



**The Republic of Uganda**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Address by Hon. Janet K. Museveni,  
First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports**

**To the Nation on the Ministry of Education and  
Sports Preparedness and Response to COVID-19  
Pandemic**

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020  
State House, Nakasero**

**Fellow Ugandans,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to address you again today on the progress the Education Sector has made to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. Our efforts as government have been to ensure safety; first and foremost, for all people within the country. As such, the closure of all Institutions of Learning was among the first COVID-19 measures that the President issued. And as a result, fifteen million learners are for now at home; and not able to report to their Institutions of Learning.

Let me say that as a Country, our typical Institution of Learning has characteristics that are unique to our setting. For example, in the Pre-Primary, Primary, and Secondary Levels of education, there is over-crowding due to high enrolment levels.

In addition, the majority of our Institutions of Learning at all Levels of our Education system have boarding facilities; of which, most of them are congested.

Beside these, the Learners in our institutions are not necessarily from the community around the Institution. We have learners who have to move across geographical regions of the country to their Institutions of Learning. These characteristics are unique to us as a country; and therefore, whatever measures we come up with to keep our Learners safe, we have to do so in light of our context.

As I informed you in my last two statements; the one of April the 04th, 2020 and April the 20th, 2020, the Ministry of Education and Sports put in place a Response plan at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in our country. This plan focuses on three main areas:

1. Continuity of learning during the closure of Institutions of Learning.
2. Preparedness for re-opening of institutions of learning when it is safe to do so.
3. Ensuring effective teaching and learning upon re-opening of the Institutions of Learning.

His Excellency, the President directed that a Cabinet Sub-Committee be constituted to look into the issue of re-opening of Institutions of Learning. This Committee had representation from the other Ministries such as Health, Local Government, ICT and National Guidance, Science, Innovation and Technology. The Committee also consulted with the Technical Team of Scientists that is advising government on its response to this pandemic. After taking into consideration all the views, we resolved that the time was not yet right to have learners go back to their Institutions of Learning – not even for candidate classes as we had earlier thought.

It was based on this guidance that Cabinet advised the President to maintain the closure of Institutions of Learning for another month as he communicated to the Nation.

Since then, we continue to observe the trends of COVID-19 pandemic within our country; and continue to listen to our local team of Scientists. In addition, we also listen to the steps and experiences other countries are having

when it comes to full operation of Institutions of Learning. What we are learning from our local trends of COVID-19 as well as experiences from countries that had closed but later re-opened Institutions of Learning, is that we need to exercise patience and self-restraint on the matter of normal resumption of Institutions of Learning.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Education and Sports is working on the following:

**Strengthen our interventions for Continuity of learning during the closure of Institutions of Learning.**

When implementing this intervention, we have designed it keeping in mind the socio-economic and geographical context of the average learner in this country. As such, government has focused on facilitating the process of having the learners learn from their homes. Therefore, for Primary and Secondary Education levels, we are delivering continuity of learning through radio and TV stations around the whole country. In addition, government provided printed learning materials for 25

percent of learners for the start as we wait for more funds to scale-up the intervention.

I would like to appeal to all parents and guardians of our learners. Our learners need you to support them as much as government may be doing its part. The effectiveness of this home-schooling approach we are utilizing is a shared responsibility if our learners are to get the most out of it. As a parent, take the effort to find out when the lessons are broadcasting on the radio or TV stations, if you are not available for that one hour, have another responsible older sibling or adult in the home be with the child as they listen to the lessons.

The above interventions constitute the first phase of continuity of learning with a focus on remedial teaching and learning for Primary and Secondary Education Levels. I would like to take this opportunity to also appreciate our Local Government structures that have been very key in this phase of continuity of Learning.

However, I am also aware that for several reasons, some of our learners that we had targeted for the first Phase of continuity of learning experienced challenges due to:

1. Some families did not have a radio set or TV set to listen in to the lessons.
2. Even some families that have the radio or TV set experience technical difficulties with the quality of the broadcast signals.
3. The need for printed materials is greater even in the few districts initially covered.
4. Some learners missed because at the time of lesson broadcast, they were involved in home chores and other critical activities in the home-setting.
5. The level of education of some parents/guardians could not allow them to help their learners in using self-study materials.

As a Ministry, we will continue with the implementation of continuity of learning for Primary and Secondary Education levels through the home-schooling and distance-learning approach of radio and Television.

**In the second Phase of continuity of learning for Primary and Secondary Education Levels, we will cover the entire syllabi for all levels.**

In this regard:

1. As you may have heard, the Government will supply a radio set to each household.
2. The Ministry is in advanced stages of developing home-schooling study materials for the entire Primary and Secondary Education levels. We are also going to provide printed learning materials for all subjects and all learners. In addition to that, all lessons in the printed materials form shall also be broadcast through the radio and TV stations.

Therefore, I wish to call upon all families and villages/communities to support government in ensuring that this second phase of continuity of learning becomes effective.

**For Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions:**

The Ministry's Departments of Business Technical Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) and Teacher

and Instructor Education and Training (TIET) are working with the Principals of the institutions to generate home-study learning models and materials for continuity of learning.

It is our desire as a Sector that all Universities and Tertiary Institutions do e-learning as soon as possible. In this regard, the Ministry has already put in Guidelines for implementation of e-learning. The Executive Director of the National Council for High Education (NCHE) will communicate these Guidelines.

However, allow me to observe that one of the critical requirements in these Guidelines for e-learning is that, no continuing learner should be left behind or excluded from learning when a Learning Institution starts implementing the e-learning approach as a COVID-19 response intervention.

## **On the matter of an E-Learning Agenda for the Education Sector:**

There has been a misconception in the media that the Ministry of Education and Sports prohibited e-learning. This is absolutely not true; we cannot be the ones banning what we are promoting. A number of institutions including Uganda Christian University, Makerere University and several International Schools in Basic and Secondary levels have been utilizing e-learning; even before the outbreak of COVID-19.

What we are doing as a Sector is to put forward a comprehensive sector-wide agenda to guide delivery of formal Education through e-learning mechanisms because it has implications on quality of education for the country and its citizens. Once the ICT and E-Learning Framework is complete, we shall communicate it to our stakeholders and the public at large because you all deserve to know.

## **Preparation for re-opening of schools and institutions**

The Ministry of Education and Sports has received Sector-specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) from the Ministry of Health to guide us in determining our Sector's readiness to re-open Institutions of Learning. My Ministry shall review these SOPs and advise Cabinet in due course.

I am convinced that the God we serve and have been praying to will soon deliver us from this pandemic. In the meantime, I appeal to you all to keep safe and ensure the safety of our young people.

**I thank you all and God bless you!**