



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS – THE REMARKS OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY ON THE OFFICIAL RELEASE OF THE LIST OF THE SUCCESSFUL LOAN BENEFICIARIES FOR THE AY 2024/25.

Honorable Minister of State for Higher Education,

Chairperson of the Board of HESFB,

The Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education and Sports

The Director Higher, Technical, Vocational Educational Training

Board members of HESFB,

Commissioner Higher Education and Training,

Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sports,

Staff of the HESFB,

The Press,

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Sports, I wish to take this opportunity to welcome you all and thank you for making time to attend this function when the Higher Education Students' Financing Board is releasing the list of the eleventh cohort of the approved Student Loan Beneficiaries for the academic year 2024/2025

Since its inception in 2014, the Higher Education Students' Financing Board (HESFB) has been delivering on its mandate to increase equitable access to Higher Education through the implementation of the Students' Loan Scheme.

The Students' Loan Scheme was introduced as an alternative funding model to address gaps that were created by the success of basic education initiatives since the Government of Uganda implemented Universal Primary Education in 1997.

In a follow-up to Universal Primary Education (UPE), the Government of Uganda introduced in 2007 its Universal Secondary Education (USE) policy in order to increase access to quality secondary education for economically vulnerable families.

In 2012, the Government introduced the Universal Post O' Level Education and Training (UPOLET) program, which also extended free upper secondary education to those who had completed elementary education.

These initiatives came up as a result of the successes of the predecessors. Throughout these cycles of education, the Ministry of Education and Sports registered tremendous numbers of young people moving up the ladders of education.

Soon, there was need for another initiative to help increase access to higher education. Graduates from A' level, examined by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEb), Business and Technical Education examined by UBTEB, Nurses and Midwifery studies under UNMEB and other Allied Health professionals examined by UAHEB increased tremendously and are currently close to 150,000 every year.

The Government merit sponsorship scheme is able to sponsor about 10,000 annually and a big percentage of the remaining candidates need support to access higher education and truly, this is being achieved through the support offered by the Student Loan scheme.

In the early stages of the Board's operations, applicants averaged 2500 but since 2019, the number of applicants has more than doubled to over 6,000 which is projected to hit 10,000 applicants by 2026.

While we have not had the funds to support all the applicants, I am happy to report that a total of 16,437 students have been supported under the students' Loan Scheme in the last 11 years of operation with a loan portfolio exceeding UGX 120 Billion. This year alone a total of 1,836 learners are to be supported for both diploma and diploma programmes. I want to applaud the Board for a commendable job well done.

I am happy to learn that this support has enabled the training of over 4,000 medical and health professionals, over 4,000 in engineering and ICT, 2200 Science Teachers and over 1000 agricultural experts among other pure science professionals. I am aware that the Board through their Strategic Plan had envisioned to support 3,000 students every year. I am also aware that the

Board is experiencing pressure from beneficiaries to extend additional support to meet the welfare component. We shall reach out to our partners, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and Parliament to ensure that the Budget for the Board can be supported at least to the planned 3,000 beneficiaries per year.

I am also aware that there are calls to support the welfare component from some sections of the beneficiaries, an issue we are still discussing.

I wish to commit that we shall continue to prioritize capitalizing the Students' Loan Scheme as we wait for it to become sustainable. Efficient recovery processes in the long run will help the Board to run sustainably and now focus on expanding the numbers supported.

I congratulate the new Board on the great strides undertaken to support the needy students that has increased equitable access to higher education. I pledge my own and the Ministry of Education and Sports' Support to the Board to further the objective of the Board to Increase equitable access to Higher Education.

May God help you to produce more fruits for the Higher Education Students' Financing Board (HESFB).

Permanent Secretary