



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 1 FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/2022**

10TH JANUARY 2022

**Honorable Minister of State for Higher 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 the 8th cohort of the students' loan beneficiaries. 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 Permanent Secretary and thank you for your support and 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 to come up with the list of the first LOT of the successful loan beneficiaries for the academic year 2021/2022 .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, the journey for selection of the Student Loan beneficiaries for the academic year 2021/2022 started in October 2021 when we invited interested applicants to submit their applications. Pursuant to Article 20 on Eligibility into the Scheme and Article 21 on Applications for Loans & Scholarships of the Higher Education Students' Financing Act No 2 of 2014, the Board advertised the call for Loan Applications on Monday 11th October 2021 and the deadline was set for 30th November 2021. During this time, Board made a decision to handle the Loan Award process in a phased manner, in this respect, all the participating Private Chartered Universities, 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 those Institutions that were unable to complete admissions, to 15th January 2022.

Hon Minister, in ensuring that information about the Loan Scheme is widely spread across the Country, the Board carried out sensitization talk shows on the community radios known to have the most listeners and in the most widely understood and spoken local languages. Sensitizations also ran

on selected televisions including NTV, while students were also engaged on social media specifically Facebook; WhatsApp and Twitter.

Information was further shared on the numerous WhatsApp groups among the existing Scheme students. As a result we have seen an upsurge in the number of applications received as detailed by the Executive Director.

Hon Minister, the Board has continued to improve on the application modes, making them simpler and user friendly. This time round 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 the established online Loan Application Support Centers in all the four regions of the Country. These were located in selected Higher Learning Institutions and Government Offices notably, in Jinja, Moroto and Hoima Districts in the Office of the RDC. These allowed us to operate online Loan Application Support Centers in their premises at no rental cost. Hon Minister, this was the way to go in the new normal of operating digitally. We discouraged applicants from coming to our offices in a bid 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, for the first time the Board has awarded 120 continuing students in their final year of study and this will create opportunity to those who were finding financial difficulties to complete their course of study. There has been increased number of applicants over the years as the Scheme provides opportunities to the less privileged students to study without much hustle of looking for fees. 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.

Hon Minister, the demand for the Students' loans has continued to rise. So far a total of 4,797 applications have been received while the Board is still receiving more applications which may shoot to 8,000 against 1,600 available slots. The details of the successful applicants have been given in the Executive Director's report.

Hon Minister, the Board has always ensured a balanced gender parity and out of the 920 successful loan applicants 49.6% are female .The Board has ensured Gender Equity which is a great milestone for the girl child doing science programmes which was formally dominated by male. The Board also awarded 20 Persons with Disabilities to do various courses both in sciences and humanities.

Hon Minister, we thank the Government of Uganda that has opened up the landscape of higher education allowing in private players to open up Higher Learning institutions. As a Board, we support students in both Public and private Chartered universities meaning that the Loan applicants are free to choose their preferred University. The Number of Tertiary Institutions benefitting from the Scheme has continued to grow from 12 Universities in the academic year 2014/15 to 22 now and 36 Other Tertiary Institutions. More Universities are attaining charter status that qualifies them among eligible Institutions. The Board has increased on the number of programmes that are supported to 136 undergraduate science programmes and 76 diploma programmes.

Hon Minister, we continue to receive applications from non- eligible students who fall outside the eligibility criteria. This constitutes students admitted for non- accredited programmes; non chartered universities, those admitted for masters and certificate courses; continuing students; and those admitted for humanity programmes among others that are not supported. Every year we receive big numbers of continuing students applying for loans

while the Scheme for now considers only first year students and final year continuing students. There is need in future to fund continuing students across the Board who are struggling to cater for their education costs. We also appeal to Government to increase funding to cater for the high demand for student loans.

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

10th January 2022