS OF THE PROJECT.

in January. The committee presented its report and it was debated and passed by Parliament in April.

The objectives of the Bill are to provide for a staggered term

of office of the members of the Regulatory Authority (ERA), provide for additional functions of the authority, increase funds allocated to the authority from 0.3% to 0.7% of the revenue received from generated electrical energy and provide for deterrent penalties for theft of electricity and vandalism of electrical facilities.

The Bill passed by Parliament has set a prison sentence for both offences at 15 years or a fine of sh1b or both for vandalism of electricity infrastructure and power theft.

The Bill permits generation and transmission licences to

Fuel storage facilities

In its report on the 2022/2023 budget ministerial statements for the two sectors, the committee raised concern that the government has taken long to construct fuel storage facilities as a contingency mechanism for protecting the country against high fuel prices.

"The country continues to rely on fuel stocks in the fuel storage facility in Jinja and other privately-owned facilities. Overall, private sector storage exceeds government reserves. This is attributed to the failure to complete the once-planned reserves like Nakasongola depot and stocking challenges at the Jinja Reserve tanks.

"With no policy to guide stocking levels like other East African states, the envisaged 10-day fuel reserve capacity targeted by UNOC remains low to ensure the fuel security of the country," the committee stated in the report.

The members raised concern that even the planned Kampala Storage Terminal, which would beef up the country's fuel security, had not been budgeted for in the 2022/2023 national budget. The committee recommended that government finds the sh254.2b that the energy ministry requested for to finance the construction of the storage facility.

The committee recommends in its report the need for the government to amend the Petroleum Supply Act to provide for minimum fuel stock at government storage facilities.

"This will ensure that the Ugandan economy is secured from the risk of inflationary pressures arising from fuel shortages. Consideration should be made of a minimum fuel stock of at least 100 days," Otaala said.

FINAL INVESTMENT DECISION



MPs during a session. The Electricity Amendment Bill passed by the House is meant to enable ERA to do its oversight work more effectively

supply electricity in bulk directly to industries and other users without going through Umeme. Otaala said Kapeeka Industrial Park and Bukwe industrial parks will be among the first beneficiaries of that amendment.

The Speaker of Parliament, Anita Among, who presided over the passing of the Bill, commended the legislators across the political divide for passing it, saying it is so critical and would go a long way in dealing with vandalism of electricity infrastructure.

Otaala recounted that while amending the Electricity Act, they increased the levy that the ERA has to charge for power generation from 0.3% of electricity sold to 0.7%.

"The purpose of that amendment was to enable ERA to do its oversight work more effectively and we hope that it will result in the reduction of the power tariffs," he stated.

ROYALTIES INCREASED
Parliament also increased royalties from mineral revenue for local governments/districts from

PREMISED ON THE ARGUMENT THAT ELECTRICITY IS THE ENGINE FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, THE COMMITTEE IS ENGAGING THE EXECUTIVE FOR A POLICY SHIFT AWAY FROM TARGETING CONNECTING ONLY SUB-COUNTY HEADQUARTERS TO CONNECTING PARISHES WITH ELECTRICITY

10% to 15%. The central government will take 70%, sub-counties 10% and land owners 5%.

During the national budgeting process, as the committee scrutinised budgets for entities under the two sectors of energy and environment, the committee pushed for



Energy and Minerals Minister, Hon. Ruth Nankabirwa tabled the Electricity Amendment Bill in January 2022

more funding for various items in the two sectors. "We provided more funds for the oil and gas sector.

We advocated for more resources for the minerals development sector, but the budget committee did not adopt our proposal.

As a country, we have enormous potential in the minerals sector, which can greatly turn around our economy. Even the third National Development Plan (NDP III) recognises the minerals sector as one of those we have to prioritise to develop the country's economy," Otaala explained.

The committee, he said, will continue advocating for weighbridges to be procured so that

all minerals extracted are weighed for the country to have correct data on the number of minerals that are exported out of the country.

Premised on the argument that electricity is the engine for social-economic transformation, the committee is engaging the executive for a policy shift away from targeting connecting only sub-county headquarters to connecting parishes with electricity, since parishes will be the centres for the implementation of the Parish Development Model (PDM).

"The various economic activities, such as cottage industries, value-addition and many others that will be implemented through PDM will require electricity," Otaala explained.

He said they were able to convince the budget committee to allocate more resources for availing clean water in various parts of the country.

The committee carried out an oversight visit to Tilenga and King Fisher to assess the progress that was made in preparing the country to achieve the target of starting oil production in 2025, which is now almost two years

Benchmarking trips

Talking about the challenges they faced, Otaala said they were greatly limited by the limited funding of the committee and because of that, there were many oversight activities they were unable to carry out.

"Each leader comes with their style of leadership. In the past, committees used to control their budgets, but now, for everything, you have to run to the leadership of Parliament.

"You can ask for money for committee work and it is not availed and shortly afterwards, you see over 200 MPs facilitated to go to Arusha for EAC games and another big number going for the commonwealth games. Committees have been suffocated and Parliament cannot effectively do its work, which is mostly done through committees," he said.

The chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources and Environment said due to limited funding, they processed three Bills without having undertaken any benchmarking trip for a comparative assessment of what other countries had done in similar legislations.

In the 2021/2022 financial year, government cut budgets of most entities, including Parliament, whose budget for travel abroad was significantly cut. The leadership of Parliament protested the decision, arguing it had greatly undermined the oversight mandate of Parliament.

away.

The committee undertook oversight visits to the water and electricity projects in the districts of Masaka, Mutukula, Mitooma, and Isingiro and visited electricity installations in Gulu and Lira.


By Our Reporter

When Nakawa West MP Joel Ssenyonyi was appointed Chairperson of the most reported about Public Accounts Committee (Committee on Commissions, Statutory Authority and State Enterprises), PAC- COSASE, there were doubts on whether he will keep the spark of most of his predecessors.

COSASE became a mainstay in the media when then chairperson Abdu Katuntu and his deputy Anita Among (now Speaker) led the probe into Bank of Uganda's closure of seven commercial banks. The two leaders steered the COSASE in that probe that saw former Governor, the late Emmanuel Tumusiime Mutebile and his then deputy Louis Kasekende become frequent visitors at Parliament.

However, when the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) decided to change the leadership of COSASE in January 2019, there was a little bit of stagnation in the performance of COSASE as then Speaker Rebecca Kadaga rejected former Rubaga North Legislator Moses Kasibante's appointment as deputy chairperson. He was appointed to deputise then Kawempe South MP Mubarak Munyagwa.

For most of its two and a half years, Munyagwa's COSASE did not cause any quake among the government entities as less energy was put on scrutinising the Auditor General's report as has always been the case.

Only the sub-committee led by then Makindye East lawmaker Ibrahim Kasozi made headlines as it for over a year investigated rot in the Departed Asians Properties Custodian Board following a revealing forensic audit by the office of the Auditor General. This investigation caused tensions among the key figures of the Indian Association in Uganda with most of them probed for alleged dubious repossession of expropriated properties. Much of the findings of the report have since been quashed by the Constitutional Court, something that has made pinpointed property dealers get another sigh of relief.

When National Unity Platform (NUP) took over the leadership of the opposition in Parliament, its spokesperson Joel Ssenyonyi was handed

COSASE UNEARTHS ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES



The first probe by the current COSASE was about the Entebbe Airport expansion project



Hon. Joel Ssenyonyi
Chairperson - COSASE

the responsibility to lead COSASE and deputised by FDC's Lucy Akello the Amuru district Woman MP.

"I do not want to talk about the past committees because I don't know what challenges or otherwise what the issue was. I thank God that we have been able to do the work we have done so far, little or much. At the very start, I had a meeting with my committee members and I said, 'we have a lot of work to do, I request for your availability,'" Ssenyonyi said.

With the majority of the members of COSASE including the chairperson being new MPs, all the eyes were on Kasilo County MP Elijah Okupa and Kashari South MP Nathan Itungo who have been members on previous committees.

THE PROBES SO FAR

The most recent probe that still rings bells in the ears of many Ugandans is the scrutinising of the Auditor General's reporting into the operations of Uganda Airlines. The newly revamped national flag

ENTEBBE AIRPORT ISSUES

The first probe by the current COSASE was about the Entebbe Airport expansion project which is being undertaken using a sh720b loan from the Exim Bank of China.

China Communications Construction Company Ltd (CCCC), the company that is carrying out the works according to COSASE findings, was hired by Uganda Civil Aviation Authority (UCAA) without following procurement regulations like competitive bidding.

The committee found out that the loan agreement signed by Finance Minister Matia Kasaija and the China Exim Bank has "unfavourable and unsustainable clauses" for the country because the international immunity for Uganda was waived.

carrier had made losses of more than sh500m according to the audit which also queried issues of direct procurement, lack of accountability for some in-flight equipment for the AirBus A320 neo aircrafts, among others.

However, the spotlight was much on current Chief Executive Officer, Jennifer Bamutaraki, especially the telling revelations of not holding the requisite academic papers by the start of the probe, her alleged involvement in procurements of service providers and also receiving per diem to visit stations outside Uganda but did not travel.

COSASE is in the process of writing a report where clear observations and recommendations will be made to Parliament for the public to know what then happens to the officers responsible for the qualified

The report reads: "China has to first approve the UCAA annual budget, UCAA cannot spend money from its accounts without China's approval, arbitration and legal redress can only be sought in China's Courts which disadvantages Uganda"

Ssenyonyi said he was happy with the work so far accomplished by his committee because in one year, they have been able to show the country that there is much beyond what the Auditor General finds in entities every year. He said that the committee has a variety of professionals among the MPs, mostly lawyers, certified accounts and auditors and that has helped to dig out issues of accountability.

Sh 720b

The first probe by the current COSASE was about the Entebbe Airport expansion project which is being undertaken using a sh720b loan from the Exim Bank of China.

opinion in the Audit report.

LAND MATTERS

COSASE in August 2022 presented to Parliament a report about the probe into the operations of the Uganda Land Commission (ULC).

The report adopted by Parliament recommended further investigations and possible punishment of top government officials.

Top among the government officials recommended for investigations and



Beti Kanya - IGG

possible prosecution include Inspector General of Government (IGG) Beti Kanya for allegedly committing fraud while serving as lands minister. COSASE after going through action-packed interactions with the IGG, found that it needs to be probed further for her role in the generation of sh10.63b supplementary budget with part of the money going to ghost land claimants.

ULC Chairperson Beatrice Byenkya was opposed to the

expenditure but Secretary to the Commission, Barbara Imaryo, acting on the instructions of the then minister went on to pay.

At least sh2b was lost to ghost claimant, Natalie Namuli, whose lawyers pocketed the money that Parliament now wants returned to the Consolidated Fund. The land title issued to Namuli after her lawyers presented fake Powers of Attorney has since been cancelled.

Finance Minister Matia Kasaija who conceded to erroneously signing off the Supplementary request that was not generated by ULC is also supposed to be investigated further. To be investigated together with Kasaija is Patrick Ochailap the Deputy Secretary to the treasury. Others officials that Parliament want further investigated are; Imaryo who is on suspension since January and allegedly fled the country at the start of the COSASE probe, former ULC Chief Accountant, Sirajje Isabirye, Kibaale District Land Registrar, Denis Kahabura and lawyer Richard Buzibira.

ROT IN RAILWAYS

Another COSASE report adopted by Parliament early this year resulted from the probe into the operations of the Uganda Railways Corporation (URC) the entity that runs the railway services in the country.

The Auditor General's report for the year ended June 30, 2021 had queried a number of issues including management of core and non core assets, procurements and indebtedness of URC.

COSASE found out that there were irregularities in the disposing off of some of the properties of URC as there was no evidence to show that 10 out of the 15 sold were advertised to attract competitive bidding.

"There was no evidence of payment for these properties. There was no evidence of a valuer's report determining the reserve price. The committee recommends that the Inspectorate of Government should investigate this matter and prosecute those found culpable," read part of the report.