

## **Statement on the operations of the Uganda Bridge International Academies by Uganda Parliament – 09.08.16**

The Ugandan Minister of Education and Sports, Hon Janet Museveni, declared on 9th August 2016, during a parliament session, that the Government will close at the end of the term (September 2016) the schools operated by the largest and most controversial chain of commercial private schools worldwide, Bridge International Academies (BIA), which runs 63 nursery and primary schools in Uganda. The Ministry's decision is due to the non-respect of national standards by BIA, particularly in regards to health and safety.

See below for the transcript of the Minister's statement. This is only a transcript, which may have errors. To check the original version, check the audio of the Minister's intervention in parliament by following this link: <http://bit.ly/2aCyuoq>.

*“Our Ministry found that most of the submissions about the schools were true and deserved attention. The schools started in 2013 and are located in 63 sites out of which only one was licensed by Kumi Municipal Council. The schools' legal status was not established except in for the one in Kumi Municipal Council site. The schools never underwent the criteria for registering and licensing international schools. My Ministry has however been closely monitoring the schools prior to the time that matter was raised here in parliament. It was found out that the infrastructure of the schools is still in a bad shape, yet interim period required for schools to have permanent structures expired.*

*The material used could not promote teacher pupil interaction. And most all, the report showed poor hygiene and sanitation which put the life and safety of the school children in danger.*

*In an attempt to act on the poor conditions of the schools, the Ministry concerted the local governments and was informed of the efforts made by the respective local governments in executing their mandate, as the second schedule, part 2 and part 4 of the Local Government Act, 1997, which spells out the functions for which district councils and lower local governments are responsible for nursery and primary education.*

*The Ministry was aware that only Kumi Municipal Council had initiated the licensing process and therefore wished to monitor the standards in the interim period. However, upon receiving technical inspection reports on many sites from Ministry staff, the National Curriculum Development Centre, and area school inspectors, the Ministry had decided to enforce section 36-4 of the Education Pre-primary Primary and Post Primary act, 2008, and close all the schools site under the management of Uganda Bridge International Academies, particularly because of the danger from poor hygiene and sanitation on the life and safety of the innocent children. However, given that this is the middle of the term, it would disrupt the children already enrolled at these schools. It was therefore agreed that the schools remain open until the end of this term, and thereafter the schools will be closed until the Ministry is satisfied that they have put in place what is required to operate a school as per Ministry's guidelines.*

*The chief administrative officers and town clerks of the respective districts hosting Uganda Bridge International Academies have been advised to lend support to parents as they arrange for the transfer of the pupils that will be affected, to the existing neighbouring UPE schools. The Ministry will continue to strengthen the inspections of schools and collaboration between the local governments and the centre, in view of lifting the education standards in the country.”*