

# Parliament rejects sh169b loan for technical education

By Henry Sekanjako and Mary Karugaba

MPs have rejected a proposal by the Government to borrow up to \$45m (sh169.1b) from the Islamic Development Bank to support the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) support project.

Through the finance ministry, the Government tabled the loan request before the House in September last year and it was referred to Parliament's committee on the national economy for consideration.

After thorough scrutiny, the committee on Thursday presented its report before the House, recommending the approval of the loan.

However, debating the report, the MPs refused to approve the loan, questioning the criteria used to select beneficiaries of the project.

"We have been approving so many loans in this House, which have remained non-operational. We should have value for money. Many of these institutions are non-functional because they lack equipment, we should be approving money to equip them so that they benefit learners," Susan Amero (Amuria Woman MP) said.

Presenting the committee report,



Speaker Rebecca Kadaga

Lawrence Bategeka, the deputy chairperson of the committee on national economy, said the project aims at contributing towards transforming the TVET sub-sector into a comprehensive system of skills development for employment, enhanced productivity and growth.

According to the report, the project also aims at enhancing the acquisition of relevant employable skills and competencies that match the labour market and workplace needs.

"In principle, I agree that we need this loan to support this sector, but we need matching skills to support the labour sector. Do you think our youth are only interested in carpentry and

## BETWEEN THE LINES

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bricklaying?" James Acidri (Maracha East) asked.

The MPs asked the Government to repackage the loan request, saying it does not address the needs of technical education.

The legislators also highlighted the need by the Government to establish various technical institutions across the country, saying the report only targeted a few selected institutions.

"This motion is very wanting, we do not have a single technical institute from my constituency. We have only one technical institute in the whole of Teso sub-region, if we are to get a loan, it has to take care of the interests of all Ugandans," Jaqueline Amongin (Ngora Woman MP) said.

The report indicates that the project will be located in nine districts — Masaka, Sembabule, Busia, Mayuge, Kabale, Kakumiro, Oyam, Moyo and Napak.

The nine technical institutes that will benefit from this project are

Kitovu Technical Institute found in Masaka, Lutunku Technical Institute in Sembabule, Nalwire Technical Institute in Busia, Nkoko Technical Institute in Mayuge and Kabale Technical Institute in Kabale.

Others are Birembo Technical Institute in Kakumiro, Minakulu Technical Institute in Oyam, Moyo Technical Institute in Moyo and Moroto Technical Institute in Napak.

The MPs demanded that the Government consult further about the project to cover the interests of different stakeholders before the loan is approved by Parliament.

"There is a lot that needs to be improved for this loan to be useful. It is surprising that the committee which considered this loan, did not interact with the education committee of Parliament," Jacob Opolot, the chairperson of the committee (education), said.

Deferring the approval of the loan, Speaker Rebecca Kadaga, who was chairing the House, asked the committee and the Government to reconsider the request by capturing the MPs' concerns.

Kadaga also tasked the Government with ensuring that girls benefit more from this project and to provide accountability for previous loans approved by Parliament.