



HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS' FINANCING BOARD

Increasing Access to Higher Education

REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON

HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS' FINANCING BOARD

**AT THE RELEASE OF THE APPROVED SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS' LOAN
BENEFICIARIES LOT 2 FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/2022**

8TH FEBRUARY, 2022

**Honorable Minister of State for Primary Education Education,
The Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education and Sports,
The Executive Director, Higher Education Students' Financing Board,
The Director Higher, Technical, Vocational Educational Training,
Board Members of HESFB,
Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sports,
Staff of HESFB,
The Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I welcome you all to the Media Centre and thank you for accepting our invitation. Hon Minister, I would like to warmly welcome you and thank you for coming to officiate at the release of Lot 2 of the 8th cohort of the students' loan beneficiaries for the AY2021/22.

In a very special way, I would like to thank you for the support and guidance you continuously offer to the Students' Loan Board. Because of your immense support, the Board has been able to make good progress in the eight years of existence. We say thank you so much.

I would like to welcome all the Board Members and thank you for the tireless efforts in ensuring that the Student Loan Scheme is a success. We thank you for the commitment, guidance and keenness to the activities of the Board. In a special way, I welcome the our senior colleagues at the Ministry of Education and Sports for the cordial working relationship that is exhibited at all times.

Hon Minister, I would like to recognise the staff present here and others in absentia for working tirelessly handling the Loan Application process which for the very first time was handled in lots due to staggered admissions by Higher Learning Institutions. Thank you for your commitment and hard work. I would like to equally thank the Board Members for the self-sacrifice exhibited throughout their term of service.

I would like to welcome the Press and thank you for being our good allies and for always positively and objectively covering issues concerning the Student Loan Scheme. You have always done a remarkable job and we acknowledge and appreciate you for that.

Hon Minister, in October 2021, the Board invited applicants to the 8th Cohort of the Students' Loan Scheme following closure of admissions from most of the Higher Education Institutions. By the 30th November deadline, all the listed higher education institutions had released student admission letters, save for Makerere, Kyambogo, Gulu, Lira and Soroti Universities and all the Tertiary institutions under the Joint Admissions Board.

The Board then made a decision to handle the Loan Award process in a phased manner (in lots), with all the participating Private Chartered Universities and the four public universities that had issued student admissions; i.e. Muni University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Busitema University and Kabale University were placed in the first phase for Loan awards while all the Listed Other Tertiary Institutions and the Universities of Makerere, Kyambogo, Gulu, Lira and Soroti are to be considered in the second phase as they had not finalized their admissions processes. The Board therefore, extended the deadline for receipt of the Loan Applications for the latter Institutions to 15th January 2022.

Hon Minister, the Board ran a country-wide awareness campaign to ensure that all the key information is disseminated to all communities in the country to achieve an equitable distribution of the awards. This campaign was run on 34 community radio stations and 4 Television stations using local dialects to enhance the reach of the messages. This was supplemented by broadcast on all the Board's extensive social media platforms and those of our stakeholders.

Hon Minister, the Board has been on a journey of improving and decentralising the application modes, making them simpler and user friendly. In this window of applications, the Board for the first time used online application as the sole application mode. I would like to report that this was very successful partly because of a simpler system which allowed applicants to use their handsets to apply but also partly we established 16 online Loan Application Support Centers in all the four regions of the Country to help those who had challenges with access to computers and internet. This way, we were able to observe the SOPs while ensuring efficient maximum service to our clients. It has also been our policy to minimise physical interaction with the applicants during the application process.

Hon Minister, following the UGX 500 Million boost from the 10th Parliament, the Board for the first time awarded study loans to 120 continuing students in their final year of study to help them complete their period of study. This was a great achievement as it answers the pleas of hundreds of students who fail to finish their programmes on time or just drop out after encountering financial constraints. According to a 2016 'Africa Higher Education Student Survey Report,' almost 30% of all students in Uganda, who join university education on various degree programmes in various universities dropped out of their programmes with

majority pointing to financial challenges. Hon Minister, we are looking to have this funds for this Loan Product increased such that we are able to cover all the Continuing Students who need this support.

Hon Minister, the Scheme has gained popularity among the youth and is appreciated by many Ugandans for availing opportunities to the needy learners to attain higher levels of education and this explains the growing number of applicant in each subsequent year since inception.

In the AY2021/22, the total number of applicants grew to 6,023 from 5,590 in the AY2020/21. Lot 1 attracted 4,897 applicants while Lot 2 registered 1,226 applicants. In Lot 1, working off a budget of UGX 3.8 Billion, the Board was able to support 920 Beneficiaries representing 18.8% while in Lot 2, the Board was able to support 610 applicants with a budget of UGX 2.25Billion, representing about 50% of Lot 2 Applicants. Over all, the 1,530 successful applicants in the AY2021/22 represents performance at 25.4%. It is without doubt that we need more resources to support the increasing number of applicants.

Hon Minister, we continue on our journey to obtain gender equity and out of the 1,503 successful beneficiaries, 44.5% are females having benefited from our affirmative action programme. Also to note, the Board has offered loans to 44 Persons with Disabilities in both Lots and with the established encouraging policy where PWDs can take any programme of their choice, the numbers are increasing greatly.

The Board is also advancing the regional equity in access of these loans which in this window under review, Northern Uganda is performing at 51.5% of the total loans awarded.

Hon Minister, there are many strides the Board has registered and is still committed to achieve. We still face shortfalls in the budget allocations in relation to the numbers interested in the service and also the new normal which requires our learns to engage on Open and Distance Learning platforms (ODEL) providing a new challenge where we are considering supporting our beneficiaries with enabling tools such as laptops to support ease of learning.

Hon Minister, once again I would like to thank you for coming to officiate at this function; I thank the Board and staff that has expeditiously concluded the exercise of awarding loans to the student beneficiaries.

Hon Minister, I now take this honour to invite you to make your remarks and officially release the names of the successful loan beneficiaries for the academic year 2021/2022

Thank you for listening to me.

Rev.Fr.Prof Callisto Locheng

CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD

For GOD and my Country

8th February, 2022