



Input to the Ministerial Policy Statement FY 2013/14

Following the release of the ministerial policy statement for the Ministry of Education and Sports for 2013/ 2014, the Sectoral Parliamentary committee on Education and Sports invited stakeholders on Wednesday 24th July 2013 to the Parliament to discuss and input into the policy statement. Hon. Opolot Jacob Richards chaired the committee meeting.

UJCC (The Uganda Joint Christian Council), FENU (Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda), UMEA (the Uganda Muslim Education Association), UNATU (Uganda National Teachers' Union) provided joint feedback on the Ministerial Policy Statement. Mr. Godfrey Amanyire (UJCC) was the leader of the group. He informed the meeting that UJCC, is a Christian organization but works with other faith based organizations and NGOs in cross cutting issues such as education. Mr. Mwesigye Fred (FENU) led the technical presentation on behalf of the group.

Mr. Mwesigye informed the meeting that for the last few years, UJCC, UNATU, and FENU came together to campaign for quality education. On 17th July 2012, the group petitioned the parliament to work on various issues affecting education;

- Require parents and guardians to make a mandatory financial contributions towards the provision of lunch for all children at school
- Increase the capitation grant to at least UGX 22,000 per child per year in the UPE system
- Ensure construction of decent classrooms and latrines
- Recruit more teachers
- Setting up of the Public Service Negotiation and Consultative Council for the negotiations of a collective bargaining agreement.
- Increase of teachers' basic salary from the current entry point of UG shs. 273,000 to at least Shs 546,000 in FY 2012/2013

The meeting was informed that fortunately the petition was adopted by the Parliament. However, most of the recommendations were not included in the Ministerial Policy Statement.

Issues discussed

- Sciences are compulsory at secondary education level yet more than 100 government schools lack science teachers.
- Teacher management that includes payments and rewards has been tabled for a long time but still needs to be worked upon.
- The cuts in the pre-primary and primary subsector lead to inadequate basic development which will affect the developing of skills development.

Mr. Mwesigye informed the group that such issues that were left out from the Ministerial Policy Statement are crucial and affect the quality of education.

Reactions to the presentation

- The committee appreciated the contribution of the group (FENU, UJCC, UNATU and UMEA) towards quality education. The committee called upon the group not to give up even when the petition was not included in the policy statement.
- UNEB (Uganda National Examinational Board) should separate the performance of UPE schools from the private schools. This will help in assessing the performance of UPE schools
- The meeting agreed on the importance of continuous sensitization on the responsibilities of parents.
- The meeting discussed the issue of performance between private and Government schools. The meeting agreed that it is important that researchers, who carry out assessments, are given other aspects to assess beyond the academic examinations. Some private schools concentrate on only the academic concept of passing examination yet education is much more than that.
- The meeting agreed that in some schools young children are given too much homework and have no time for playing, or learning values and morals. This is dangerous as it robs the students of a wholesome education.
- The meeting agreed that private schools perform better due to the high supervision and monitoring levels. Most private schools have permanent inspectors while Government schools are inspected once a year (as indicated in the policy statement.)
- The capitation grant/ arrears given to government schools arrive late and sometimes are less than the amount expected thus leads to difficulties in running the government schools unlike private schools.
- The meeting suggested that the government should ensure that the government facilities are of quality
- The meeting agreed that whereas there has been an emphasis on science subjects, there is inadequate investing in the area. Most schools do not have science teachers among other issues that are affecting Sciences.

Action points of the committee meeting

Action point	Person responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meet with other parliamentarians to discuss UPFQE's recommendations that were adapted yet left out of the policy statement. Discuss on how the recommendations could be implemented. ➤ Meet the Minister of Education and Sports to discuss why the recommendations were left out. 	The Sectoral Parliamentary committee on Education and Sports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue with the struggle towards quality education. 	FENU, UJCC, UNATU, UMEA (The group that presented)

➤ Join hands with all stakeholders.	
-------------------------------------	--

The chair person urged the group (FENU, UJCC, UMEA, and UNATU) to continue the commendable work towards achieving quality education. The chair closed the meeting at 1:30pm.