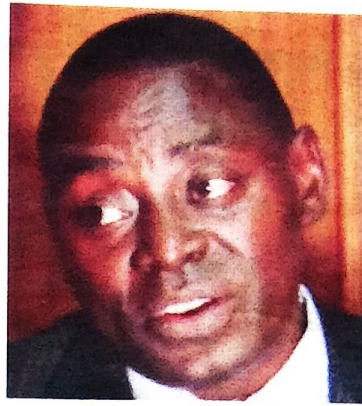


Proposed. Mr Alex Kakooza, Ministry of Education and Sports permanent secretary



Welcomed. Mr Filbert Baguma, the general secretary of the Uganda National Teachers' Union

Govt forms body to license teachers

Purpose. This policy action will focus on the calibre of students enrolled in teacher training institutions and their subsequent deployment in both private and public schools. The teachers will also sit for pre-entry exams.

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KAMPALA. The government yesterday unveiled the new national teachers' policy that compels all teachers to register with a new body to be called: the National Teachers' Council (NTC).

The proposed NTC will be mandated to license teachers in both government and private schools and also oversee implementation of a six-month-mandatory probation for new teachers before taking up any formal employment.

Every after two years, teachers will be required to renew their licences.

The council will work with the Education Service Commission to streamline the recruitment process.

The council is also expected to put in place the minimum standards and qualifications for teacher training.

This policy action will focus on the calibre of students enrolled in teacher training institutions and their subsequent deployment in both private and public schools. The teachers will also sit for pre-entry exams.

Addressing a news conference in Kampala yesterday, the Ministry of Education and Sports permanent secretary, Mr Alex Kakooza, revealed that the new policy, which was approved by Cabinet on Monday, will among other outcomes improve the quality of teachers and the learning outcomes.

"No school in the country will be allowed to recruit a teacher who has not been registered and licensed by the National Teachers' Council. All schools in the country should follow the guidelines in the policy," Mr Kakooza said.

Under the new policy, ministry of Education plans to establish the Uganda National Institute of Teachers Education (UNITE), which will be mandated to continuously train teachers and tutors annually.

Ms Jane Egau, the commissioner of teacher instructor, education and training, explained that all registered and confirmed teachers will be subjected to continuous professional development course.

“The registered teachers will be subjected to six months’ probation under a professional mentor, who has been in the field for more than 10 years, before we confirm them to start teaching our children, basing on the skills and capability they will exhibit,” MR ALEX KAKOOZA, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS PERMANENT SECRETARY.

She added that UNITE will ensure that teachers acquire up-to-date skills and information in teaching due to the changing technology.

"This institute will be identifying the gaps among different teachers and subject them to this continuous professional development courses to ensure that they improve on their knowledge in teaching," Ms Egau said.

The implementation of the new policy starts immediately, although the gov-

ernment has set a five-year deadline for setting up all the required bodies.

The policy also requires a budget of Shs20b.

Reactions from educationists

Educationists have welcomed the new policy as a step in the right direction and hoped that the proposed reforms in the sector will help the authorities kick out "fake teachers" in the market.

Mr Filbert Baguma, the general secretary of the Uganda National Teachers' Union, backed the new policy and explained that it is good news to have one policy regulating teachers.

"We have been having multiple policies regulating teachers, but now that we have one policy, our profession will be streamlined," Mr Baguma said yesterday.

"We have been having schools that have been picking people from the streets to teach, but with the teachers' council, only the qualified teachers will be certified to teach," he added.

Mr Patrick Kaboyo, the secretary general of the Federation of Non-State Education Institutions, said the quality of teachers will be promoted with this policy.

He asked government to provide the required funds in the budget to expedite the implementation of the new policy.

"This is the best policy that has been passed by this government since independence," Mr Kaboyo said.

He added: "We have been seeing a number of teachers masquerading in our field. This has partly been contributing to poor performance of our students, but with the policy, only the cream will be in the field and we welcome this."