



## EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

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### EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)

The Official Report of the Proceedings of the East African Legislative Assembly

#### **40<sup>TH</sup> SITTING – FIRST MEETING – THIRD SESSION: FIFTH ASSEMBLY**

Wednesday, 30 October 2024

*The East African Legislative Assembly met at 10.15 a.m.  
Parliament House, Kampala, Uganda*

#### **PRAYER**

*(The Speaker, Hon. Joseph Ntakirutimana, in the Chair)*

*(The Assembly was called to order)*

#### **COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR**

**The Speaker:** Good morning, everyone. I have one item of communication for you. This is about training for sports. This morning, we were about 14 or 15, thereabout. There are some members who have never been there since we arrived here. I requested the Ugandan Chapter, our host, to make some efforts to be there. However, I understand that since they reside from home, it is difficult to go back home to refresh due to traffic. However, they should try to be with us. For others who are not sick, we should be meeting there. I have been going there. Hon. Kachwamba, I have not seen you there. Hon Rose, Hon Namara, Hon Amongin and even Hon. Francoise, please join us. Those who have not been there, please come one day and join us. That is the communication I had. Thank you. Yes, Hon. Rose.

10.19

**Ms Rose Akol (Uganda):** Thank you, Rt Hon. Speaker. It is true that some of us have not been able to come for training due to one reason or the other. However, I want to request that we also have evening trainings. The mornings are a bit of a problem because of traffic, if I have to come for games then go back home to change. Some of our roads are being worked on. The traffic is too much. Today I spent one and a half hours coming here and yet I come from near here.

Since the roads are being worked on, Port Bell Road, the old and the new Port Bell Road. Therefore, I am requesting, Rt Honourable, if possible, right after sitting we go for games, then home. We should have the morning session and the evening session. We will appreciate that and be very grateful. That way we would not miss. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Our chair has already decided we will have the evening session, right? It's true. You have to communicate hours and days for practice. You have the floor.

**Mr Machano Ali Machano (Tanzania):** Rt. Hon. Speaker, thank you very much. I want to commend honourable Rose Akol. She has showed that she is ready to attend the field training.

I just want to inform you that there are some members from Parliament of Uganda who came there, trained took a shower at the grounds there. Some of them came back to take a shower here and have attended the meetings Therefore, we could also organise ourselves. Thank you so much.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. This issue is important to us because we have these games in Mombasa. We have to be fit and we have to win. Thank you. Let us proceed.

## MOTION

REPORT OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION ON THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY TO ASSESS THE PROCESS, REGULATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF CONDUCTING NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA AND THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

**Ms. Jacqueline Amongin (Uganda):** On a point of procedure, Rt. Hon Speaker. Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker. When you look at the agenda of today's business, you will see that we are actually discussing very pertinent reports that are being brought in this House by the relevant committees.

For purposes of action on these reports, normally the Council of Ministers must be present in the House otherwise these reports that are being presented today will be a debate amongst ourselves. I am, therefore, moving a procedural matter.

Rt. Hon Speaker, I am moving on a procedural matter. From the time we came here, I have only seen Ministers during the swearing-in session. The Minister from Uganda has only attended the meetings twice, at the official opening day.

As you can see, the whole Front Bench is empty and yet really, for action, we need to have Ministers present at least even if it is one. The Front Bench must be present as we debate these motions and come up with resolutions because it is eventually the Council that implements some of these resolutions.

Rt Hon. Speaker, my procedural matter is: Is it good for us to proceed debating on such important matters of the regional assembly and the East African Community while talking to ourselves without the presence of any Council member in the House? Procedural guidance, Rt. Hon Speaker. Thank you so much.

**The Speaker:** Honourable members, it is a fact that Ministers have not been with us from the beginning since we started debating. This is something we have been debating about. We had a commission's meeting and Chairperson of Council as well as the SG was present. We all noted that this is unacceptable. It is against the rules. We have the Treaty and everything else.

The Secretary General apologised and promised that we should be having Ministers present, even if they are busy, whenever we are debating. We have two special bills. Of course, they are very busy. There are activities in Juba and another activity here in Uganda in Moroto.

There are activities in Juba and another activity in Uganda at Moroto. They will also have another meeting very soon here in Kampala, from 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> November. The Secretary General begged us to understand and promised to bring them to the House. She promised to do her best to bring them to the House.

The Chairpersons and the Commissioners decided to let the programme continue because we trust her. However, this is unacceptable. We trust her but let us proceed today and see what will happen tomorrow.

Before I forget, there are some Ministers who apologised officially and who wrote to us. Honourable Minister Rebecca Kadaga wrote to me. The SG also wrote to me. The Minister from Burundi informed the SG. Those are the only Ministers that apologised.

**Ms Rose Akol (Uganda):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker. I am seeking further clarification on the same issue of the absence of Ministers. I think it is not a one-off, it is not just about the sitting in Kampala.

It has always happened and it has become routine for Ministers not to be available. Sometimes we have one. We have had incidences as Parliament where we have one Minister. After we have met and matters are handled by that Minister, the others at the end of the day come up and reject the position that he or she has taken. This is a critical matter.

At committee level, we have failed to proceed because we have matters, especially on Bills on the Monetary Union that are before us for review.

We wanted to talk to the Ministers. The committee on General Purpose, Committee on Communication, Trade and Investment but we failed to meet the Ministers because they were not there. How do we proceed to bring our report to the Floor, a report that requires the participation of Ministers so that we agree and not have another being again returned to the committees?

Rt. Hon. Speaker. So, this is a serious matter, but it is also true as they apologise, they have deputies. It is the reason the summit actually decided to appoint deputies, because this was the same issue with EALA 3.

In the Fourth EALA, we had deputies, but we are having the same challenges in this Fifth EALA. So, the clarification I'm seeking is, Right Honourable, as much as you have agreed or you have ruled that we proceed, but these are reports for action. We are not just reading reports for the sake of it.

And the action we require is from the Council of Ministers. Now in their absence here, who picks the action, whom do we ask questions, actually the debate is, we are going to read a report, we are going to debate, and we shall require answers from the Ministers here. So, when they are not here for this debate, whom are we going to ask questions?

I am seeking clarification, Mr Speaker.

*(Hon Sankok rose)*

**The Speaker:** Hon. Sankok, hon. Olivier, hon. Kakooza, who told you to stand up? Please sit. When I give you the Floor, you will get up. I can see that three Honourable Members are trying to contribute. I now give the Floor to Hon. Sankok then to Hon. Kakooza.

**Mr David ole Sankok (Kenya):** Honourable Speaker, I apologise for standing up. I thought in this House, because there is no digital way of catching your eye, we could stand so that we catch your eye, and then you give us permission. But I apologise.

**Ms Jacqueline Amongin (Uganda):** Honourable Speaker, you have already ruled on this matter and there was an apology from the Secretary-General. Again, we have the CTC, so for myself, I will say that everything that we debate here, whether it is question time, whether it is motions, all of them require the action of the Council of Ministers. Since they have already apologised, and we have reports that are actually in digital form, we can as well share with them, but still insist that

going forward, next week, they should all be present. I seek your guidance that once we have the CTC, we can proceed so that we can proceed, Honourable Speaker.

Right Honourable Speaker, with due respect to my very good friend, Hon. Sankok, he has kept on referring to the CTC as Council. He is not a Minister. He is an *ex-officio* member of this House, but he does not replace in the absence of a Minister. I am wondering whether the Right Honourable Sankok is in order to keep referring to the CTC's availability in the House to defend the absence of Ministers.

In any way, I would think that he would justify the fact that those Ministers who took responsibility to convey their apologies are recorded, but that does not mean that the CTC represents the absence of Ministers. So is my good friend, Right Honourable Sankok, in order? Right Honourable Speaker.

**Mr David Ole Sankok (Kenya):** Thank you. Honourable Speaker, I was not referring to the CTC as replacing the Council of Ministers, but as the *ex-officio* member, we can also request the Ministers who are available to follow us online, like the DRC members, so that we can proceed. We have already come here, we have used taxes of our respective countries, our citizens, and we cannot just say that we can go home, relax, while you have used taxes.

Lastly, Honourable Speaker, as you call for games, remember some of us practice Darts here. I am a gold medalist in Darts. It is only Honourable Mbidi normally competes with me from Uganda on Darts, so we also do our Darts. I do the walking around, so there can be various types of games. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Please be short. Please take one minute and then contribute. Continue, Honourable Kakooza.

**Mr James Kakooza (Uganda):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker. I feel pain that the Commission can sit, plan for plenary in Uganda or in any other country, the calendar is given to Ministers to come and yet they fail to appear. This is as if they are taking this assembly not seriously, because it happened in year four.

What the Speaker did one time is that he accessed Heads of the Summit and the members of the Council appeared. However, honestly speaking, the reports we are presenting are ours, and we need actions. The worst scenario is, and what makes the results to be bad is the performance of this House and the negotiated positions of bills which are brought in the House and returned. If Ministers are absent, that is why during Summit we are denied assent. That injures and cripples the work of this House.

The integration process needs a legal framework and the people supposed to bring that legal framework is what the president was talking about. His Excellency, Kaguta Museveni said, Africans waste a lot of time on non-issues, where you could do something correctly and do it once

for all, you waste a lot of time. You can imagine the return, 15 bills. After 10 years, the money was spent, the assembly passed the bills, now we are in the same position.

When it is time to assent, others will complain that they are not aware, like what happened last year on the bill of the budget process. It was somersaulted, and it was a vote of no confidence in the council members. Could there have been a lesson to council members to attend the work of the assembly?

I am finding it very difficult, but maybe speaker, through you, it is just courteous to write to them and say, please, you are making the assembly not to perform because you are not present. That is my submission. Thank you.

**Dr Mathias Harebamungu (Rwanda):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker. Though I agree with my colleagues that the physical absence of our Council members is obvious, we should also recognise that the new technology is opening new avenues and we may have one or two Ministers virtually, and that is possible, as we do have even our colleagues from the DRC who are following us, attending virtually. I would suggest that we insist on that because we are here for a purpose. We are also consuming our taxpayers' money. We would not say Ministers are not present, though we close our meeting. That would not be fair as well.

I suggest that we ask some of our Ministers to attend virtually and continue our daily activity. Thank you, sir.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Members. The pain you feel is felt by everyone here. This is the House where they should come and respond physically. I repeat it again, from the beginning, no one has been with us, and we are debating businesses for the Community.

The commissioners and I, yesterday, decided to send a letter to the Chair of the Council of Ministers, reminding him that the Community, is watching. So, we have already done it. With that, we have this committee in charge of legal rules and privileges. They shall consider this. Honourable Members, hoping that tomorrow they will be represented here. Let us proceed with the business we have today. With this, I invite the chair of that committee to move his motion.

## **EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION ON THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY TO ASSESS THE PROCESSES, REGULATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF CONDUCTING NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTION**

10.40

**The Chairperson of the Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution (Dr Gerald Blacks Siranda) (Uganda):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the report for the Committee on

Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution on the Oversight Activity to assess the processes, regulations, and challenges of conducting national elections be presented to the House. Right Honourable Speaker, this report was laid in the House on the 28 August 2024. I beg to move, Right Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** But you don't have seconders?

*(Hon. Amongin, Mr Sankok, Ms Mo mamo, Mr Harebamungu, Gideon, and Gladness seconded the Motion)*

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Now we can justify your motion.

**The Chairperson, Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution** (Dr Gerald Blacks Siranda) (Uganda): Right Honourable Speaker, the report of the Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution on the Oversight Activity to assess the processes and regulations and challenges of conducting national elections was hailed on the 15th to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, 2024 in the Republic of Uganda and in the Republic of Rwanda.

I will pass over the first page. Colleagues that is the page with the list of abbreviations and the table of content. I will also pass over that and briefly do the introduction.

Article 6 (d) of the Treaty stipulates that Partner States adhere to fundamental principles of good governance, including respect for the principles of democracy, rule of law, accountability, transparency, social justice, equal opportunity, gender equality as well as the recognition, promotion and protection of human rights.

The basic pillar of democracy is to have a free and fair election in every country. It was against this background that the Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution carried out an oversight activity to assess the processes, regulations and challenges of conducting national general elections in the Republic of Uganda and Republic of Rwanda.

The objectives of the activity were: -

- i) To evaluate the electoral processes in the Republic of Uganda and Rwanda
- ii) To identify the challenges faced while conducting the national general elections;
- iii) To appreciate the role played by the Electoral Commission;
- iv) To make recommendations for strengthening electoral processes for the benefit of all Partner states.

### Methodology

During the oversight activity, the Committee was divided into two teams. The first sub-committee visited the Republic of Uganda and the second sub-committee visited the Republic of Rwanda. Members received presentation from various stakeholders. After the interactive meeting with the

stakeholders, members had an opportunity to visit the chairpersons of the Electoral Commission in Uganda and Rwanda respectively. In the Republic of Uganda, the sub-committee interacted with stakeholders/ representatives from;

Ministry of the East African Community Affairs; The Electoral Commission; Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; Ministry of Internal Affairs; Inter-Party Organization for Dialogue; Uganda National Student Association; National Council for Older Person; Inter Party Youth Platform; Industrial Court Uganda, EAC Youth Ambassador Platform; Foundation for Human Right initiatives; National Consultative Forum; Political Parties;

- a) Justice Forum Party (JEEMA);
- b) Democratic Party (DP);
- c) People's Progressive Party;(PPP);
- d) Forum for Democratic Change (FDC);
- e) Uganda People's Congress (UPC);
- f) National Resistance Movement (NRM);

During the interaction with the chairperson of the Commission Justice Byamukama Mugenyi Simon, he informed the committee that Electoral Commission is a body mandated with organizing, conducting and supervising various elections. He further informed them that the Commission consisted of 7 Commissioners appointed by the President serving a term of 7 years renewable once.

The team also paid a courtesy call on the Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, the first Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African Community Affairs.

Key Findings, Challenges, Observations and Recommendations from the Republic of Uganda:

Stages in the Electoral Process

Mr Kiyimba Umar the Head of the Election Management Department in Uganda informed the committee that Electoral Commission was established by Article 61 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda in 1995. It is mandated with the function of promoting democracy and good governance by organizing, conducting and supervising regular free and fair elections. The Commission is composed of a chairman, deputy and five commissioners who are appointed by the President with the approval of parliament.

The sub-committee was briefed with the stages of Electoral Process which included; Demarcation of the Electoral Areas. Demarcation of the electoral areas involves creation of electoral boundaries for representation of the people. It is done in case of creation of new constituencies, districts, sub-



counties and parishes. The purpose of demarcation is to help in determining the number of elective positions for representation.

Re-organization of polling stations is done through harmonizing polling stations for easy access by the voters. The importance is to: reduce the distance voters walk to reach polling stations; decongest polling centers hence creating enough space for each polling station; ensure that voters are rightfully placed in parishes; villages/ cells and polling stations; ensure that each polling station is located in an open and accessible area and each parish/ward has at least one polling station.

Update of the National Voter's Register Members were informed that registers are updated before an election or a by-election. This enables new applicants register as voters and also allow those who wish to transfer to new voting locations to do so.

Display of the National Voters' Register It was noted that before any election is held, display of the National Voter Register is conducted at every polling station for not less than twenty-one days. In case of a by- election, display is conducted for 10 days to enable the public to scrutinize the register for any corrections and objections or complaints raised.

The registers are displayed to allow voters check the correctness of their particulars, confirm the voters photos appear against their correct particulars and recommend deletions of the dead, the under age, multiple registration and those who neither reside nor originate from the parish/ ward.

Nomination of candidates is when the aspiring candidates for elective offices present their duly filled nomination papers to the returning officer for verification. The aspiring candidates who meet the nomination requirements are declared duly nominated candidates to contest for an elective office then when all requirements are fulfilled Campaigns starts.

Perspectives of the Inter- Party Organization for Dialogue (IPOD) The team was briefed about the Inter- Party Organization for Dialogue (IPOD) a political platform consisting of the political parties that have representation in the Parliament of Uganda.

It is worth noting that IPOD is not a government entity. The major purpose of its existence is to seek solutions to Uganda's political parties into viable vehicles of public interest aggregation. The entity currently has 6 members parties including Democratic Party (DP), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Justice Forum (JEEMA), National Resistance Movement (NRM), People' Progressive Party (PPP) and Uganda Peoples's Congress (UPC).

Member Political Parties are bound by a memorandum of Understanding signed every after-election cycle. The current MOU runs from 2021- 2026. IPOD is structurally organized in three levels;

The Summit of leaders, the Council of Secretaries General and the Secretariat. Inter- Party Organization for Dialogue (IPOD) has been of great importance that is to say:

1. They have organized dialogue session to minimize and de-escalate any tensions arising out of political process;
2. Strengthened capacity of political parties in areas like organization management, leadership development, policy formulation and conflict resolution;
3. Engages in targeted mentorship programs fostering the growth of emerging leaders with in political parties;
4. Undertaken comprehensive initiative aimed at breaking down barriers and ensuring that diverse voices are not only heard but actively participate in political process
5. Advocating for electoral reforms that promote fair representation and encourage political parties to embrace diversity;
6. Empowered and strengthened women and youth with skills, knowledge and resources necessary to actively participate in political processes.

### General Challenges Faced During Election

The composition and the operation of the Uganda Electoral Commission has been a source of heated disputes; Members were informed that the Commission suffers from the perceptions of lack of independence and inefficiency. Although the Uganda Constitution and the legal code provides for the Commission's independence, the Commissioners are appointed by the president. This erodes confidence in the institution's autonomy.

The budgetary allocations are insufficient to fulfill all the mandated tasks. The funds are also not released on time which hinder the process to go on. Discrepancies in voters' registration which include duplication of names, missing names, names registered in the wrong districts and inflated numbers of registered voters which slows down the voting process. Monetization or commercialization of politics has significantly influenced the participation of individuals in the electoral process in Uganda.

Studies suggest that the high costs associated with political campaigns may deter individuals from actively engaging in politics, as they may lack the financial resources to compete effectively. For instance, a report on the impact of the cost of politics on inclusive political participation in Uganda found that the average amount spent by a candidate during the 2016 elections was between USD96,000 to USD149,000. So, you may say 56 million, 350 million for particular constituency for you to run in Uganda. You can ask what Honourable Namara is going through.

This financial barrier has led to a political environment where only those with considerable resources can afford to participate. Insufficient civic education significantly impacts people's participation in elections, particularly when compounded by high levels of illiteracy more especially in the rural areas. Without adequate civic knowledge, voters will not fully understand their rights, the electoral process, or the importance of their votes which leads to lower engagement

and turnout. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that civic education initiatives often do not target some populations hence leaving a gap in understanding and empowerment.

It was also noted that the process starts late and done only during electoral seasons; Increased levels of indiscipline and conflict in party primaries which equally spill over to the national elections. Some political leaders are indiscipline which is also reflected in their support base. High levels of intolerance across parties causing conflicts and hate; Ever increasing roles of security agencies in the electoral processes which makes people turn away from participating in elections for fear of being harassed.

#### Specific Challenges Faced by Older Persons and Women

1. Intimidation Language The use of intimidation language throughout the political landscape has significantly affected the participation of elderly and women in the electoral process.
2. Ill-health The elderly people are more prone to ill health that limits their mobility to the voting locations and increase dependency on others.
3. Electoral Violence Electoral violence in Uganda has a significant impact on the participation of women being referred to as a weak gender and the elderly in the electoral process. The fear and actual instances of violence has deterred them from engaging in political activities, including voting which is a fundamental democratic right.
4. Barriers impacting electoral process Cultural barriers significantly impact the participation of older persons in Uganda's electoral processes.

Rt Hon Speaker, these barriers can manifest in various forms, such as age-based discrimination, inequitable access to higher education and the burden of household chores that is attributed to women has led to marginalization in political participation and representation.

#### Observations

1. Members observed that the Uganda Judiciary is autonomous. It has always exhibited autonomy because of its independence. This has given confidence to voters to resolve conflicts;
2. It was observed that Uganda has taken steps such as the inclusion of women and elderly persons as a special interest group in Parliament, ensuring that they have dedicated representatives to voice out their concerns.
3. The participation of women and elderly in electoral processes of Uganda is a cornerstone for societal development and cohesion, recognized for their vast contributions, they are pivotal in wealth creation, nurturing future generations, and fostering social harmony. Their wisdom and experience are assets in conflict resolution and in maintaining the cultural fabric of the nation;

4. It was noted that prisoners and Ugandans in the diaspora are not allowed to vote because Uganda lags behind without laws that simplifies government approaches in handling such issues;
5. The Committee observed that the Parliamentary Election Act, 2005 as amended provides that the nomination paper of the aspirants shall be attached with a nomination fee of 3 million Uganda shillings (equivalate to USD800) which is very high and not refundable.

#### Recommendations

Hon Speaker, to address challenge of low civic education, solutions could include the development of targeted civic education programs that cater for the needs of elderly persons, women and youth by using accessible language and media that are easily understood regardless of literacy levels.

Additionally, the creation of more inclusive and accessible voting processes, such as simplified ballot papers and voting assistance, could help accommodate all voters;

I beg to move to other areas.

**The Speaker:** Hon Chair, we have guests in our gallery and they are about to leave. These are pupils from Stellamaris Boarding Primary School from Mukono District Uganda. Please join me in welcoming them. – *(Applause)*

**The Chairperson of the Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution** (Dr Gerald Sianda Blacks): Thank you so much hon Speaker for welcoming those East Africans.

Commercialization of politics can be addressed by implementing policies that reduce the financial burden of campaigning, such as state-funded campaigns or spending caps.

Additionally strengthening institutional frameworks to support people’s political engagement; Need for the reforms that allows for independence of Electoral Commission in order to create legitimacy that elections are intended to generate and ensure stability in their aftermath; Strengthening legal frameworks to protect women, youth and the elderly person from discrimination and abuse throughout the election progress.

There is need for the local government to plan and implement community-based programs to enhance political engagement; The government should design targeted interventions to address health emergencies particularly amongst the elderly and women to enhance their participation in healthcare settings will increase voter participation among older persons.

Ensuring accessibility to the voting facilities and provision of transport to polling stations will easy their mobility to the voting location; Engaging community-based organizations that focus on inter-generational approaches can also provide support and advocacy for the rights of elderly persons.

The government and civil society should engage to collaborate in creating an inclusive environment that encourages the active participation of all citizens, regardless of age and gender in the electoral process;

Electoral Commission should adopt technology to put faith and trust in the process. This is aimed at improving the efficiency, transparency and credibility of the electoral process;

The Electoral Commission should review the role of security agencies on whose interest they serve given their command structure;

The Council of Ministers should allocate funds for the Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution to enable it carry out its mandate as election observer as stipulated in Article 123 of Chapter 23 of the Treaty for the establishment of the East African Community.

#### Key Findings, Challenges, Observations and Recommendations from The Republic of Rwanda

In the Republic of Rwanda, the sub- committee interacted with stakeholders/ representatives from; Rwanda Electoral Commission; Rwanda National Police; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of EAC Affairs; Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration; National Identification Agency; Rwanda Civil Society Platform; Rwanda Elders Advisory Forum; Members of Rwanda Parliament; Association of Rwanda Female Journalist; Rwanda Journalists Association; Rwanda Broadcasting Agency; Rwanda Governance Board; National Consultative Forum of Political Organizations; National Council of Persons with Disabilities; National Youth Council; National Women Council; Rwanda National Students Associations; National Commissions for Human Rights;

Political Parties; Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF); Party for Progress and Concord (PPC); Democratic Union of the Rwanda People (UDPR); Social Democratic Party (PSD); Centrist Democratic Party (PDC); Prosperity and Solidarity Party (PSP); Liberal Party (PL); Rwanda Socialist Party (PSR); Ideal Democratic Party (PDI);Democratic Green Party of Rwanda (DGPR).

During the interaction of with the Chairperson of the Commission Hon. Oda Gasinzigwa. She informed the sub-committee that the Commission is independent and autonomous in nature and consists of 7 commissioners appointed by the President serving a term of 5 years renewable once.

At the time of visit, the Commission was receiving credentials for the candidates aspiring for the various electoral position.

#### Electoral Processes

##### The National Electoral Commission

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) is a permanent and independent constitutional election management body as enshrined in Article 140 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda.

Article 3 of Organic Law n° 001/2019.OL of 29/07/2019 governing the conduct of elections as amended to-date mandates the National Electoral Commission to ensure the implementation of legal provisions governing the holding of elections, to provide relevant instructions as necessary to ensure the smooth conduct of elections, and to appoint election volunteers. In terms of governance NEC has seven Commissioners who are appointed by the President based on merit and approved by parliament Election Laws & Regulations.

Among the fundamental principles that the state of Rwanda has committed to uphold as per Article 10 of the constitution are:

Equitable power-sharing; and building a State governed by the rule of law, a pluralistic democratic Government, equality of all Rwandans and between women and men which is affirmed by women occupying at least 30% of positions in decision-making organs. This is evident in the steady increase in women's representation in the lower House (Chamber of Deputies) throughout several legislative elections, from 48.8 percent (2003–2008), 56.4 percent (2008–2013) to 64 percent (2013–2018) and 61.3 percent in (2018-2023) that has been extended to 2024.

In addition, various gender transformative legal and policy frameworks have been adopted to remove any provision perpetuating gender inequalities and guarantee equal political rights for women and men. The inclusiveness of this framework is not just a legal requirement.

The Organic Law no. 001/2019.OL of 29/07/2019 governing elections, provides for modalities of elections as follows: Direct elections (All eligible voters) for the President of the Republic and the 53 Deputies from political organizations and independent candidates; and Indirect elections (Electoral College) for the 24 Women members, 2 Members representing the Youth and 1 Member representing persons with disability.

Presidential Order no. 077/01 of 11/12/2023 relating to elections of the President of the Republic and Deputies Provides for: The polling date; the campaign period; the electoral constituency of 24 female Deputies and the number of seats for each electoral constituency; the electoral colleges for the 24 women deputies, the 2 youth Deputies and 1 deputy with disabilities.

The constituency for the 24 Women Deputies is a province and City of Kigali and seats are distributed in accordance with the number of populations of each province or City of Kigali as follows:

Northern Province: four seats; Southern Province: six seats; Eastern Province: six seats; Western Province: six seats; and City of Kigali: two seats. Electoral college for the 24 Women Deputies includes: Members of the Executive Committee of National Women Council from Village level to national level; Members of Councils of Districts of the Province, at provincial level or members of the Council of the City of Kigali, at level of the City of Kigali; Electoral college for 2 Deputies representing the Youth. Executive Committee of the National Youth Council at the level of each

District and at national level. Electoral College for 1 Deputy representing persons with disability. Members of the Executive Committee of the National Council of Persons with Disabilities from District to national level and the Coordinator of the National Council of Persons with Disabilities at each Sector level Regulations of the NEC No. 001/24 of 19/02/2024 governing Presidential and Parliamentary elections of 2024.

Modalities for registration and updating the voter register including manual and online. Provisions on submissions of candidature for Presidential and parliamentary Candidates; provisions on Presidential and Parliamentary election campaigns; Provision on media coverage of elections; Provision for Public Broadcaster (RBA)'s provision of equitable and free access to its media platform by all candidates during election Campaigns; provisions on the role and conduct of security Agencies during elections; provisions on the roles and conduct of volunteers at different levels.

#### Electoral Preparations

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) undertakes and goes through systematic electoral processes in collaboration and partnership with different election stakeholders. These processes include: preparation and publication of election laws and regulation; prepare the elections calendar; prepare a detailed operation plans and strategies for smooth conduct of elections and for the purpose of mitigating foreseeable challenges.

Rt. Hon Speaker, the NEC also emphasizes on principles of inclusion and ownership of election processes by all election stakeholders. These include but are not limited to: Government Ministries and agencies whose mandates are linked to election processes; Political organizations at individual level or through the National Consultative Forum of political organizations; Non- government organizations including Civil Society Organizations and Faith, Best Organizations; National Councils: Youth, Women and Persons with disabilities; Public and private media Houses; Security organs (National Police)

The NEC goes through an elaborate process that include: Strategic and Annual planning that is aligned to the country's term of office of elected Leaders; Preparation of thorough and detailed election operation plans covering the entire election cycle in an election year; Election stakeholders' engagement in evaluation of past elections with a view to making improvements in up-coming National elections; Consultation with election stakeholders in the drafting of the National general elections electoral calendar and elections regulations;

Hon. Speaker, through Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with election stakeholders, they prepare and deliver electoral civic education, training and information programmes to the population. This is done even in non- election years in preparation of the next electoral cycle; Planning and working closely with the Rwanda National police in securing the entire electoral process. Through the National Women's Council, the Ministry of Gender & Family Promotion

builds on women leaders' engagement and play a vital role in sensitizing women and girls using their collective voice, leadership, and mentorship skills.

The targeted women achievers are engaged in sharing their leadership experiences and lead national and local awareness campaigns. National gender machinery mobilizes, develop capacity for, and facilitate women candidates through mentorship, coaching, and inspirational talks by senior and experienced resource persons.

Elections Observation Mission is a vital component in the elections process. NEC always sends out invitation and carries out accreditation Internationally, Regionally and Nationally to election observers and for the International and Regional observers the immigration department facilitates their entry and exit into the country. This role is anchored on the provisions of the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

The local government plays a critical role in mass mobilization to participate in and benefit from electoral processes. The National Gender Machinery works with the local Government to mobilize the population to equally participate in electoral processes and ensure gender-responsive campaigns and electoral sites.

Through the Broadcasting Agency all candidates are given equal coverage of airtime on the national broadcaster thus through TV and Radio. The element of Dialogue and consensus is the political governing spirit during elections and through political parties and simple majority determines the winners. The compliance with gender equality principles in governance processes as enshrined in the Constitution of as a requirement of gender representation, of at least at 30%, in all decision-making positions is upheld universally. This is evident with the more than two thirds of its parliamentary seats and over 30 percent of cabinet positions occupied by women.

Youth voluntary initiative in the electoral and different political party process are promoted. This is mostly on a voluntary basis through the Youth Volunteers initiative. Since the last elections (2018), there has been more than two (2) million new youths registered who attained the age of 18 and are credible for voting. However apart from voting youth play a vital in civic education and electoral observer missions. Recruitment and training of election volunteers.

NEC plans to use over 100,000 Volunteers as polling staff and election presiding officers during the upcoming Elections slotted for 15th July 2024; The persons with disability are provided access to take part in the electoral process and preparation of the country's elections for example through the National Council of Persons with Disabilities work closely with NEC to provide access for persons with disabilities at polling posts, sign languages/interpreters during campaigns as well as braille materials for persons with visual impairment.

Major components of the Election Calendar are as follows: Voter registration, Accreditation of election observers, Submission of candidatures, Period for electoral campaigns that are 22 days.



Polling date and this also caters for the Diaspora population. Publication of results. Timely and comprehensive voter registration and voter register update. This is done every year regardless of whether there are national elections. This system is interlinked with the National Identification Agency; Timely planning and acquisition of election logistics.

Majority of these logistics are acquired locally like printing of ballot papers, polling booths, among others; Funding of political Organizations is channeled through the Consultative Forum for Political Organizations that are registered in Rwanda. This grant is given to those programs considered by the forum as common to Political organizations. The government, in its budget provides for grants to Political organizations and independent candidates for their campaigns. This amount of money is equally distributed. The grant is only given to Political organizations and independent candidates that have obtained at least five per cent (5%) of the electoral votes. The Government provides for this grant in its annual budget.

### Challenges

Rt Hon Speaker, conducting national general elections comes with a number of challenges. The NEC like many other Election Management Bodies encounters the following challenges: National funding of electoral activities is not always as planned. financial gaps remain though do not hinder the general conduct of elections; Voter registration and voter register update especially for first-time voter and Rwandan community abroad (Diaspora); planning and acquisition of election logistics especially those sourced outside the country; Some individual aspiring and nominated candidates sometimes fall short of adhering to the provisions of the law and regulations governing elections especially during election campaigns; The era of social media platforms and their use though positive in reaching many voters has challenges in self- regulation in electoral processes.

### Observations of the Committee

The Committee made the following observations

The Committee commends the coordinated efforts of the various government agencies and non-government agencies in Rwanda ensuring that NEC delivers and conduct free, fair and transparent elections that promotes democracy and good governance in the upcoming Presidential and Parliamentary Elections 2024;

During the oversight activity, the Committee established the limited days that the election campaign period for Political Organizations and independent candidates which is 22 days only; According to the stakeholders, they are intentional to make Rwanda a model of best practices in democracy inclusiveness. This is where consensus generation and dialogue are used for decision making which brings about harmonious co -existence.

The Committee commends the government of Rwanda for this deliberate effort; The Mobilization Officer, National Women's Council, informed the Committee that the electoral processes in

Rwanda are gender responsive. In addition, various gender transformative legal and policy frameworks have been adopted to remove any provision perpetuating gender inequalities and guarantee equal political rights for women and men. This is evident in adherence of the laws that have been enacted to foster gender equality. The Republic of Rwanda constitution does not only enshrine the principle of gender equality but also guarantees a minimum quota of 30% for women in decision-making organs;

The Committee commends National Identification Agency (NIDA) for the coordinated efforts in ensuring the voters register is up to date by interfacing its systems with that of NEC. Such enhanced efforts will help in creating a secure and conducive environment that facilitates voting;

During the oversight activity, the Committee established about the voluntary initiative that is being promoted during the electoral process. The youth voluntarily present themselves to be part of electoral process where they are engaged in assisting NEC in various activities at the polling stations and any other assignments given to them. This initiative makes the youth to be accountable to their country.

#### Recommendations

Rt Hon Speaker, the Committee recommends to the Assembly to: Urge the Council of Ministers to allocate funds for that will cover the whole Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution to be carrying out electoral observer missions during elections within the region; Urge the Secretariat to prepare and present before the Assembly the reports from electoral observer missions; urge the Council of Ministers to urge Partner States to invest in modern technologies and mostly to have national identification agencies link up election management bodies so as to have an easy voters register update; Urge the Council of Minister to urge Partner States to have electoral processes that promote inclusiveness of the youth, Persons with disability and are gender sensitive.

#### Conclusion

Rt Hon Speaker, conducting national general elections is very tasking and challenging to an election management body that requires very elaborate electoral processes and implementable regulations as per the electoral cycle in place. The smooth conduct of elections mitigating and addressing challenges throughout the electoral processes requires professionalism, impartiality and integrity on the part of election managers that are core principles of the National Electoral Commission elections management values. A successful, free, fair and transparent national general election process also calls for active participation, involvement and ownership of the entire elections process by all election stakeholders.

#### Acknowledgement

Rt Hon Speaker, the Committee of Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution wishes to thank the Rt. Hon. Speaker and the Office of the Clerk for facilitating it to carry out its oversight function. The Committee further appreciates the stakeholders for the information given to the Committee. The Committee hopes that the findings and the recommendations contained in this report will greatly improve on the challenges faced during elections in the Partner States.

Right honourable speaker, I beg to report.

**The Speaker:** You beg to move or to report?

**The Chairperson, Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution** (Dr Gerald Siranda Blacks) (Uganda): I beg to move that the report is adopted by the House.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Members, we had agreed that this kind of report should be brief. We even allocated time and fixed it at 15 minutes.

The next Chairpersons should try to be brief otherwise we will not leave here. We have taken 45 minutes. Before proposing the motion, we have other visitors. I see pupils coming in.

*(Question proposed)*

11.36

**Mr Abubakar Kachwamba (Tanzania):** Mr Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank you, the Chair of the Committee and the entire team of the committee of Regional Affairs for a tedious work of coming up with a good report for implementation. However, my concern is on page seven, item number 4(iii) on the general challenges on the composition and operation of the Uganda Electoral Commission. It says that the Commission has been a source of heated disputes and that members were informed that the commission suffers from the perceptions of lack of independence and inefficiency. Although the Uganda Constitution and the legal code provides for the commission's independence, the commissioners are appointed by the president. This erodes the confidence in the institutions.

My concern is that I do not know how you arrived at that challenge. It looks like you interacted with about 18 stakeholders. When I look at the list, I do not think half of them can come up with that observation, with the exception of maybe the Secretary General of a certain party and other sub-parties. There is a way in which we should look at this item. I would like to remind you that during general elections in Africa, especially in East Africa, this is a time when there is a turmoil and a lot of disputes. At the end, we end up losing our peace and tranquilly. This has been a source of many conflicts in Africa. The electoral commission should be a commission that cannot be manipulated easily in order to avoid the conflicts after election. If the Constitution of Uganda provides that the president is the one to appoint the commissioners then I do not a challenge unless you go back and redefine the constitution of Uganda.

11.39

**Mr Denis Namara (Uganda):** Thank you very much Speaker. On the onset, I would want to say that I support the report of the Regional Affairs Committee chaired by my powerful friend and comrade the Hon. Dr Siranda with exception with amendment on page 7.

However, before I go into that amendment I would want - since we are in Uganda I want to inform you that yesterday in my area, where I come from, we experienced a very big challenge where some two or more individuals were hacked to death using *pangas and machetes*. At least 10 people in that area, my constituency, where I come from, actually 10 people were hacked to death and others are still hospitalized. Security is still finding out whether it was an act of some of these destabilising forces from DRC or whether it was an act of cultism. We condole with those families and we pray that government works expeditiously to ensure that the culprits are apprehended and may the souls of the departed rest in eternal peace and those who are in hospitals may they recover very quickly.

Rt. Honourable Speaker, the issue raised by Hon. Kachwamba on the composition of the electoral commission and the appointment of the commissioners is something that the Constitution of Uganda is very clear about. It talks about how they are constituted and how they are also appointed. The Constitution gives the mandate to the President to appoint the members of the Electoral Commission. Therefore, for the committee to put in the report this particular paragraph that the composition is always a source of heated disputes and that it erodes confidence in the institution and its autonomy - I think this particular paragraph should be expunged from the report. What happens here is done is according to the Constitution of Uganda and the laws of Uganda.

Hon. Speaker I support the report of the committee in as far as the observations on the Inter-Party Organization for Dialogue are concerned. This is a platform where different political players are able to meet and discuss issues affecting the political terrain of Uganda particularly in the multi-party dispensation environment of Uganda. It is fundamental.

I remember the Rt. Hon. Secretary General, Hon. Siranda Blacks was at one time, I think Chairperson of Inter-Party Organization for Dialogue. He did well and yet he was from the opposition. This platform helps to bring a discussion a sober discussion between different political players.

I, therefore, commend the committee as far as that particular observation and recommendation is concerned. Regarding commercialization of politics it is, indeed, very true that the level of commercialization of politics is beyond its limits and is critical that maybe parliament comes up with a law to limit the commercialization of politics. It does not only affect the voters but also affects those who are contesting because you become a slave to the voters that if you do not have money, you cannot run a political office. I commend the committee for that. I will end by saying that Parliament should enact laws to ensure there is a disclosure in the way the politics are being

commercialized. The report also talks about some candidates. Let me speak about some candidates who use blackmail, propaganda, insults, cause havoc and chaos during the electoral process. This erodes democracy, erodes the right of the people to choose the right leaders, and it is true.

In some constituencies we have some politicians who have radio stations. They use them as an open platform of attacking individuals, politicians, political leaders, the president, attacking some very powerful people in the government. The body that is responsible for controlling, the Uganda Communications Commission, has not done their part in as far as controlling these people and their radios. They allow them to talk about anything on the platform. I went to Rwanda, and I was impressed. I was one of those, I am not a member of the committee, but I found my way there in Rwanda against all odds. I was impressed by the electoral process there, because there's no use of money. The election on the voting day is very peaceful, and therefore I commend the Republic of Rwanda for those efforts.

Rt Hon Speaker, I want to support the report of the committee with the amendment of expunging the first challenge on page 7. I move that we expunge it and approve and support the report. I beg to submit.

Visiting Delegation from Busabala Primary School, Wakiso District

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Before I give the Floor to Caroline Kayonga, we have visitors, again. These are pupils and teachers from Busabala Primary School, from Wakiso District, Uganda. Please, recognize them. You can proceed. They are dressed in green, very good colours just like our seats here. Thank you.

11.46

**Mr Gideon Gatpan (South Sudan):** Thank you, Right Hon. Speaker for the opportunity. I want to declare from the onset that I am a member of the Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution. Rt Hon Speaker, mine is an emphases in some areas.

The emphasis is informed by the fact that I am a member of this committee. I have experience in the EAC electoral processes, since I have been observing elections in the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya, and Rwanda. During the elections of Burundi, I was among those members who were travelling during the hard time of coronavirus until we were asked to go back when we were almost reaching the country. So, there is a shift, and I think this shift is also noted by the African Union.

This is in terms of its integrity and credibility Article 6 of the Treaty Establishing the East African Community, talks about good governance as a key principle. This is the principle that we use to measure elections.

So, we use elections to measure the principle of good governance under Article 6 of the Treaty establishing the East African Community. This makes it very fundamental for us to always focus on any shift with regards to elections.

Rt Hon. Speaker, initially, the African Union and other electoral bodies used to emphasize the measure of the outcomes of election. Two, they would check if they were free, fair and credible. Credibility, involves inclusiveness, where you have the opportunities for voters and candidates. It also involves transparency, where you have all the steps being opened for scrutiny. You then have accountability that includes the conduct of all governments, electoral management bodies, security forces, candidates and political parties. But also, there is the issue of transparency and accountability. These things are all found under credibility aspect of measuring elections. You have free, fair, and credible elections. So, credibility comes with all these. Credibility is no longer being used as a measure now. We have moved to free, fair, and sometimes we go and pick one component of credibility, which is transparency, to measure election, to say free, fair, and sometimes transparent election. So, the element of inclusivity and accountability are missing. Why?

Rt Honourable Speaker, I think that is something to note. And where we can bring up this kind of competence or aspects of measuring elections, with regard to Article 6 of the Treaty, is to always debate the reports of the electoral observation mission. It is very difficult, from my experience, to have the Council of Ministers to table a report of election observation.

We have been asking in election observation missions, why we cannot debate. They will always say that we should not table it to the Assembly because these reports are meant for the electoral bodies in their respective Partner States, to inform them of the areas of weaknesses and to improve the electoral processes. That is fine. We are legislators and we are also accountable to the people of East Africa. We are guided by the Treaty.

There is a clear provision of the Treaty. Let me wind up. So, we have to debate these reports, and it must be an initiative of the Assembly to have the electoral reports debated.

As we wind up, Rt Honourable Speaker, the funding issue of our elections. Our elections are largely funded from outside, except for the Republic of Rwanda. I think we need to borrow the experience of the Republic of Rwanda, where elections are 100 per cent funded by the government. I know it is going to be difficult, but I think that is the way to go because funding from outside informs a lot of issues to do with the credibility and integrity of the electoral processes in our Partner States. Thank you, Right Honourable. I submit and I support the report without amendment. Good.

**The Speaker:** Next is Honourable Sankok and then Honourable Mathias.

11.52

**Mr David Ole Sankok (Kenya):** Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker, for giving me this time to also support this very good report from Honourable Dr. Siranda Blacks and the entire committee. They did a lot of work and a very progressive report here in front of us. I only have a few interjections especially on the methodology. African problems need African solutions. Democracy demands that the majority have their way and the minority have their say.

The minority, have had their way. That is what we are witnessing in Africa, especially in the EAC, where after an election, we start another campaign, especially led by civil society. I have said African problems need African solutions.

Honourable Speaker, I think now it is clear. I had picked on the methodology, whereby the committee interacted with some organizations and institutions most of them civil societies.

Honourable Speaker, I speak from what my predecessor, who has just spoken, had talked about, Honourable Gatpan, regarding foreign sponsorship of our elections. Our civil societies at times become evil societies. To be frank, if a civil society is entirely dependent on foreign donation, they cannot bite the hand that feeds them. They will entirely be responsible and advance the agenda of their foreign masters. In advancing the entire agenda of the foreign masters, they bring us to what I define as political socio-economic neocolonialism, where our democracy is not an African democracy, but a kind of choreographed democracy from foreign masters, they have biased thinking.

Next time when the committee goes, it should try to dig out who we are meeting and who our sponsors are. If a civil society is entirely sponsored by EAC Partner States, listen to them. If they are sponsored by Europeans or the West, let them advance their human rights of the West and of the Europeans. They cannot advance human rights, especially when it comes to the election process of East Africa, if we are not sponsoring them.

I have also seen the report on the election of marginalized group representatives, especially here in Uganda. The representation of persons with disabilities is actually an electoral college, where persons with disabilities themselves elect their own representative. In our case in Kenya, I was nominated to represent persons with disabilities in parliament. I ended up becoming more loyal to my master, the political party that nominated me, more than the persons with disabilities whom I purport to represent.

Honourable Speaker, it is very important that even those other nations within the East African Community who nominate directly representation of the marginalised group like persons with disabilities, women and youth, allow an electoral college system of election so that at least you are elected and you are loyal to those who have elected you.

Finally, the election in Rwanda is a case that all of us should emulate. It is 100 per cent sponsored by the Government of Rwanda, meaning everything that is done there is entirely out of the people

and the taxes and the money from the Rwandan taxpayers. Again, it is not that expensive. Sometimes our elections become so expensive that as if you have bought your position, and if you have bought your position, you will naturally try to get return on investment. Since you have invested in the election process, getting return on investment, sometimes the salary may not give you enough return on investment. We end up advocating for corruption without knowing, simply because of making the election process to be very expensive.

Honourable Speaker, with those few remarks, I support this report and urge the Council of Ministers to look into this report and encourage our Partner States to learn from Rwanda and Uganda, because these are typical African democracies that will withstand the test of time, that have shunned away with the modern-day political, social, economic neocolonialism. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Thank you, Honourable Sankok.

11.39

**Dr Mathias Harebamungu (Rwanda):** Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I want to highlight that I am a member of this committee. Right, Hon. Speaker, I will be brief.

My intervention focusses on three points. One, about the members of the Electoral Commission who are appointed and nominated by the Heads of State. That would not be an issue at all, as long as it is well stated and clearly approved by the Constitution and even by the Parliament. That is one. Second, it is about what we have observed in Rwanda. All the stakeholders that were meant to meet have responded and participated actively.

This has helped the team to clearly capture all the corners of the electoral processes in Rwanda. Three, it is about what transpired from our reports. When you look at the way we develop our power sharing model, when you look at the inclusiveness and go through the concessional democracy, these are key for the stability of our nation and our Partner State.

I think that we, Africans, have our own homegrown solutions that can be borrowed, though I am not selling my model. Thank you, Rt.Hon. Speaker. I beg to submit and support the report.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Now we have three last Speakers. Honourable Ndangiza, Honourable Kakooza, and our chair.

Honourable Ndangiza, you have the floor.

12.01

**Ms Fatuma Ndangiza (Rwanda):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker. I want to start by thanking the Committee of Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution under its leadership of Hon. Dr. Siranda



for a very comprehensive and precise report. Mine is really to commend the two Partner States, both the Republic of Rwanda and the Republic of Uganda, especially the electoral commissions for the good work they are doing to ensure that elections in the respective Partner States are conducted in an impartial and democratic process. The two countries allow the citizens of their respective countries to participate in electing their leaders, giving them choices. We listened to various best practices in both countries, but also challenges and recommendations.

However, I just need clarification on the methodology, because the report is about assessing processes, regulations, challenges of conducting elections.

It was an oversight to assess processes, regulations, challenges of conducting national general elections. I expected that the methodology would at least to come up with some guidelines when organising elections, because be it African Union Commission, but also East African Community. We normally send observers and they are guided by some norms and practices and a list of maybe some checklists. It was not very clear.

Maybe the Chair will have to clarify on that. What was the purpose of the mission? Was it to understand how election processes, election commissions work in organising elections, or it was related to conducting elections and therefore that one should be clear.

The second one, on the case of Uganda, there were some recommendations and also some observations made, especially on the issue of monetisation and commercialisation. This is a challenge in most elections, where you have competitive democracy, people tend to use money. Now when you come to the recommendation, the recommendation does not really align with the problem, because you are recommending that there should be state funding. Should we use taxpayers' money to fund elections? Is that the best solution? Or maybe there could be legislations that can be set up to curb the influence of money.

My recommendation is to enact legislation and policies that will reduce the influence of money and commercialization in elections to allow all sectors of the society to participate, including women and other groups that do not have so much money. The moment you have that kind of a system; they are left out. The final comment I have is on the term that was raised by Hon. Gideon on the free, fair elections. I saw it used both for Rwanda and Uganda. Is it the terminology that is being used by the commissions? And how do we align with the African Union language? We are a race that is aligned to the African Union. Nowadays they use the word transparent and credible elections.

With those remarks, I want to support the report and thank the committee for a job well done.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Ndangiza. Now, Hon. Kakooza.

12.06

**Ms James Kakooza (Uganda):** Yes, thank you, Rt. Honourable Speaker. I want to add my voice to the committee, giving us the highlights and insights of the processes of the two countries. My observation will go to page 8(v) then I go to the other.

Chair of the committee, the figures you mentioned as the average amount spent by candidates during 2016 elections was USD96,000 to USD149,000. I think the figure needs to be corrected for the purpose of the record, because USD96,000 dollars by 2016, if you use the same formula, it does go to 149 million. If you use that formula, meaning the exchange rate was USD1,552 dollars. The record needs to be corrected. Secondly, on that same bulletin, commercialisation of politics is influenced by individuals.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, the problem here with politics campaigns, depends on (v). If you read (v), the insufficient civic education significantly impacts people's participation in elections.

That is true, Rt Hon Speaker. I have an experience. I have been participating in elections for 25 years. I went into an area where they requested me to pay anything I had. I bought chairs and saucepans for them, everything. But what happened in that parish, where I gave all those things, they only gave me five votes in that particular area. Can you imagine?

I asked them what happened. They told me I should have paid them to come vote. They told me on the day of voting, the other man came and gave them UGX2,000. You can imagine. They left all what I gave them, which was almost UGX120 million, but they valued only UGX2,000.

That means if people do not have enough civic education to know what they are supposed to do, then the voting process or the voting rights are becomes dangerous for society to participate and have a free and fair election. Second, on (ii) I think it is a shame that we still look for funding from donors for our elections. Democracy is not a cheap thing. It is expensive thing. To achieve it, because the political cost can never be quantified, I would like to quote Prof. Paul Swami, that you have to invest in that democracy, which is not cheap, to have an objective if you want to have democracy. So insufficient funding over electoral process and you depend on donors whose interests you do not know. Actually, I borrowed that from the Political Organisations Act.

That is why the Government of Uganda went into an extra mile and said it would use money from treasury to sponsor the parties so that they have fundamentals of democracy. When we depend on donors, where they have their thinking on different terms, and they give you strings attached, like their behaviour in cultural society, it becomes dangerous for a country. They can even plot to overthrow you. So, I think this is a serious shame for those going for elections and borrowing money or begging donors to sponsor your countries because you never know what happens next.

With those few remarks, I beg to support the report.

12.12

**Mr Machano Ali Machano (Tanzania):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity. I am a member of the committee. I want to apologise. There are some issues I want to debate in this report but I think it would be better to do so when it comes to reporting on the election observation mission.

I will allow my other colleagues to continue with the debate. Thank you so much.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Now I give the floor to the Minister to respond. However, they are not here. It is as if we have been talking to ourselves.

It is now time for the Chairperson, Council of Ministers if he is around. It is their time to contribute and to respond, but there is no one to respond. It is as if we are talking to ourselves. CTC, who is with us? You are with us here, but with this situation...In this situation, we have to go to hon Chair to reply.

12.13

**Dr Gerald Siranda Blacks (Uganda):** Thank you, Mr Speaker and honourable colleagues that have accumulated wealth in terms of this report. I want to report that this is our report. We came to engage stakeholders and whatever you see in this report is what the stakeholders told us. The Hon. Mary was in the team and good enough, she is Ugandan. Hon. Jacqueline Amongin was in the team and she is also Ugandan.

I am Ugandan and I have participated in the processes of election. The people that we engaged, first I want to collect Hon. Sankok. In Uganda, there was only one civil society. That is the foundation for human rights initiatives. The rest, you look at them as civil society, but they are not. We engaged the ministries. You can read. We engaged the Ministry for Justice that is charged with the mandate of conducting elections. I am lucky that the current Minister for Justice is my party leader who came and engaged with the committee.

We engaged with the Council for Disabilities. These are government entities that we did engage with. The Uganda Student Association is an umbrella body of government spearheaded and by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

In Rwanda, the entities that we engaged with are more of government entities. We wanted to be more inclusive when we are dealing with matters of election. Matters of elections are not for the government alone. Matters of election are for everybody. As a regional affairs committee, all that we had in mind was to be more inclusive. So, I wanted to collect that. The teams that we met were properly catered for including the stakeholders that were on the list.

The Republic of Uganda funds 100 per cent of all the elections. When we met the Electoral Commission, they talked about funding. However, Uganda funds the elections 100 per cent. In all the elections, there is no donor funding. The donor can come in to help other civil society issues

like for civic awareness. Remember, the civic education in Uganda is charged under the Uganda Human Rights Commission.

There is a difference between civic education and voter education. But when we are engaging, we use the two concurrently. The Electoral Commission is charged with voter education, whereas civic education is a mandate charged under the Uganda Human Rights Commission, according to the Constitution.

During the appropriation, there is little money that is assigned to that duty. All we need to do is for our Council to argue that our governments have put a lot of money under that right. So, it is the same thing in Rwanda. All elections are funded by the government. The two Partner States we met had similarities. In Rwanda, Electoral Commission is appointed by the President to run for five years, renewable once and they are approved by Parliament.

In Uganda, Electoral Commission is appointed by the President for seven years, renewable. So, you will see similarities. But the question that members want to expand is what people said.

Honourable Namara, you know, there has been what we call the civic compact on electoral democracy. You know that the courts in Uganda recommended that we go for a review. But when you look at that statement, it says what the Constitution provides for. That is what people told us. Even when we met the Electoral Commission, there was a question, I think by one of us. We were asking, do you not get a feeling that people feel that you are not are not independent? The Electoral Commission said that it their duty to make sure they prove that they are independent.

So, hon. colleagues, this is feedback from all the people we did engage. On that note, we believe that is what is reflected. However, the Constitution also provides for that. Unless there is an amendment that people go and respond to, the issue that members are asking about civic education is what I have just explained.

We agree that elections are very important for our people. However, our people must be aware. We agree that you cannot only wait for electoral process. Election is a process; it is not an event. If it is a process, then you must engage the people that determine the process on how to vote so that they do not vote by rumours. Voting by rumour is one way. This is the same situation like a school that is overly packed and as the students were studying, others on the interview and one would ask, what has the teacher said? And by the time they get to exactly what the teacher said, it's a different thing. We believe that election is a key pillar, and we must create awareness and involve people in the processes.

So, we agree. And we did it in a way that there is dependence on civil society. We agree that the question of Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD) brings political parties together.

I happen to have been the Chairperson of the IPOD Council of Secretary Generals. It is a rotational thing. The IPOD has lobbied government to fund all political parties in the House. Honourable Fatuma, this is the principle everywhere, even where we borrow democracy.

The recommendation is that as long as you attach money to whoever can go and borrow a big loan, that person comes and buys everybody and determines who comes to the House. And we are saying, for instance, in a multi-party dispensation, you have to pay polling agents. When the honourable Member is nominated by the party, sent to electoral commission, why would you demand for nomination fee? These are centerpieces that are set. And what we are saying is that government should take over the burden in terms of reducing, for instance, you have polling agent, you must pay a polling agent, but you are in a multi-party dispensation, so it's the winner takes it all to the highest bidder. But we know that we are also talking about, in terms of opening the cup, in Uganda there is a limitation of how much money a political player can spend.

There is that cup. I run a political party. For me to manage to do a national delegate conference for my party, I need about \$150,000 to bring 5,000 people in a national delegate conference. However, the law says I cannot bring more than \$40,000. So, we are saying that there should be the limitations that limit and open the gaps within those. But in the question, Honourable Fatuma, of whether we are dealing with the question of free and fair elections, and how do we align with the African Union.

First, in election, in our region, the thing we are dealing with is how to manage the aftermath of elections. First, we are dealing with the question of free, fair, orderly, but also secure. We agree.

We should first deal with free, fair, election, credible, but secure election. Is it peaceful, because the people should feel secure and peaceful to go and participate in their own right to choose a leader who will govern the whole of their taxes for the particular five years. This is the person who will determine the healthcare for the particular five years, a person who will determine all the good policies. Once the question of secure, fairness and transparency is not addressed, people will say, why do I need to vote because after all, it has been determined?

I think it is important that we also engage with our secretariat on where, how do we align these two initiatives, and where are we going from, so that our electoral commissions are in line with the question that we are trying to deal with.

I have answered Hon. Kachwamba in terms of that election. When we do an oversight mission which is not ours, we report what we have seen. We went and asked the electoral commission the same question and that was the answer. They also feel it. But I love to look at you so that I see your body language in terms of what you are doing. You know, I earn out of speaking, and this is what I have done since I was young. So, I know that.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, these concerns are very valid and members follow and see what is there. I am only trying to say that we also report in the areas that require. This same point has been but the law says A, B, C, D in terms of what is happening. So that is something that we continue to engage with. The courts in Uganda have asked that there should be a review on these processes. It is not just that we picked out of the way. The able members, Hon. Jackie and Hon. Mary would not have just left this to lie if it was not a question of what was there and that is the same.

I want to appreciate you, Honourable Namara. We agree with you, Honourable Namara that there are people who only use the platform they have to eliminate you completely and you have no space to run back. I think at the East African level; we should come up with a recommendation to our Partner States. Maybe we should think about coming up with a bill in terms of how we make sure that there is level playing in terms of how people use the media to make sure that they popularise the good ideas and the good messages. When you own a radio station you do not have a right to wake up and just talk all the ills against a particular individual just because you think you will run against them. We know and I admit that we should ensure we have a recommendation. Honourable Fatuma, again, in terms of making sure that there are laws in Uganda that regulate in terms of how much money can you spend in an election. If you go beyond that, what is the punishment? Do we remove you from the race? What is the punishment and how is it going to be enforced so that at the end of the day, there should be a cap that limits how much money people can spend.

Honourable Amb. Mathias that was just in terms of adding value and soup in terms of whatever reporting that we did.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, the processes like the IPOD have helped us to de-escalate the tension in Uganda. When we met them, initially, I would not sit with someone in yellow. Even just carrying a yellow file was a very big problem to me, yet yellow is part of my Uganda flag. It was very difficult. I know the two parties here that are dominant in this region, they have yellow but we have come above that. I can now happily sit with a National Resistance Movement (NRM) person and project my argument, project my ideas so that we come on table. We therefore recommend that these initiatives are very important and all political parties and political players that are running away from this engagement should pay attention and interest themselves have continuous engagement. These engagements are very important.

The National Consultative Forum in Rwanda is a very important aspect that brings everybody on board for people to feel that they are part of the processes that determine who leads the nation. Of course, the model of Rwanda is very good. I think we should borrow it so that winner takes it all is not something that was taken.

The reason why this visit was taken was because first, we always do election observation. But when you observe election, it's a post-mortem. You are just dealing, you go to an election, it is properly set, you have nothing to say. But we did this mission basically to find out how ready the

electoral bodies are in terms of conducting elections. What are the processes that they have set in place? What are the challenges? Because when we go to observe, sometimes they tell you we have this challenge, there were no resources, there are no resources and there is nothing you can do. But when you go before election, you are in position either to make a recommendation and you're in position to tell what is there so that by the time you go to observe, you've already identified the gap.

The mission for this election was for us to assess the readiness, the processes, and was for us to find out what was the challenges that electoral bodies were facing in conducting an election. I believe that when you look through, and for instance, the processes of Uganda, you can see that there are unique processes on demarcation, on involving people, and in terms of voter registration, and what do they do. We believe that we picked out exactly that and it is going to be very helpful for Uganda.

We were unlucky that by the time we did Rwanda, they were already going through an election. Some of the things we saw in the report, you see that they're already happening. And then we must just design the strategies and modalities on how do we give this feedback, Right Honourable Speaker. We engage stakeholders, we do reports, we argue the councils, but how do we send the feedback to the people that we have met in terms of them looking at this report for them to improve.

With all those few remarks that I have said, Right Honourable Speaker, I beg to admit that we will take into concern the contributions of members because they have given very important contributions here that we have captured and our clerks have captured.

I want to appreciate Rt. Hon. Speaker, the members, the Hon. Kachwamba for the good contribution you've made, the Hon. Namara Denis, the Hon. Gideon Gatpan, the Hon. Amb. Mathias Harebamungu, Hon. Fatuma Ndagiza and Hon. David ole Sankok.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, allow me to appreciate the team that made this work possible. I want to start with Hon. Jacqueline Amongin, Hon. Mary Mugenyi, Hon. Goreth Bigirimana, the Hon. Karerwa Mo-mamo, the Hon. Marimambona Anastase, Hon. Ewanga Is'Ewanga Iwonga, Hon. Geraldine Kaubo, Hon. Kalala Evariste, Hon. Hassan Omar, Hon. Zipporah Kering Kering, Hon. Shahbal Suleiman Said, Hon. Amb. Mathias Harebamungu, Hon. Nyiramana Aisha, Hon. Uwumukiza Françoise, Hon. Luke Thompson, Hon. Gideon Gatpan, Hon. Dr. Leonardo Ann Itto, Hon. Machano Ali Machano, Hon. James Millya, and Hon. Dr. Gerald Siranda Blacks.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, in that same spirit, allow me to appreciate our clerk, Victor Manzi for the good job, Susan Namusoosa and Aida Nakabugo for the good job.

Rt Hon Speaker, I appreciate the entire Department of Clerks and yourself. Thank you. I beg to move.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, it is time to put the question.

*(Question put and agreed to)*

*(The Report was adopted)*

Honourable Members, we have two guests in the VIP gallery. We have Mr. Kennedy Mutenyo who is the Chairman of the Electoral Commission of the Democratic Party of Uganda. We also have Mr. Kelly Wanda, Consultant and Chairman of Cassava National Platform Council. *(Applause)*

Honourable members, the item No.4 which was the report of the Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources. I think that the clerks made an error because this report had been concluded in June. We had debated it and adopted it on 28th June, 2024 in Arusha. So, with this, let us jump to the next item.

Item number five is amended on the order paper. The report of the Committee on Accounts on the Oversight Activity of the Inter-University Council of the East African and Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisations by way of motion. Honourable Sankok has been nominated to present the report.

#### **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS ON THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY OF THE INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF EAST AFRICA AND LAKE VICTORIA FISHERIES ORGANISATION**

**Mr David ole Sankok (Kenya):** Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker. I beg to move:-

THAT, the report of the Committee on Accounts on the Oversight Activity of the Inter-University Council of East Africa and Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation be adopted late before the House on 29th October 2024. adopted.

**The Speaker:** Do you have seconders? Caroline, Mathias, and others. Now.

**Ms Rose Akol (Uganda):** Procedure, Rt Hon Speaker.

Thank you, Right Honourable Speaker. As the Chairperson of the Committee goes to present the report, we should also be having copies of the report. In fact, they should have been distributed much earlier, not as he's going to read, but even now as he's going to read the report. Personally, I don't have the report. I do not know whether others have it.

So, you do not have the report.

**The Speaker:** You do not have the report? Maybe it should be distributed. Where is our clerk? He has just been congratulated and now this report is not ready. They will distribute. You may proceed.

**Mr David ole Sankok (Kenya):** Thank you very much, Hon. Speaker. From the onset, let me start by declaring that our Chair is Honourable Joseph Mbombo Mandela from the Democratic Republic



of Congo. I am representing him here in reporting to this House. Honourable Speaker, this report is a report of the Committee on Accounts on the Oversight Activity to the Inter-University Council of East Africa and Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation. Honourable Speaker, I will jump the first question, the first pages, which are just normal questions. We go to page five, introduction.

**Ms Mary Mugenyi (Uganda):** On a point of procedure, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Yes, Honourable Mary.

Mr Speaker, we still do not have the document. This is agriculture. It is not accounts. He is reading accounts. We do not have the documents. I think we should hold on. We either get agriculture to present because we have the document or wait. Yeah.

**The Speaker:** I think that since we do not have the report, we should suspend the House. Let us suspend and give a chance to the clerks to be ready. I will suspend. What time is it? It is one. It is almost one.

Let us suspend for one hour. Then we'll be back after lunch. Let us be back at 2.30 p.m. Thank you.

*(The House was suspended at 12.39 p.m. until 2.30 p.m.)*

*(The House resumed at 2.30 p.m.)*

**The Speaker:** Hon. Sankok, you have the Floor.

2.30

**Mr David Sankok (Kenya):** Thank you very much Hon. Speaker. I rise to support the report of the Committee on Accounts on the Oversight Activity to the Inter-University Council of East Africa and Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation.

Honourable Speaker, our Chair is Honourable Joseph Mundela, who was busy with an East African function elsewhere and he had assigned me, he is the most democratic Chairman in EALA. So, he assigned me to represent him and I will try as much as possible to fit into his very big shoes.

Honourable Speaker, this report is already with members, so the members can follow me with the report. I will skip page one, definition of course I will skip. Honourable Speaker, introduction, I will also skip that one because it is self-explanatory and it is about the function of our East African Community Legislative Assembly.

Honourable Speaker, objective of this report is that governance and management system including the legal instruments governing Inter-University Commission of East Africa and Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization, performance of programmes and projects of IUCEA and LVFO, achievement registered and the challenges faced by IUCEA and LVFO, follow up on the progress of construction of the IUCEA headquarters and the status of implementation of the audit queries for IUCEA and LVFO for the financial year ended 30th June 2021.

Honourable Speaker, methodology is the same as we have always used. I am on page seven. The committee interacted with management of the IUCEA and LVFO.

Hon. Speaker, I will also skip that one and go straight to page eight, if members are with me. Page eight, the management and governance system of IUCEA. This one is very important, historical background of IUCEA.

In East Africa region, higher education interaction and cooperation originated from the pre-independent era when Makerere University College was the only higher education institution in the region. This university was serving students from Kenya, the then Tanganyika and Zanzibar in East Africa, as well as from the Rhodesia and Nyasaland in Central and South Africa, which now consists of Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Later in 1963, University College was formed in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam as constituent colleges of the then University of East Africa that had been established during the era of independence of the four countries, Uganda, Kenya, Zanzibar and Tanganyika.

Service to note, Makerere College was the third constituent college of the University of East Africa. Honourable Speaker, in 1970, the University of East Africa was dissolved. The University of Dar es Salaam, Makerere University and the University of Nairobi were established as separate national universities for Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya respectively.

In the same year, due to the need to maintain collaboration between these universities, the Inter-University Committee (IUC), was established under the auspices of the first East African community. The role of the IUC was to facilitate contact and cooperation among the three universities, University of Dar es Salaam, Makerere University and the University of Nairobi. The IUC was hosted in Kambala, Uganda.

In 1977, the former EAC collapsed and the support that the IUC was receiving from the partner state declined. However, the IUC continued to coordinate cooperation between the three universities abate the resource constraints that severely limited its function.

Honourable Speaker, later on, there was the establishment of Inter University Commission of East Africa (IUCEA). So, you can see that IUCEA is one of the surviving institutions of the former East African Community.

The Treaty for the Establishment of the current East African Community was signed on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1999 and entered into force on 7 July, 2000, following its certification by the East African Partner State upon its establishment. Therefore, that is what established the Inter-University Commission of East Africa. The Inter-University Protocol of East Africa Protocol is currently being amended as per the directive of the 29<sup>th</sup> Council of Ministers, with a view of harmonising it with the IUCEA Draft Bill, 2012. The amended IUCEA Draft Protocol was developed and adopted by the Executive Committee of the IUCEA on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 and was sent for consideration by the Partner States in 2018.

In accordance with Article 150 of the Treaty of East Africa, only four out of six Partner States of that time— Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda—submitted their comments. I think we can encourage the rest to submit their comments. We go to page 10.

5.0 is key findings. 5.11 is on Status of Implementation of the year 2020 audit recommendations. As you can see in the table, the Audit Commission verified the implementation of the previous year audit recommendation and provided the status, as summarised in the table below.

There is some level of implementation, especially the total number of recommendations raised in previous report, that is number one. Eleven of them and all of them were implemented, 100 per cent. The one you see at 45 per cent are actually still being implemented and they are at several stages of implementation.

We go to Committee observation. Non-implementation of audit recommendation implies that the management and financial weaknesses noted were not addressed, which negatively affected IUCEA's ability to effectively achieve its objective. Committee Recommendation.

The Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure that the management of Inter University Council of East Africa takes sufficient steps to ensure that audit recommendations are properly and timely implemented. Honourable Speaker, there was also some unsupported credit balance of US\$67,934. Although it was explained, the Committee was informed that there was IUCEA ceased to exist.

The previous one, when there was a transition, there was this problem. Committee Observation. The Audit Commission should verify the authenticity of the management response.

We are in page 11. Committee Recommendation. The Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure that the management of IUCEA complies with the Inter University Council of East Africa Financial Regulation. We go to 5.1.3, which is in page 11, and reconcile creditors' balances of US\$13,934.

Today, I would like to talk about Article 1.3, which is in page 11, and reconciled creditors' balances of USD \$13,875.59.

Honourable Speaker, the Audit Commission reported that upon review of the financial statement of IUCEA, it noted that payment had been reflected as payment balance of USD \$3.15 \$15,561 as at 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2021. A sample of 19 creditors were secularised for confirmation of the balances reflected in the financial statement. However, variances were noted between the financial statement figures and the amount confirmed by five of them.

Honourable Speakers, The Audit Commission should verify the authenticity of the management responses.

*(Laughter)*

It depends on where you were born and bred, and who was your English teacher, and your dental formula as well.

#### Committee Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure that the management of IUCEA reconciled the balances in a timely manner as stipulated in Regulation No.82.6 of the East African Financial Rules and Regulations. Oversight There is also overstatement of gratuity deposit figures of USD \$3,019.09. Again, the Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure that the management of IUCEA adheres to strict financial controls to ensure the overstatement of gratuity should not recur.

We are in page 13, 5.15, inability to achieve set strategic objectives. They gave excuses like COVID-19 was there, lack of funds, remittances from some countries are low. But generally, we have our recommendation. The Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure that the management of IUCEA is consistent in the implementation of its strategic objectives.

Partner States should avail adequate funding for IUCEA programmes and activities. Revenue and under-collection. The figures are there, and the table is there. We are in page 14, and the Committee recommendations are there.

We urged Partner States to remit their contributions in a timely manner, ensure that the management of IUCEA frequently pursues defaulting partners, member universities, development partners, and subscribers. Honourable Speaker, receivable from Partner States, during the financial year under review, IUCEA had expected to receive a total of USD 19,691,770 during the financial year, including arrears of revenue amounting to USD 15,721,870. However, only USD6 million was received, leaving an outstanding balance of USD13,680,000 or USD 665,098 as at the close of the financial year.

This is indicated in the table below. I think you can see the Republic of Kenya. You should see all of them. From here, we urge all Partner States to contribute timely. We go to page 16, long outstanding receivable from IUCEA member institutions.

The IUCEA received contributions from its members, those are institutions of higher learning. When the Committee reviewed the status of contribution from member institutions, it revealed that IUCEA had received receivable amounting to totaling USD 959,000 from 96 universities. The outstanding balance has increased by USD209,000.

So, you will see Table 5 with all those amounts that were delayed. Committee of observation, just below page 16, increase in receivable from the institution hinders service delivery. The higher outstanding balances have a higher probability of failure to be collected by IUCEA. The failure of timely remittances affects the implementation of IUCEA programmes.

#### Committee Recommendations

The Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers who are not here to ensure that the management of IUCEA should intensify revenue collection effort for the defaulting universities and consider imposing sanctions for the defaulting universities. This one is a recommendation that we also doubt ourselves because if we cannot impose sanctions to those states that do not remit on time then we cannot impose sanctions on members of the Council of Ministers who are not here, then I doubt if they can also impose.

Contribution received in Uganda and Schillings, there was an issue of the Republic of Uganda which I think was solved, that were giving their money not in terms of U.S. dollars but in terms of Uganda and Schillings at the exchange rate of that time.

We go to page 18 on unfavourable Gratuity Fund Management is almost the same. I do not think members can read that one. The table there will explain very well but the recommendation is that the Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure that the management of IUCEA reviews and streamlines their current gratuity fund management option. 5

#### Lack of an Updated Asset Register

We did not find an up-to-date asset register of all the assets that are under IUCEA, so the Committee have its recommendation which are in page 20. The Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure that the management of IUCEA always updates their asset register in order to safeguard assets from loss or misuse. The Committee further recommends that there is need to put more effort in safeguarding the institution's asset by having concrete controls including updated register and tagging all assets.

Performance of programmes and projects, assessment of the achievements, challenges and the future prospect of IUCEA current and past programmes and scholarship.

Honourable Speaker, it is self-explanatory there. We go to 5.3.1, performance of programmes and projects, they are there, African Centre of Excellence, two projects, you know, they have several Centres of Excellence and projects. We have all those ones and B is IUCEA 2, Female Scholarship Programme.

Page 22, we have the table of the IUCEA 2 Female Scholarship Programme. So, you can see how many countries had a number of cohorts, there was cohort 1 in 2018, cohort 2 in 2019 and in 2023 cohort 3, the total number of beneficiaries. The Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to direct the management of IUCEA to enhance the development and dissemination of standards or protocols for postgraduate research supervision at regional universities.

Critically address, examine the factors that hinder students from timely completion of their programmes. IUCEA should deal with issues that

My address examines the factors that hinder students from timely completion of their programmes. The IUCEA should deal with issues that ensure the quality, commitment, and availability of the supervisors because they are paramount importance towards timely completion of postgraduate studies.

They should consider implementing a result-based financial mechanism in universities, financing so as to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and continue raising awareness about regional integration programmes in member universities to ensure coverage of all EAC Partner States.

Honourable Speaker, we have another innovation hubs, they have innovation hubs. They also have in the University, that is in the University Commission of East Africa, Kyung Dong University Scholarship. I think this one is a scholarship, actually it is a scholarship, it's a global. The Kyung Dong Global is a university based in the Republic of South Korea and it does sponsor several students. Table 8 will show you the number of students that have benefited from this programme.

Honourable Speaker, the committee recommendation, the committee recommends to the Assembly to the Council of Ministers to ensure that management of IUCEA commends Kyung Dong Global, that is KDU, and the Republic of South Korea for their partnership with IUCEA. It should explore opportunities in other multisectoral disciplines in KDU and other universities. We are on page 25 which is on East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project. We go to page 26 which is on Challenges in Implementing this Programme.

The following are the major challenges that were experienced in the implementation of the project. There was a delay in understanding the result-based financial model. This was because the model was new to most of the project implementation agencies.

This resulted in a delay in completion of the projects. There is also the human resource capacity of institution implementing the project was inadequate. Three, there was a delay in constructing

new teaching and learning buildings and acquisition of new machineries and equipment for training workshops and laboratories due to the COVID-19 lockdown. As a result, most of the construction works were stalled for up to two years. I will skip committee observation. The recommendations are there.

Of course, urging the Council of Ministers to urge IUCEA, one, to adopt this model and join the ongoing Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) initiative to make the education system in the East African Community more relevant and impactful in driving industrial transformation and socio-economic transformation, and invest adequately in the TVET education and training system as it has proved to contribute to immediate socio-economic benefit. This will, in turn, enhance employability of the youth and drive industrialisation of EAC countries in the region in general.

Honourable Speaker, on this one, we have really trained a lot of youth. They have come out as graduates with degrees but some of them lack skills. Some of our degrees are degrees that we may not really know where to apply.

If a student graduates from the university with a degree in criminology and he is not a policeman, a lawyer or a judge, he or she may never know where to apply this one. The wheels of the economy can only be moved by skilled people. Unfortunately, we have not invested so much in TVETS.

That is why we insisted on investing on TVETs, so that we have skilled labourers. Many graduates mean many managers without people to be managed through digital skills for an innovative East African in industries.

I explained the table there. We go to page 28. The recommendations are general. They are there. I urge members to go through all those scholarship programmes and those projects of IUCEA. The East African Community Student Mobility Scholarship Scheme. There's also another scholarship scheme there, and members can read that one.

Honourable Speaker, we also have Staff Mobility Programme, 2023-2024, that is on page 30. Members can go through. In fact, even the table on page 31 will explain much about it.

There are some challenges. A decline in the budget means a small number of applicants benefit at a given time. Previously, the programme was supported by member university subscription. There is also an issue of language barrier among the francophone and anglophone.

**The Speaker:** We have pupils and four teachers who came from Kinawa High School from Kampala District, located in central part of Uganda. There are 104 teachers. Thank you for coming. You can proceed.

**Mr David Ole Sankok (Kenya):** Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Page 32 is on Regional Accreditation Framework of Programmes. Members have always talked, especially those from the Republic of South Sudan, and accreditation of students to study in Partner States universities have been a challenge. I think they told us that is being addressed. If you go to page 33, we have the committee recommendations. The committee recommends that IUCEA pegs awards of regional scholarship and establishment of centres of excellence to regional programmes to accreditation status.

Establish a forum of heads of commission and council. There was also financial argument or memorandum of understanding with financial committees. Under this one, we have Horn of Africa Initiative, Carnegie Corporation of New York through ESSA. And it's a lot of money. An agreement of USD158,000. We have International Livestock Research Institute, which also have an MOU of almost USD13,000.

We have Braille Global, and that one also has euros of almost 30,000 grand. Challenges that impede the successful implementation of the projects. That is page 36.

The committee was informed that the following challenges impede the successful implementation of the projects. I think members can read through. There are several challenges. It is important they are addressed. We have our recommendation as a committee. As usual, we ask the Council of Ministers to compel the management of IUCEA and EAC to, one, enhance coordination of a regional level for the issue of timely remittances of annual contribution.

Today, I would like to talk about enhanced coordination of a regional level for the issue of timely remittances of annual contribution. Continuously advocate and all relevant stakeholders to speed up the operationalisation of the common higher education area. Build synergies with sister institutions and mobilise resources as a team or bloc; engage internet providers to considerably reduce the cost of internet for universities; recognise the strengthening research in higher education institutions is a key strategic area to enhance and promote regional development and integration. Some students from other Partner States are charged fees different from the locals in our universities. We want the whole of EAC to be a common higher education area.

## CONSTRUCTION OF THE IUCEA HEADQUARTERS PHASE II

Honourable Speaker, this high university education commission of East Africa is one of the institutions in East Africa that does not entertain corruption and all their buildings are timely and cost effective. I think other institutions should actually benchmark from IUCEA. They are very organised. On project construction progress report members can read but I can assure you even at the time that we were there and up to date because I passed through there, the project is almost complete.

The committee observed the following;



The timeliness for completion of the structures are on schedule. In fact, those structures in IUCEA are on schedule. There were no identified shortcomings or structural defects on the buildings and the construction works were of high quality and security and safety measures were being observed to the workers and the visitors and as established by law.

Committee recommendation, the committee recommends to the assembly to urge the council of Ministers to ensure that IUCEA guarantees that the building is completed on time to realise value for money and attainment of the project objective. The committee commends IUCEA for the excellent work so far that ought to be emulated by other East African Community institutions and organs while undertaking similar projects. This is one of the best and I think honourable members deserve an applaud. We should clap for them. *(Applause)*

The management and governance system at Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation, LVFO. I think we have to rethink our issue of Blue Economy and how we utilise our lakes. We went there. We have already pumped a lot of money into this particular institution. Unfortunately, the communities around Lake Victoria, including those that are a stone away from the headquarter of Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation are the poorest. The fish on the shores of Lake Victoria is not selling. The one from China is cheaper on the shores of Lake Victoria than the fish that is fished using cages provided by Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation that you only use a hook to remove. It is more expensive than the fish from China. We have to rethink this institution. Convention establishing the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation, that is page 39. That is easy to read, but we are not happy with this particular institution. It needs close supervision and monitoring.

Key finding, presentation of the status of the implementation of the previous audit recommendation for Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation for the Financial Year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2021. Status of implementation of prior year audit recommendation, the Audit Commission verified that implementation of previous year's audit recommendation and provided the status as summarised in table 12.

Here the recommendations are in the table, and it is self-explanatory. Lack of risk management framework and committee observation. The committee observed that failure to put in place risk management strategy denied the organisation the opportunity of addressing emerging risk which may threaten the achievement of its strategic goals.

Committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure that the management of Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation put in place the risk framework which will help to provide a roadmap for identifying, recording and mitigating possible risk. Non-functional audit and risk committee, it was not even there, it was not functional. I think members can read there.

There was also 7.14, page 42, operating without a strategic plan. Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation is on autopilot, they do not have any strategic plan. Committee observation, the lack

of strategic plan, the lack of strategic direction affects budgeting and prior setting for Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation.

The committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure that the management of Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation lies with Council for approval of the strategic plan 2021-2022, 2025-2026.

Fast track the process of finalising the strategic plan for Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation, irregular implementation of Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation staff rules and regulation, failure to prepare monthly procurement reports. I tell you this is on autopilot. There was almost nothing that we could see them doing.

We should merge this Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation and Lake Victoria Basin Commission and have a whole East African Blue Economy Commission that may do something. As far as I am concerned, if Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation is what we depend on, we better tell our fishermen to go farming because the farmers are richer than them. Everyone around Lake Victoria is poor.

The committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure that the management of Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation prepare monthly procurement reports and are furnished to the procurement committees as required by law.

On wasteful expenditure. We can go to page 45, budget and performance. The organisation had budgeted to receive USD3,840,271 in the year but received USD2,838,487. They received a lot of money and there is nothing they are doing with it. We have also the lack of risk management framework. I do not know what they have. What they do not have is what we have written here.

Non-recovery of VAT and the status of VAT refundables are there. We have expanded the mandate and scope vis-a-vis staffing levels as indicated in the following table. Of course, they have a staff deficit, but not as much as other institutions. They are only underperforming.

The committee observed that Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation currently has huge staffing gaps. This has affected the delivery of its mandate and timely implementation of its programmes.

Most project activities did not cover Burundi and Rwanda, even though they are part of the Lake Victoria Basin. Only one resource area includes these two countries. Two, the mid-term review recommended a non-cost extension of project activities up to the end of 2025, and the East African community submitted the NCA request to the European Union.

The committee observed a very big lacuna emanating from the design and formulation of these projects. As such, there is limited accountability, fragmented decision making, and misalignment with regional priorities.

There is also Aquaculture Investment Guide Projects. There is also multiple projects. There is collaboration with the University of St. Andrews on page 51.

Other collaborative initiatives; the World Aquaculture Society, Indian Ocean Commission. The committee recommends that the identified intervention listed in the national policy framework needed to be translated into national investment programmes in the near future. Enhance diversity collaboration with the other development partners and objectives of saving the lake and fish species embedded therein.

Honourable Speaker, the recommendation are also there for sustainable fisheries initiative, which is also there. We are now on page 54; World Aquaculture Conference 2025, that will be held in Entebbe, Uganda. We welcome all the members to be there.

The committee recommends to the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to ensure Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation utilises and strengthens this collaborative arrangement for synergies and resource mobilisation to ensure a successful conference.

**The Speaker:** Before you go there, we have the new visitors. Yes, 30 pupils and 70 teachers of Hilltop Primary School from Luengo District in the Central part of Uganda. Please join me in welcoming them. Thank you for coming

*(Applause)*

**Mr David ole Sankok (Kenya):** Honourable Speaker, I think this was general observation for IUCEA. The process of amending the IUCEA protocol to harmonise it with the IUCEA Draft Bill 2012, has taken over 10 years. Four out of six partner states, as earlier indicated, Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda have submitted their comments.

The Republics of South Sudan and Burundi have not yet forwarded their comments. And we urge other member states, the two, who have just joined recently DRC and the Federal Republic of Somalia also to follow suit. But there is a lot of observation for Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation. I had alerted you that this was a disaster in the making. Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation amended its LVFO convention in 2016 to cater for all East African Community Partner States. To date, the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo are yet to ratify to become members of the organisation.

Two, the expansion of the scope and mandate of the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation following the amendment of the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation Convention, 2016, requires a change in name from Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation to East African Fisheries Organisation. The Fisheries and Agriculture Sectoral Council of Ministers has already issued

directives and policy guidelines to that effect. There is a need to fast track the staffing of the quality directorate because the central role that it plays in preserving fish quality and sustainability.

The Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation needs to strengthen collaboration and partnership with other intergovernmental organisations and institutions that are active in the sector of fisheries aimed at attracting more resources to the organisation.

Lake Victoria Organisation should implement the recommendation of the studies on long line fisheries, including the bait types and size in relation to the size of Nile Perch being caught. Conservation and adoption to Nile Perch stock tipping points and scenario modelling, which was conducted towards mitigating climate change, particularly global warming.

Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation must work towards an effective community management regime to make the Lake Victoria Fisheries more economically efficient and benefit the fisheries communities.

Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation plans to construct other buildings in the available empty spaces at its headquarter in Jinja, Uganda, to support its expanded scope and mandate and accommodate the diverse fisheries and aquaculture development projects for an estimated cost of USD2 million to be implemented first manner. I wish even if we have to allocate this money, we have really to be proactive and follow it up. The Audit Commission should be close to this organisation. Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation has a resource mobilisation plan. I think all these are there, we can read for ourselves.

#### General recommendation

The general recommendation is to fast-track efforts to get the remaining Partner States to submit their comments on the amended IUCEA protocol. For Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation, they should continue to sensitise the Partner States to join the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation, fast-track the full implementation of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sectoral Council of Ministers directive on the roadmap for completion of the institutional process. There are many recommendations for the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation, because if you have not completed your task, we will recommend a lot of things for you to do. They are there and members can read. The committee also recommends the Assembly to formulate a Bill on the use of water bodies in fishing and fish management practices.

Honourable Speaker, in conclusion, funding is a prerequisite for a smooth running of all organs and institutions of the Community. Most Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation and Inter-University Commission of East African programmes remain underfunded and without the critical staff personnel to execute its mandate, the committee urges the Council to fully support strategies and programmes geared towards strengthening the mandate of both institutions.

Honourable Speaker, let me acknowledge you forgiving us time and the committee to be able to undertake the oversight programmes. I also thank the Clerk's Office and the management of the Inter-University Commission of East Africa and the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation for the excellent facilitation accorded to it while we executed its mandate.

We also want to thank our Committee Clerk, Mr. Victor Manzi, for always being ready for us and preparing our reports on time. Honourable Speaker, I also want to thank the Honourable Speaker of Parliament of Uganda, AAA, for giving us this chamber for use. She is my good friend and that is why I am standing here. She gave us an opportunity to use this chamber. We are also grateful to her for extending lunch for us, we no longer have to rush to our hotels, we thank them. We also thank the Chapter of Uganda for facilitating our stay here and making us very comfortable.

We also thank the people of Uganda for being very friendly to us. We have enjoyed our stay here. We also thank the President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the father figure of the East African Community, for officially opening our sitting and for giving us words of wisdom.

Lastly, let me thank my Chairman, Hon. Mundela Mbombo Joseph from DRC. I also thank Hon. Kezimana Cathy, the Queen of Sheba. Hon. Gabriel Ntisezerana, Hon. Desire Boulu, Hon. Nkurunziza Olivier, Hon. Iman Falhada Dekow, Hon. Kalonzo Kennedy Musyoka, Hon. Clement Musangabatware, why are you not clapping for those people? (*Applause*)

Hon. Caroline, Hon. Francine Rutazana, Hon. Dr. Woda Jeremiah Odok, Hon. Arol Gabriel Garang, Hon. Sadia James Sebit, Hon. Mohamed Nadra Juma, Hon. Dr Magembe Ngwaro Jumanne, Hon. Kizigha Angela Charles, Hon. Kakooza James, Hon. Odongo George Stephen, the mobile encyclopaedia, Hon. Veronica Kadogo. Thank you so much, Hon. Speaker, and I beg to submit the report. (*Applause*)

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Members. It is time now to propose the motion that the report of the Committee on Accounts on the Oversight Activity of the Inter-University Council of East Africa and the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation be adopted, laid before the House on the 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2024. (*Question proposed*)

Now, debate open. We have Hon. Amongin, Hon. Gideon, Hon. Gladness. Clerk, the Committee Members will not have the Floor now.

Let us start with Hon. Amongin then Clerk will give me the other names. Honourable Members, let us try to adjourn by 4.00 pm because I have to close a meeting which is in Arusha at 4.30 pm, virtually. They will be waiting for me. Let us manage time. You have the Floor, Hon. Amongin.

3.26

**Ms Jacqueline Amongin (Uganda):** Thank you so much, Honourable Speaker. I would like to really thank the Chair of the Committee for the great presentation that he has made towards these two institutions; the Inter-University Council for East Africa and also Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, I will start with Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation. Fisheries are one of the biggest resources that we have as a region. We might actually be having a comparative advantage in fishing compared to the rest of the other parts of the world because of Lake Victoria.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, studies show that in 2021, there were microplastics in every location of Lake Victoria with over 60 per cent of the 29,000 plus fragments collected being microplastics from cosmetics, pharmaceuticals products, polythene bags. This poses a big threat not only to aquatic life, but also to the people, not only of Eastern Africa, but all who consume the waters and the fish from the Lake Victoria Basin. This affects human health.

Therefore, when the chairman was presenting this report, I would have loved to see a strong recommendation from this committee calling upon the Council of Ministers to expedite the ban, especially of single-use plastics within the region. It is estimated that the plastics being dumped everywhere in Lake Victoria have led to the decrease of fish and this will continue to worsen in the future.

If we have to sustain the fisheries industry within the region, the Lake Victoria Fishing Organisation should be very proactive in ensuring that there are modalities put in place to ensure that single-use plastics are banned within the region. We should not only have a long-term sustainable way of addressing climate change but also of ensuring sustainability of fish in the Lake Victoria Basin. You realise when the chairman was talking, he said that the people living around the fishing area were poorer than farmers because they are not even able to access the same fish.

From the explanation that has been given by the Chair of the Committee, I would like to call on the Council of Ministers to take this seriously. It seems as if the administration of the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation is lurking and needs a lot of attention, despite all the monies that have been put there by Partner States and donors. Rt. Hon. Speaker, I now take us back to the Inter-University Council of Eastern Africa.

The Inter-University Council of East Africa's vision, by the time they formed it, was to ensure that all East African citizens have access to institutions within the region and can be granted the same rights, as Ugandans, as Rwandans, as Tanzanians, as Kenyans, as Burundians, as South Sudanese, as Somalis, or as DRC citizens.

Right Honourable Speaker, as it stands, and from the presentation made by the chair of the committee, there is still discrimination, especially in terms of monies charged. If I'm from Tanzania

and I'm accessing Makerere University, some universities have not adhered to the call the Inter-University Council was put in place.

Therefore, I would like to really emphasise that whereas we are emphasising free movement of people and services, as we move, we should also move to study, to do business, and to access education as East Africans, but not to be treated as coming from country X or country B. That is what the Inter-University Council of East Africa must be addressing. There is also a need, as we get these scholarships, that we evaluate them to see whether they add value to the East African students who access them.

At the end of it all, despite the fact that there is a partnership between the Inter-University Council of East Africa with other partner universities outside the region, it is very critical that this kind of courses are analysed, evaluated, to be seen whether there is, indeed, value for money for these students to partake them. Otherwise, you will find a student going to do a course, probably I will not be able to name countries, but coming back, it is not possible for them to do anything or to put that into practice within the region or within the continent.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, as I conclude, I would like us to take keen interest on the Inter-University Council of East Africa and how this benefits not only the members who started the Inter-University Council of East Africa, that is the University of Makerere, my university which I went to, very proud of Makerere University, the University of Dar es Salaam, and the University of Nairobi in Kenya. This must be expanded and let there be equity in terms of access to the opportunities within the Inter-University Council of East Africa for all the East Africans as long as they are East Africans.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to submit and to second the report presented by the great Hon. David ole Sankok. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** Thank you for your contribution. Now we have Honourable Gideon, then Dr. Siranda, then Hon Francine, Hon. Francoise and Hon. Amb. Fatuma.

3.34

**Mr Gideon Gatpan Thoar (South Sudan):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker, let me assure you that I will be very brief. We have to respect the time that you have mentioned. Let me thank Dr. Gerald Blacks and his committee. They have done a tremendous job. Sorry, sorry.

**Mr David ole Sankok:** What?

**Mr Gideon Gatpan Thoar (South Sudan):** It is also your brother who is taking the credit but let me give it to the one who deserves it, that is Hon. David ole Sankok. Thank you very much for representing your able chair. You are also a deputy chair, I think so.

Thank you very much Hon. Sankok for that report. My contribution is limited into two aspects. One, is on page 12, committee observation. I think we need to improve on that. That is not an observation. The Audit Commission should verify the authenticity of the management response. I think it should be read like this. This is an amendment I am creating to that. “The audit commission has not been adequately verifying the authentication of the management response.” I can give you writing so that we manage time. That is part of my contribution.

Second is that the amended protocol of the Inter-University Council of East Africa, we are informed by the Hon. Sankok who was reading the report, that the Republic of South Sudan and I think the Republic of Burundi are yet to submit the amendment or their comments to the amendment. I think that is a very important mission for us as members of parliament from the respective countries, the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Burundi to engage with our Partner States to speed up these comments so that they are given to the Inter-University Council to effect the reforms that they are undertaking.

The case of South Sudan, my colleagues, Hon. Dr. Garang is here and the rest. So, we shall be able to find out the stages of these comments and to ensure that they are submitted to the Inter-University Council.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, as I wind up, Hon. David ole Sankok had mentioned something that I was looking for in the recommendations. I could not find it, but he spoke about it very passionately. This is about merging Inter-University, the Lake Victoria Basin Commission and the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization. I anticipate this is how we encourage efficient utilisation of the limited resources that we have. He suggested that there should be the East African Community Blue Economy Commission. Instead of the two they could be combined and then we maximize the available infrastructure that is there already to efficiently utilize the resources. However, I did not find it in the recommendation. He is the acting chair. I do not know if that is the opinion of the committee. If it is the opinion of the committee, it should have been reflected as such, otherwise, it should be expunged from Hansard because it will not be relevant. We just need to know how it is getting into the resolution. If the Chair is in agreement with me then let it be an amendment.

**Ms Francoise Uwumukiza** (Rwanda): Rt. Hon. Speaker, on a point of information!

**The Speaker:** Do you want to take the information?

**Mr Gideon Gatpan Thoar** (South Sudan): Yes, Rt. Hon. Speaker.

**Ms Francoise Uwumukiza** (Rwanda): Thank you very much, Rt. Hon. Speaker. I wanted to inform the member on the Floor that the report on Agriculture says something different. It is recommending that the LVFO be merged to cater for all the water bodies in East Africa and not to be merged with Lake Victoria Basin Commission. I think what he was suggesting could be different from its mandate.



**Dr Gladness Salema (Tanzania):** Rt. Hon. Speaker, on a point of further information!

**The Speaker:** Proceed.

**Dr Gladness Salema (Tanzania):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker. I just wanted to say that we need to make a distinction between the two committees. There is the Accounts committee which we are now talking about its report here looking at the financial aspects, governance, and management systems. So, we get mixed up because there are two committees that oversee these institutions. There is the Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources Committee also, and this is just to help the discussions going forward. Sometimes when you see some recommendations are not in this report, it is because it is the report of the Accounts Committee. Some of the things that you are talking about are related to the Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources Committee.

**Mr Gideon Gatpan Thoar (South Sudan):** Let me wind up, I was on Page 36. The Committee has indicated some challenges there with regards to the implementation of the projects of the IUCEA and extended towards the projects of the East African Community. There is inadequacy of funding while we have expanded mandates for the Community and for specific projects. That was how I came to link the proposal by Hon. Ole Sankok about merging the two and we have the Blue Economy Commission. It is a conversation that has been triggered and it should go ahead because we are grappling with shrinking resources and expanded mandate. Rt. Hon. Speaker, I beg to submit, and I support the report. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Hon. Gideon. Hon. Dr. Salema, proceed.

3.41

**Dr Gladness Salema (Tanzania):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker. As others have said, I also want to congratulate the team on a detailed report. I would like to share my observations; they might be used to improve the report. The first thing I did not see clearly coming out based on the objectives which were stipulated is that they were giving an oversight of governance and management systems. However, you do not see findings on management or governance systems issues yet that was a specific objective. The findings start with the implementation of audit recommendations. It would be interesting to understand what the team observed on management including its efficiency, capacity, structures, available systems in the two institutions and what it is that is missing. That would be interesting to see coming out clearly, similarly for the governance issues. In the objectives, it was even giving oversight on the legal instruments, but it did not come out clearly in the findings of report.

I also want to contribute on Page 37 on committee recommendations. I would like to add on recommendation number four regarding engagement of internet providers to considerably reduce the cost of internet for universities. Coming from a university, our main problem is not just the cost of the internet provisions but also the infrastructure. We have serious problems of having

reliable infrastructure, and that has contributed a lot to the cost also. It is not enough to deal with the internet providers but also, we need to have modern infrastructure in our universities.

I also want to contribute to recommendation number five. The team recommended that we need to recognize that strengthening research in higher education institutions is a key strategic area to enhance and promote regional development and integration. My contribution would be to refine and improve it. We need to strengthen joint research and not just research. That will help us have strong integration at the research level. At the same time, we need to prioritize what exactly we are researching in our region. It is important to include these two words in that recommendation: joint and prioritization. That is what I wanted to share, and I support the report. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Gladness Salema. We now go to Hon. Dr. Siranda

3.45

**Dr Gerald Siranda Blacks** (Uganda): Rt. Hon. Speaker, from the onset I want to appreciate the able interim Chairperson. We need to think about a position like that so that people step in in terms of doing work. Thank you so much and the entire committee. My interventions are on a few areas. First is the objective of this oversight activity. The objective of the activity is to evaluate the management and governance systems. I have seen the recommendations, but I expect, as Hon. Dr. Salema said, the specific details of management structure. How is the management system? I have not seen it very clearly. They are there but they need to align so that we argue with the Council about the management of these two bodies. What are the specific management systems issues that we should be looking for? Of course, the other areas regarding management of plastics are not what the report was looking for and I would not hold them accountable on why they do not have that specific recommendation, because the issue was on the management systems of the two bodies and the assessment of the performance. The performance but has come out and I must appreciate. However, the two issues on management require aligning so that we get it out in terms of how they are functioning. I know there would be issues of structure, systems, and administration. Once we align that, we will be good so that we match it with the others.

**Ms Mary Mugenyi** (Uganda): On a point of information, Rt. Hon. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. Siranda, do you want to take the information?

**Dr Gerald Siranda Blacks** (Uganda): Yes, Rt. Hon. Speaker. She is a very senior colleague.

**The Speaker:** Yes, Hon. Mary, proceed.

**Ms Mary Mugenyi** (Uganda): Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker. I just wanted to say that issues of managing plastics, particularly around the water bodies, is a management system issue. I wish to differ with you in terms of your interpretation of what the committee set out to do. It is right that

the management of the environment around the water body is actually a management system issue. Thank you.

**Dr Gerald Siranda Blacks** (Uganda): Rt. Hon. Speaker, I will take that as 50-50. Given that she is my senior and very passionate on that matter, I will take it, and I appreciate it. Environmental issues are important.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, my other intervention is on the specifications in terms of the amendments. I expected that when I go through a report like this, I would find timelines in terms of when these countries that have not appended the protocol will do so. Some have done it, but we need to know up to what level so that we know who we are looking for except for the new ones. We would also argue in terms of the new ones so that they also do. Consultation should be done, to know when they would. We should not leave a blanket opening so that we can urge the Council to set a timeline for when we need these countries on board. For instance, on the other committees, when we know that we are dealing with the matter of the political confederation constitution, we know we have timelines. That will help so that we do not bog down on our students that are still looked at as aliens.

I was in South Sudan, and we were dealing with the matter of aliens. Dr. Woda as well had called me to deal with a matter where students from South Sudan were being treated in the same way. We called the Ministry and did a lot of intervention. However, the institutions are also still locked within because this has not been effected. I think once that is out, then we will appreciate it.

The other final intervention is to appreciate that this institution and the committee has brought out a properly structured table that I want to appreciate. What were the questions? Why would we not have South Sudan, our member, as a beneficiary from table seven? However, we have Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Malawi as beneficiary of a scholarship for East Africans, and we have students from East Africa. You do not have the Republic of South Sudan here. The other one you might say is new, but DRC came as well in 2023. We do not have students from DRC. We do not have students from Somalia. I think in terms of specifications, we are Africans, but first of all, for now, these are scholarships for East Africans. Rt. Hon. Speaker, expect either a question or an explanation. Maybe the donor who gave a scholarship required that they share these with beneficiary countries.

Finally, I saw the Inter-University Council of East Africa collecting money. However, when we looked at the appropriation, at what time do they send this money back to the body that does the appropriation? People are paying contribution fees and membership fees straight to them.

**Dr Mathias Harebamungu** (Rwanda): Rt., Hon. Speaker, I want to echo what Honourable Siranda is highlighting on the scholarship. However, I am very sure that the scholarships offered through the Inter-University Council was largely allowed to different countries by the World Bank.

It started earlier in 2012 and 2013. It is an open programme. It is not only scholarships which are offered to the Eastern countries. I thank you and beg to submit.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Dr Gerald Siranda Blacks** (Uganda): Rt. Hon. Speaker, that now makes my work very easy. I want to appreciate it, but the report should be detailed.

**Dr Saidi Kibeya** (Burundi): On a point of information, Rt. Hon. Speaker.

**Dr Gerald Siranda Blacks** (Uganda): Rt. Hon. Speaker, that is from my young brother, I will take it.

**The Speaker:** Yes, Hon. Dr. Saidi.

**Dr Saidi Kibeya** (Burundi): Thank you. From my little knowledge, the ACE II programme is beyond East Africa. It is a number of universities supported by the World Bank as a programme coordinated by IUCEA, but for Southern and Eastern Africa. Thank you.

**Dr Gerald Siranda Blacks** (Uganda): Rt. Hon. Speaker, I do not know if Dr. Saidi Kibeya is a member of that committee. For Hon. Mathias, he is not. I will take the information properly, but for Hon. Dr. Saidi Kibeya, he would have done the input properly in the report.

**Ms Veronica Kadogo** (Uganda): On a point of further information, Rt. Hon. Speaker. Hon. Siranda, I am giving you information as a member of the committee because you have said that the committee did not state it in its report. However, I want to take you to Page 26 under the challenges of implementing this programme. The committee states that the human capacity of institutions implementing the project was inadequate. The committee was informed that as a result of Inter-University East Africa Council as a regional facilitation unit, how to carry out capacity building areas such as financial management and procurement in line with World Bank financial Rules and Regulations, monitoring and evaluation leadership, and among others. So, the funding was from the World Bank and it was supposed to be for the whole world, not only specifically East Africa. Thank you.

**Dr Gerald Siranda Blacks** (Uganda): Rt. Hon. Speaker, I want to appreciate you. I am on Page 23 and colleagues, appreciate the contribution we are trying to put in. Once a person reads this report, they will struggle to go and look for it where you are referring people to. This is page 23. It does not do harm for us to do an explanation the moment you talk about female scholarships.

**Ms Francine Rutazana** (Rwanda): Rt. Hon. Speaker, on a point of information.

**Dr Gerald Siranda Blacks** (Uganda): Rt. Hon. Speaker, I am doing my intervention, and I am about to complete. I love Hon. Francine so much, but because she is a member of the committee, I request she allows me to complete my intervention. I request the Honourable colleagues to take

the interventions positively because we do these reports for people that are going to read them. The interventions are good and during my intervention, I have provoked some of the good answers that have come in and I hope that they are going to help. Thank you, Honourable Veronica, for that very good intervention. Rt. Hon. Speaker, I beg to submit and support the report with the amendments.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Blacks. Now, the next is Hon. Francoise Uwumukiza, then Hon. Amb. Fatuma.

3.56

**Ms Francoise Uwumukiza (Rwanda):** Thank you very much, Rt. Hon. Speaker, for the Floor. I rise on the onset to appreciate the report, starting from the presenter, Hon. David ole Sankok, for a well elaborated report with innovations. I would also like to give, just in one minute, a brief of the collaboration of the Inter-University Council and the review for both institutions of the East African community as they all work together. Their roles are very important or essential in their respective fields.

I would like also to highlight that the report is highlighting the regional integration as far as IUCEA is concerned because IUCEA is enhancing academic standards and guidelines, which are aligned with the governance they have been looking for. They found out that students there were catered for, and they were being treated kindly with equal treatment. It is also encouraging to see what you call student mobility that cannot be found under LVFO.

As far as the LVFO is concerned, I took note of Page 56, whereby they are proposing that a law is needed. I agree with them that there is need for regional legislation to address the challenges of illegal fishing practices and declining fish stocks because it will support food nutrition and security while also mandated to make sure we observe and work together as one assembly. Doing research under Accounts Committee and Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources Committee, the outcome is the same. We are coming and reporting on the Floor of the House because our goal is one.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, I also appreciated this partnership with other organizations like GIZ, EU, like FAO to make sure we change the narrative. The institutions of this community are changing the narratives. For instance, where they are saying LVFO has partnered with the GIZ and the EU to promote sustainable fisheries initiatives including clean-up projects in fishing communities to mitigate the dangerous waste that pollutes the lake such as plastics and industrial waste. So, this is the answer to the question of Hon. Amongin. She is not here but put this on her side that the committee tried also to dig up this. They brought to us this information that is very important to the committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources. That is why I am saying we are moving with the same goal.

Lastly to comment on the quality of fish we want as we promote the blue economy. Hon. Sankok, I know you are working on a Motion that did not come but I know it because we talked about it. Let us promote the blue economy and make sure we bring it to another level as we support fisheries because we need food to also nourish the surrounding communities. The report says that the local community is not benefiting enough from this local fishing, and that it not what we want. I do not know the quality of the Chinese fish and how they do that for it to be cheaper, yet it comes all the way from abroad. I do not know the practices around that. I am eager to know how their fish can be cheaper than ours. Maybe it is a question. The committee should tell me why the fish from China is cheaper than the locally produced fish and then to take a recommendation that we make a follow up on it to make sure we feed our people. Rt. Hon. Speaker, thank you and I support the report.

**The Speaker:** After Hon. Amb. Fatuma, we will have Dr. Saidi Kibeya, Hon. Rose and Hon. Caroline. Please take one minute because you know, as I have told you, they are waiting for me on that side.

4.00

**Ms Fatuma Ndangiza (Rwanda):** Thank you very much, Rt. Hon. Speaker. I want to thank the Accounts Committee for an informative report. However, my first concern is why they delayed coming up with this report and share it with Members. This is because the oversight was undertaken in May 2024, and this is November. Imagine we are debating a report that we just received right now. It is not fair.

Our recommendation, especially to the clerks of the committee, is that we have timely reports that are shared at least to members within 48 hours or maybe 24 hours so that you can have quality reports. Most members are asking generic questions and clarifications because we just received the report.

Secondly, the other comment I have is on page 10 on non-implementation of audit recommendations. I just want to hear from the committee because these are the recommendations for 2020. When you talk about audit recommendations, I know IUCEA has money from Partner States, but they also receive money from projects and financial agencies. I just want to have clarity on audit recommendations. Is it only for remittance from Partner States or money from the development partners all combined and what is the real problem? The issue of delays in the implementation of these audit recommendations is cross-cutting across institutions. Is it a governance structure issue or lack of internal auditors? Why are people not implementing and we know they have the capacity to implement, why? Why implement by 50 per cent only?

Rt. Hon. Speaker, the second observation I have is on Page 15. When you look at the status of Partner States' contribution as of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021, many Partner States are not paying their contributions and yet this is a very important institution that contributes to higher education in our

Partner States. It cannot deliver if it solely depends on donor funding which is not good. We have arrears of over USD13 million and that was on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, when we interacted with the IUCEA. Is this still the status or has it changed? These were my questions on the report, otherwise I support the report and thank the committee for its good activity.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Hon. Ndangiza. Next is Hon. Dr. Saidi Kibeya.

4.04

**Dr Saidi Kibeya (Burundi):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker, for giving me the Floor to add my comment on the report that I support from the Accounts Committee. However, I see there are some points to be highlighted. The first one is the quality of some data within this report. I am looking at the level of implementation of those recommendations for the audit reports, they are mixing maybe the percentage for IUCEA and the ones for LVFO. The IUCEA at Page 10 and LVFO at Page 41. I see on page 41, a number that cannot be understood having three out of 15 to be 45 per cent and five out of 15 being also 45 per cent. I think the committee may correct these ratios.

The second aspect, allow me, is to highlight this low level of achievement of the strategic objective of IUCEA by this year, ending on June 2021, 45 per cent. That means that we have human resources on board, however, the level of achievement of those strategic objectives are so low, reminding us that in May, 2017, the Heads of State declared the EAC as a common area for higher education. Where are we now, seven years later? We can see that all the programmes and all the reports for IUCEA show that we are very far from realizing our region as a common higher education area. Why? This is because of those high outstanding contributions from Partner States. Therefore, IUCEA goes to rely only on development partners' funding. That means that they are spread to go to Eastern Africa, meaning Ethiopia, Djibouti and so on, going to Southern Africa to support them. We are expecting them to be focused on our universities. Those academicians, those faculties are hard workers who need support from our institutions. They need support from the policy decisions and directives from the Council. This is because creating highly skilled people will allow us to overcome global competition.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, on Page 9, there are challenges encountered by IUCEA. There is very low research impact and research and development (R&D) production, and R&D patent application. This is because there is little money, yet R&D is one of the key areas as provided for by the Common Market Protocol. In Article 42, it is a cornerstone for industrial development. How do we improve the GDP share in the industrial area? It cannot be if we do not support the key area of research productivity in the universities. I support that on this aspect, the General Purpose Committee looks into these institutions especially towards scrutiny for value for money as per the achievement of IUCEA to support the regional integration.

I thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker, and I support the report.

**The Speaker:** Hon. Akol, proceed.

4.09

**Ms Rose Akol (Uganda):** Thank you Rt. Hon. Speaker for the opportunity to air my views on this report. First and foremost, I thank the committee for the detailed report and very informative issues they have raised which need the attention of the Council. It is unfortunate that we do not have Council represented here yet most of the recommendations are to Council. We need to find a way of making sure that this report reaches them by maybe sending each of them a soft copy for information and maybe they will pick up from there.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, I also want to request that the whole report be uploaded in the Hansard because the Chairperson read it very fast taking into consideration the time and he had to omit very important areas as well. Therefore, Hansard can take the report as it is for future reference.

I will start with Page 43 on the recommendation by the committee on the strategic plan. I agree with the committee on this, but we have a challenge. I remember in this Financial Year 2024/2025, when the LVFO appeared before the General Purpose Committee. We even set aside resources for them to conclude the strategic plan, but as usual F&A always cuts this money. It would have been very important for the Council to be here to understand that most of these institutions including the East African Kiswahili Commission (EAKC), they do not have a strategic plan which should be the guiding document for the institutions. That is where they pick their annual operations plan. If there is no strategic plan, how do they operate? When? u audit what are you looking at because what were the intentions and what have they done? The intentions are in the strategic plan. Therefore, it is very important that these institutions are funded to conclude their strategic plans.

Rt Hon. Speaker, on the issues of accountability on Page 44 and wasteful expenditure of USD57,000 vis-à-vis a netbook value of *umoja* which is USD37,000. We passed an anti-corruption legal framework which has not been assented to by our members of the Summit. We needed to hear from Council how far this document has moved and what are some of the challenges. This is because some people who control the resources of the Community are stealing some of these monies with impunity and there is no legal framework to handle that. There was a reason this Anti-Corruption Bill was passed by parliament but now we cannot even know what is going on. Those were some of the questions on the Order Paper yesterday that we wanted to ask the Council of Ministers. It is important that the legal framework is expedited to avoid wasteful expenditure by some of these institutions that have the opportunity to take charge of these resources.

On Page 47, non-recovery of value added tax (VAT) is a perennial matter in our reports be it the audit reports, oversight reports and even in the reports by General Purpose Committee. It has become a serious matter, and we would have required an update from the Council to tell us the way forward because this is a perennial matter that seems to be in all these reports year in year out. We need a way forward on that one.



Rt. Hon. Speaker, another perennial matter is the issue of staff recruitment. On that one, definitely sustainable funding is also a matter because most institutions are operating below capacity even when they get the money because there are no personnel. This EAC is also that kind of community which has some institutions run by one person. You are allocated one million USD, yet you are alone. How do controls work when you are alone? It is high time that something is done about the recruitment of personnel so that even with availability of resources, these entities can perform adequately.

As I conclude, the issue of sustainable funding is a serious matter. On the issue of the legal framework, I support the Committee on Page 56 on fishing and sustainability of the lake. In Uganda, we have legal framework on fisheries that prohibits the fishing of small fish in any water body in Uganda. That has been a point of contention especially when fish, especially small fish, is intercepted at the borders. I remember traders from Kenya and South Sudan have always had issues when Uganda intercepts these small fish. It is because we do not have a similar legal framework all over the member States of East African Community. It is high time that we have a regional legal framework guiding the utilization of the lake in order to avoid these non-tariff barriers (NTBs) but also ensuring sustainable use of the lake for whoever is engaged in utilization of that lake.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, I conclude by thanking the committee for the work they have done but still register my disappointment for the lack of the Council of Ministers here to receive these recommendations. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Akol. Before I give the Floor to Hon. Caroline, we again have visitors in the Gallery who are four pupils and ten teachers from Mt. Ararat Nursery and Primary School from Nakasongola District in Uganda. Please join me in welcoming them. *-(Applause)*

Hon. Caroline, you have the Floor.

4.17

**Ms Caroline Kayonga (Rwanda):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker for giving me the opportunity respond to some of the questions that have been asked by Members. I thank you for the interest you have taken in this report. I can already see that you are supporting it. I also want to provide what I had prepared to say about this report. As you have seen already in the report which you received, we apologize that you received it only an hour before this plenary session. This report was supposed to come out in the last plenary. There has only been one plenary that has passed because we did the oversight in May and the June plenary was short, so it came to this plenary, but of course it should have come earlier. The reason you are asking most of these questions is because you did not have enough time to read through the report and we understand that. Our able Chairperson also was not able to present the report by reading the whole of it.

Just to clarify the questions that came out of audit recommendations that are not implemented with regards to IUECA, a number of them are already in the report. We have mentioned that most of them are related to policy and finance, some things that are beyond their control, which we have put in the report. Some are also to do with the governance systems which a number of members have asked about. With regards to the management and governance systems which we have looked at, we provided information on their strategic plans. Also, staffing issues, if you read the report, including missing important departments, for instance, in the LVFO like the Fish Quality Directorate which completely has no staff. If you look through the report, you will see that a number of recommendations on the governance systems are mentioned issues as well to do with the strategic plans which are either not in place or have not been implemented because of absence of resources. You will be able to look through the report and see.

Related to what you have seen in the report regarding ICUEA, these are my comments. As you have read, there are many ongoing scholarship programmes, some that are funded by the World Bank, which Hon. Siranda asked why they mentioned other countries. These are wider projects like Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence (ACE). If you read the report, it is the Eastern and Southern Africa and not only East Africa but it includes East African countries. Our recommendation is for more East African countries to be included. Then they have some that are funded by bilateral partners, which Hon. Francoise and others mentioned. We also have collaborations with universities outside the region with good programmes. We also have the student mobility programmes which are facing the problems which you have mentioned across the floor which the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) is working towards and our recommendations in the report are towards that. The programme was supposed to start in September 2024, but we did our oversight in May, so we are yet to verify if that programme has started. Related to staff mobility programmes, we have good programmes going on. If you read the report, it is there. They are innovative programmes, and we commend IUCEA for the projects and programmes that are going well.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, we also commended as you have seen in the report, the construction of their facility which for the first time in all the oversights we have carried out of the institutions it is the only institution that is on track and has not spent a lot of money on the facility. I am told that even as we speak because this is October, that the construction is done from what we have heard from the last time we were there in May. It is really commendable, and we have recommended that all other institutions should borrow a leaf from IUCEA.

When it comes to LVFO, concerning the governance systems, just to answer the questions, the name was supposed to be changed. In the interest of condensing the report, we did not include the organogram and a picture of what we did but we had all of that summarized. What was missing was that LVFO was supposed to have been transformed to East Africa Fisheries Organization but that was not done because of bureaucracies and all these things that go into reviews. There are

these humongous boards in some of the institutions and you are aware of it because we have mentioned them as we are talking about governance systems. We have mentioned that they require the sectoral councils and amendments from the Partner States, for instance, the comments that are not coming, you have seen that too. That they cannot carry out these amendments that are necessary for the conventions and protocols to accommodate the expanded of these institutions.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, as a Member of the Accounts Committee and Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources Committee, just to answer some questions that Members asked like Hon. Amongin asked. I thank you Hon. Francine for pointing out on the issues of plastic and pollution among other issues that were raised by Members. I ask you to also look at Page 57 because there is a specific recommendation that goes with that. To answer the question regarding merging the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) with Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), that was not within our mandate because LVBC has a broader mandate than LVFO. The LVFO is only looking at Lake Victoria while LVBC is looking at the whole basin. The proposals that have come from the sectoral councils of both institutions go into that.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, thank you. I had to take advantage to respond to all these so that it is easier for my Chair at the end of it all. I submit. I have to reserve the rest maybe to my colleague Hon. Francine who is next to answer. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Hon. Francine, all the clarifications have been made. Take one minute to conclude because time is not on our side.

4.24

**Ms Francine Rutazana (Rwanda):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker. I will be brief. First is to inform the House that I am a member of the committee, and I will not take long. I wanted to highlight that our EAC institutions are like children without parents around. The Secretariat and the Council do not support them, and they are struggling alone. They do not have strategic plans, and we are going to a different financial year to budget for the following year, yet there are no performance audits from the previous years. That has to be done by the Secretariat, if I am not mistaken. How are we now going year after another without any supervision, yet we want to have an institution which is functioning? That is quite an issue, and the Council is not even here. Through the Council, we could have submitted that information. I know the Council does not have any mechanism allowing them to follow what is going on in the institutions, yet we are bringing information as the Assembly which there is no Member of the Council here to take. This is unfortunate and we need to find how we handle this issue because now we are talking to ourselves, and nothing will go as an outcome to help our institutions to function well.

Another issue I wanted to put out is regarding Common Higher Education. This has been put in place by the Summit and the Council is supposed to work on it, but since 2012---

**The Speaker:** Hon. Francine, I have four minutes.

**Ms Francine Rutazana (Rwanda):** Yes, Rt. Hon. Speaker. I wanted the Council, if they were here, to help us understand the problem for this EAC Common Higher Education to be in place. That is a question I put to them. The other question is why the IUCEA protocol is not yet working. This is another question I put to Council to respond to us so that this report will have something tangible which will help us to follow up for the subsequent financial years.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Francine. We do not have time. They are waiting for me now in Arusha. I was supposed to start my speech at 4:30 pm. Okay, take one minute, Hon. James.

4.27

**Mr James Kakooza (Uganda):** Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker. I will be as brief as a miniskirt. One observation which the Committee on Communication, Trade and Investment should take seriously is that one mistake that the framers of the Treaty made was to have one Secretary General to man all the institutions. They should create space for a deputy to be attending especially where we report on accountabilities. If the other deputy had been here and allowed in the House, he could have taken this into account. Since he is going to amend the Treaty and it is on their table, we should create a position to appear in the House as an ex-officio so that in case the Secretary General is not around, the deputy should be there because he is the person responsible for all these accountabilities. That is what I wanted to say. Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you for your contribution. I now give the Floor to Hon. David ole Sankok.

4.28

**Mr David Ole Sankok (Kenya):** Rt. Hon. Speaker, for the interest of time and because my colleagues Hon. Caroline Kayonga and Hon. Francine have answered most of the questions, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Members who have contributed. I assure them that we have taken in their recommendations, all of it, and the report will be amended accordingly. I thank Hon. Amongin, Hon. Dr. Gatpan, Hon. Dr. Salema, Hon. Siranda, Hon. Francoise, Hon. Mary, Hon. Ndagiza, Hon. Eng. Saidi Kibeya, Hon. Rose Akol, Hon. Caroline Kayonga, Hon. Francine Rutazana, and Hon. James Kakooza. Thank you so much. I beg to submit.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Members. You tried to respect the time. You helped me.

*(Question put and agreed to)*

*(The report was adopted)*

*The House rose at 4.30p.m. and adjourned until Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 at 10.00 am.*