

Education ministry halts recruitment of over 4,000 teachers

By Henry Sekanjako

The recruitment of 4,700 new secondary school teachers by the Ministry of Education and Sports hangs in balance due to failure to secure the required sh17b to facilitate the process.

The ministry had in its budget for this financial year, requested for sh17b to enable them recruit the teachers, but the money has not been provided by the finance ministry.

Appearing before the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Sports yesterday, the First Lady and the Minister of Education and Sports, Janet Museveni, told the Members of Parliament that the ministry was considering requesting for a supplementary budget to have the much needed teachers recruited.

"The problem we have is the

shortage of science teachers. We have been waiting on the budget to recruit more teachers, but even this financial year, the money was not given to us," Mrs. Museveni told the MPs yesterday.

She was accompanied by the permanent secretary, Alex Kakooza, together with education junior ministers John Chrysestom Muyingo (higher education) and Rosemary Seninde (primary education), among other senior technical officials, to respond to issues raised by the committee during the 2017/18 budget process.

To cover the funding gap, the First Lady implored the committee, chaired by the Mbale district Woman MP Connie Nakayenza to support her ministry to secure a supplementary budget from the finance ministry, to recruit the teachers.

Kakooza told the MPs that the ministry had already placed advertisements calling for qualified teachers to apply and fill the over 4,000 vacancies for teachers.

He noted that out of the 4,700 teachers needed, the Government would recruit 2,000 of science subjects, and the rest would be those teaching arts subjects.

The MPs raised concerns about the limited promotions of teachers in government-aided schools, which they said demotivates the teachers.

"We should look into promotion of teachers. A teacher is recruited today, but three years down the road, one remains a classroom teacher," Margaret Rwabushaija, the Workers' MP, said.

Nakayenza added: "So many teachers upgrade, get degrees, but they are demotivated and run away from

the profession due to low salaries and lack of promotions. It is demotivating to upgrade, and one remains at the same level."

In response, Mrs. Museveni indicated that the ministry was committed to addressing all the concerns raised by the MPs, but was incapacitated by the limited funding.

The education ministry was allocated sh2.4 trillion in the budget for the current financial year 2017/18, which, according to some MPs, is adequate enough to address key issues, such as teachers' remuneration.

About the lower secondary curriculum, Mrs. Museveni told the MPs that for the past two years, consultations and planning have been carried out in preparation for the rollout of the reformed curriculum.

The ministry also updated Parliament about the Skilling Uganda programme,

the state of the technical education in Uganda, the state of teacher education at both Primary Teachers' Colleges and the National Teachers' Colleges, as well as the finalisation of the various Bills expected in the ministry.

However, the MPs expressed concern over the limited number of technical schools in the country, which they said needed to be increased for skills development.

In their submission, the ministry indicated that to increase the quality of skills provision, 40 Business Technical Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) institutions were to undergo comprehensive institution strengthening.

Currently, a total of 32 public BTJET institutions, according to the ministry, have so far been established, upgraded and equipped to improve quality and access to BTJET training.