

BY ISAAC SSEJJOMBWE

KAMPALA. Uganda's creative industry erupted in celebration yesterday after Parliament passed the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2025, a landmark piece of legislation expected to strengthen the protection of intellectual property and improve how artists earn from their work.

The Bill was passed during a plenary sitting presided over by Speaker Anita Annet Among, marking a major step forward for musicians, filmmakers, playwrights, and other creatives who have long pushed for stronger legal protection and fair compensation.

The public gallery was packed with artists and industry players, who closely followed the proceedings, a visible sign of just how much the reforms mean to

Ugandan creatives celebrate landmark Copyright Bill passage

Uganda's creative community.

"I put a question that the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be read the third time and be passed. Those in favour say 'Aye', to the contrary 'Nay'," the Speaker said.

After a brief pause with no objections from the House, she declared, "The title is settled and the Bill is passed."

Within moments, jubilation broke out among creatives who had gathered at Parliament. In a rare show of unity that transcended artistic rivalries and political affiliations, they burst into songs of praise as they walked out of the parliamentary building, singing "Katonda Yabadde Mwe'eno Ensonga" by Pastor Wilson Bugembe, a song that proclaims God's hand in every victory.

For many artists, the moment represented years of advocacy finally bearing fruit.

"This is not just for musicians but for all creatives," said singer Sheebah Karungi.

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The amendment is expected to reshape the creative economy by strengthening copyright enforcement, improving royalty collection, and addressing gaps created by the rapid growth of digital music distribution, streaming platforms, and online content sharing.

"Even if you are a painter, a filmmaker, a playwright, or a composer, you will earn from your work. Even after you pass on, your work will continue to benefit your family. We are so happy today," she added.

Uganda National Musicians Federation president Edirisa Musuuza, popularly known as Eddy Kenzo, also hailed the development as a victory for the entire creative sector.

"We thank everyone who has been on this journey with us, especially our fans who sometimes misunderstood us," Kenzo said. "But today the job is done. We are victors, and this is exactly what inspired us to become leaders."

Kenzo, however, cautioned that the work is not yet finished.

"The laws now have to be put into use, especially when it comes to regulations," he said. "We must remain united to ensure the regulations are implemented. We have just started this journey, and our goal is to make sure money begins entering the pockets of creatives."

He added that the amendment marks a turning point for Uganda's intellectual property regime.

"Today the Bill has been passed, and a creator has regained full authority over their creativity. The old law has changed, and it now belongs to the past."

With Parliament approving the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2025, the legislation will now be presented to the President for assent before it becomes law.