



The Republic of Uganda

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

Statement by the Minister of Education and Sports

First Lady, Janet K. Museveni,

On the occasion of the

Press Conference

04th May 2022

State House Nakasero

Good morning to you all.

Thank you for making time to be with us at this Media Engagement as the Education and Sports Ministry.

I want to recognize with gratitude and thank the various media houses and platforms that have walked with us as a Sector through the trying times imposed on us by COVID-19 and after we re-opened our Education and Sports Sector in January 2022. You have been available to share with us feedback from the public, while at the same time passing on messages from government to our people. It was your support that enabled us to attain a COVID-19 vaccination rate of **90.2 percent** amongst our teachers that have so far received their first dose. So, on behalf of the entire Education and Sports Sector as well as government at large, I say, “Thank you!”

I also take this opportunity to thank our learners and teachers for returning to schools when we re-opened on January 10th, 2022. You truly demonstrated that Education means a lot to you, and that you never lost hope despite the challenges that lay ahead.

In a special way, as a Ministry, we do thank headteachers and owners of our educational institutions of learning for all the preparations you made to receive the learners back. Like you, we were all in uncharted waters. However, you have shown that when we are committed to face a common enemy, with God’s help, nothing is impossible to them who believe.

As a Ministry, we also recognize and appreciate the support and the generosity of our partners in development. You stood with us during the continuity of learning while schools were closed, but also came alongside when we fully re-opened. Government has duly released funds to the Local Governments to implement various interventions in the Education and Sports Sector. This brings me to the first among several issues that I want to address today:

1. Commissioning of Seed Secondary Schools under the UgIFT Program:

I want to thank our leaders from both the central and local governments that have supported my Ministry with the commissioning of Seed Secondary Schools in over 48 districts. We plan to commission more schools especially the 69 that are already completed even as we look forward to the completion of the remaining schools that are still undergoing construction since the first phase of building 117 new Schools started in 2019.

I would like to reassure the public that though you may be hearing about government commissioning Seed Schools in some sub-regions and districts, construction is still ongoing in 48 other Seed Schools in various sub-regions.

Overall, by end of 2024, government expects to build a total of **two hundred fifty-nine** Seed Secondary Schools in Sub-Counties without any public secondary school through the initial financing facility of the five-year Uganda Inter-governmental Fiscal Transfer Program for Results (commonly referred to as UgIFT). My Ministry is in the final stages of procurement of contractors for the second phase of UgIFT which shall see us embark on construction of an additional 115 new Seed Secondary Schools sub-counties without any public Seed School.

However, an emerging challenge is that some contractors want to handover schools for commissioning when in fact the construction is not complete. This is unacceptable and should never allowed to happen. No Seed Secondary School should be commissioned when the infrastructure that is supposed to be built is not in place and complete.

2. Improvement in funding of Education and Sports Sector interventions in the Local Governments:

I thought I would also use today's opportunity to inform the public that government provided a supplementary budget totaling **Shs. 44.27 billion** which has been made available to 176 Local Governments starting with the 4th Quarter of the current Financial Year to cater for:

- i.** Inspection, monitoring, and supervision of schools by the Education Office at the respective District, Municipality, or City to the tune of **Shs. 3.96 billion**.
- ii.** Capitation grant rates for the **70,712** learners with Special Needs Education in both public primary and secondary in beneficiary Local Governments have been increased by Uganda Shillings **194.14 million** in total.
- iii.** Capitation grants for learners in public Technical Institutes, Community polytechnics, and Health training Institutions have been increased by a total of **Shs. 6.81 billion**. The capitation grant rate had stagnated these institutions since 2011.
- iv.** A total of **Shs. 10.297 billion** was apportioned amongst the 176 local governments to carry out minor maintenance of public Schools. This money is not sent to the schools but remains at the local government to apportion based on the schools that have been prioritized for minor repairs in the financial year.
- v.** This money for minor maintenance is neither part of capitation grants nor School Facilities Grant (commonly called SFG). Each Local government receives on average

Shs. 58.5 million (some may receive less than this whereas other may get much more than this).

If a Local government decides to carry out minor renovations of its schools in a phased manner (a few schools at a time), these funds can make a significant difference in the appearance of some of the public schools in our local governments. Therefore, my call to our local government leaders is that we explore how to do better with what is received from government.

- vi. **Shs. 23 billion** was released as supplementary budget to increase the capitation grant rate for the **7.6 million** learners in **12,432** public primary schools from **Shs. 17,000/-** at the start of the Financial Year in July 2021 to **Shs. 20,000/-** target per learner annually that government had set itself to be at by end of the current financial year.

I would like to remind the public that; firstly, there is considerable progress in Government's effort to increase capitation grant rate in UPE that was at UGX 7,000/= five years ago. And, secondly, to inform the public that capitation grant sent to each beneficiary school is in addition to government paying the wages for staff as well as meeting the cost of instructional materials and major capital development expenses in these schools.

3. **Validation exercise of Human Resources in Government Schools and Institutions: -**

As some of you may remember, in September 2021, I announced that the Ministry of Education and Sports was going to undertake an exercise to ascertain the number of teachers and non-teaching staff in our Education Institutions of learning. I tasked the Education Service Commission to carry out this exercise as soon as the schools fully re-open.

As of today, the Education Service Commission has been able to go out in the field and compile payroll information from **1,570** government-owned and government-aided education institutions of learning. These include:

- a) 1,365 Secondary Schools
- b) 134 TVET Institutions
- c) 20 Health training institutions
- d) 51 teacher education and training institutions.

Let me remind the public that the intentions of this validation exercise are:

- a) To verify the payroll data in each of these institutions.
- b) To find out what the staffing gaps are in the institutions.
- c) To establish the teaching load for teachers employed in government institutions, and lastly,
- d) To identify cases of fraudulently hired staff.

Once the Commission has completed their Report, we shall disseminate the findings to the public at an appropriate time. In the meantime, the ban I

4. **Time for reporting at School: -**

Today, I want to awaken all of us to a problem that you perhaps know too well – the problem of starting the school day too early. As a parent and an elder in this nation, I am very concerned about burdening our children to sleep late and wake up early all because of schoolwork.

It is not uncommon to hear or see school shuttles picking children from their homes at 4:30 a.m. to drop them at school before 7 a.m. This child who has been dropped at school before 7 a.m.; sometimes with hardly any breakfast because they woke up in a hurry, stays at school until 7:30 p.m. I am meant to understand that some Day Schools have even been keeping learners at school way beyond 8 p.m. – and then you let these young people walk home!

By the time this child is done with homework, having dinner, and going to bed, it is way after 10 p.m. And the cycle is repeated the next day. Unknown to the parent, guardian, or teacher, you are negatively affecting the mental, physical, and spiritual health of this young person.

Scientists tell us that these young people who are below 18 years require between 8 to 10 hours of sleep. Not having enough sleep not only contributes to poor performance in school, but is also associated with overweight, less engagement in physical activity, depression, engagement in risky behaviors like consumption of illicit drugs, drinking, and smoking tobacco among others.

Therefore, I want to call upon all Headteachers of Pre-primary, Primary, and Secondary Schools, to review your practices in these schools. I also want to task the Education Policy Review Commission led by Hon. Amana Mushega to critically study this matter and see what further policy interventions government needs to make in this regard.

5. School fees:

On the issues of school fees, my Ministry will soon be embarking on the process of consulting the various stakeholders about the Statutory Instrument that we have drafted to regulate School Fees and other Charges in our Education institutions of learning. Once this exercise is completed and the Instrument is taken through the necessary processes, as government, we shall be in a better position on how best to regulate school fees and school charges.

6. Safety in Schools:

It was rather unfortunate that we had a spate of fires affecting a few of our schools during first time. I want to call upon all concerned: - parents, learners, school administrators, proprietors, and other government agencies, to work together to make our Schools safer places in the terms ahead.

As government, we have put in place various measures which if implemented can significantly reduce not only the risk of fires in schools but also the incident of fatalities should such incidents occur. I therefore call upon the local government authorities to do your part of inspection and ensure that these Education Institutions of Learning strive to comply with the guidelines for prevention of school fires.

7. Strikes in schools:

Relatedly, we witnessed a spate of strikes in our Education Institutions of learning with a large majority of the 29 incidents occurring Schools within Secondary Schools in the Northern region of the country. The region notwithstanding, my Ministry established that most of the strikes were associated with weaknesses in school management and managing conflicting expectations between the school administration and the learners.

Therefore, as a Ministry, we are going to scale up our capacity building efforts for headteachers to have better skills and competence in handling such situations. I am meant to understand that these trainings for headteachers have already been commenced by the Ministry, and we should continue to do so during Second Term as well as part of continuous professional development for Headteachers in both private and public schools.

8. Establishment of public Universities in Rwenzori, Bunyoro, and Busoga sub-regions:

Government has earmarked UGX 60.0 billion to operationalize Mountains of the Moon University in the Tooro and Rwenzori sub-regions in the financial year starting July 2022 and expedite the preliminary processes for operationalization of the public university for Busoga sub-region.

Funds have also been earmarked to establish a Taskforce as required by Law to embark on the establishment of a public university in Bunyoro sub-region in the financial year that starts July 2022.

9. The Education Policy Review process:

The Education Policy Review Commission started receiving public memoranda in March 2022 and will soon embark on public hearings. I want to take this opportunity to thank those that have already participated in the review process by responding to the call to submit public Memoranda with ideas and proposals that can contribute to making our Education and Sports system better. I want to encourage the public to actively participate in the process when called upon. No idea is too small to be shared with the Education Policy Review Commission.

10. Lastly, Commencement of 2nd Term 2022:

We are coming to the commencement of the 2nd term for most learners in our education system – that is, learners in Pre-primary, Primary, and Secondary levels. The first term holiday may not have been if learners and parents, but I pray that we all understand that we are still in the phase of recovery of lost time due to the school closures occasioned on us by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I call upon parents that as you prepare you children to return to school, remember to play your cardinal role of a counselor, mentor, and guide to your child. The words of encouragement, wisdom, and guidance that you give your child as they return to school is what may be their source of inspiration to persevere through another term for the next 14 weeks.

As government, we are aware of the economic tough times that have been occasioned on families and Education institutions of learning because of factors that are beyond government's control. Nonetheless, I encourage parents and school administrators not to hold back learners from returning to school.

For parents who may find it challenging to return their children to the school they were in for first term, kindly explore options of more affordable schools near your home where possible. I am aware that affordable public schools are not yet in every parish and sub-county as envisioned for primary and secondary schools respectively but use the opportunity of those currently in place under the Universal Primary and Universal Secondary Education programs.

Lastly, regarding COVID-19, as per the recent Status Report from the Ministry of Health about COVID-19 in the country, we thank God for the significant reduction in transmission rates in the communities around the country. However, we are also aware that the country is not yet declared free of COVID-19.

Therefore, as a Ministry, we shall continue to urge our Education Institutions of learning to take responsible measures against the spread of COVID-19 in school settings. My Ministry shall embark on a review of the Guidelines that were used to re-open schools in January 2022 and make the necessary adjustments in keeping with the status of COVID-19 in the country and advice from the Ministry of Health.

I thank you and God bless you all.