



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

REMARKS BY THE HON. MINISTER OF STATE FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION. HON DR.J.C.MUYINGO

AT THE RELEASE OF THE APPROVED SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS'
LOAN BENEFICIARIES LOT 1 FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/2022

10th JANUARY 2022

- THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS' FINANCING BOARD
 - MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
 - PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS
 - STAFF OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS
 - STAFF OF THE BOARD
 - MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
 - LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
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On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Sports, I wish to take this opportunity to welcome you all and thank you most sincerely for turning up to grace this very important occasion when the Higher Education Students' Financing Board is releasing the list of the 8th cohort LOT 1 of the approved Student Loan Beneficiaries for the academic year 2021/22.

I would like therefore, to congratulate the Higher Education Students' Financing Board who have worked tirelessly amidst challenges of the COVID pandemic to ensure that the first phase of the loan beneficiaries is released on time. I am aware that the Board for the first time will handle the Loan Award selection process in a phased manner because of the staggered admissions by the Higher learning Institutions. The First list includes successful loan beneficiaries who applied to study in all the participating Private Chartered Universities, Muni University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Busitema University and Kabale University. The second phase shall include all the Listed Public Other Tertiary Institutions and the Universities of Makerere, Kyambogo, Gulu, Lira and Soroti. I would like to thank the Board for extending the deadline for receipt of the Loan Applications for Public Other tertiary institutions

and the Public Universities afore mentioned to 15th January 2022 as this will ensure that all interested students are given an opportunity to apply for the Loan facility. I would like to call upon the universities and OTIs to ensure that they meet the deadline.

The Government of Uganda through the Higher Education Students Financing Board has continued to support parents who find difficulties in raising fees for their children to access Higher education. The Government of Uganda has opened up the landscape of Higher education where to date there are 10 public universities and 34 Private Universities and a host of both public and private Other Tertiary Institutions. There are now over 220 Higher Learning Institutions in the Country because of the good prevailing investment opportunities that has attracted private players in the higher education landscape. Any student interested and qualifying to join Higher education is now free to join either a public or private institutions that is easily accessible to him/her. The Government started the Scheme of giving out the student Loans to the less disadvantaged learners who face challenges of raising fees so that every Ugandan is given an opportunity to attain education. This is in addition to many Government interventions introduced to increase equitable access at all levels of Education to all Ugandans.

In the first LOT, the Board awarded a total of 920 students bringing the total number to date of the successful beneficiaries to 12,107. This number I am told will raise with the completion of the selection exercise in early February 2022 for the second LOT. As earlier promised, the Government started this Scheme with considering students who were pursuing undergraduate degree programmes and two years later started supporting the diploma students. From this year onwards, the government is now supporting the continuing students having realized that many learners

would fall off the ladder along the way because of financial challenges. In this category you have heard that a total of 120 students in their final of study have been given loans to complete their education.

I would like to thank the Board for establishing 16 temporary online Loan Application Support Centers in all the four regions of the Country. I thank all those that gave the Board free space to house the Student Application support Centers. These centres were critical in ensuring that applicants who didn't have the relevant gadgets to use or found challenges with internet/data were easily assisted to apply.

As Government, we note that the Contribution of The Student Loan Scheme towards increasing access to Higher education cannot be underestimated. The Scheme has greatly increased on the stock of scientists in the Country through emphasis on the STEM programmes. I am aware in the last eight years, the Board has trained over 3000 health practitioners in the field of medicine, nursing, and midwifery, pharmacy and pharmaceuticals, medical laboratories and others; 2,000 Science teachers; 3000 in engineering disciplines and over 800 in agriculture among other fields. These are good efforts aimed at producing graduates with the relevant skills required to spur economic development. For now, loans are mainly awarded to students pursuing Science and Technology programmes because as a Country, we are still faced with a big shortage of manpower in science disciplines. In future, we plan to look at the possibility of extending loans to other critical disciplines as funds avail.

To ensure that we train more people at higher level, the Government of Uganda has continued to encourage investment in Higher learning Institutions and we have registered great milestone in the Higher Education landscape. The Government continues to establish more public Universities

and support the private ones to accommodate the increasing number of students pursuing higher education.

The Government is aware of the increased demand for the student loans. I am also aware, this year for the first LOT, the Board received a total of 4,797 loan applications and awarded loans to only 920 students representing a success rate of 20% of the applications received; 464 (50.4%) are male while 456 (49.6%) are Female. As government we are determined to continue increasing the number to meet the aspirations of the National Development plan III and as approved in the Ministry strategic plan under the strategic objective of increasing access to education at all levels. We shall work with Parliament to increase the funding to ensure that more students in the participating Universities and other tertiary institutions also qualify so as to widen access and give a chance to more needy students to attain Higher Education

I am happy to note that there is increased demand of loans by the girl child. The number of female successful applicants stands at 49.6% as compared to 50.4% for male. This will greatly enable the girl child to access higher education and as you know, when you educate a girl child, you educate a nation. I thank the Board for ensuring Gender Equity which is a great milestone for the girl child doing science programmes which were formally dominated by male. The girl child out there should not sit at home but should pick up this Government offer to pursue a course of her choice.

Permit me also thank the Board for taking special consideration for Persons with Disabilities. In the first LOT, the Board offered loans to 20 students with disabilities, 4 female while 16 are male. The good information is that these learners unlike their colleagues are allowed to pursue degrees or diplomas in both Science and Humanities Programmes. This is a commendable job for which I applaud the Board.

I want to reiterate that these are loans and must be repaid back to create a revolving fund in order for others to benefit. I would like to applaud the loan beneficiaries who are paying back the loans and especially the 26 students who have completed repayment of the loan ahead of the repayment schedule. As Government, we are saying, it is possible to repay the loans as demonstrated by the 26 beneficiaries. I do encourage all the Loan beneficiaries with due loans to pay back timely in order to create a revolving fund and create opportunity for others.

I am aware that COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the education cycle but as a Ministry, we have encouraged the Tertiary Institutions to explore means of using online channels for teaching and learning. I call upon the loan beneficiaries to take their studies seriously and finish in time with excellent grades. This will enable them to be useful Citizens, get good jobs and be able to pay back the loans so that other needy students also benefit from the same funds.

As I end my remarks, permit me once again to thank and applaud the Members of the Higher Education Students' Financing Board and Staff of the Secretariat for the tireless effort and good work done. I want to equally thank all the stakeholders (Members of Parliament, Ministry of Education Staff, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; Universities among others) for the continued support to the Board and the Ministry at large. I also call upon the Board to hasten the selection process for the second LOT to enable the students report on time.

I want to thank the Press for the good work you are doing for this Country and especially to the sector of education and for attending today's event.

It is now my singular honour to release the list of the first LOT of the 8th cohort of the successful loan beneficiaries totaling to 920 for the academic

year 2021/2022. I congratulate the successful loan beneficiaries and wish them success in their studies.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY