

# Public universities failing to collect tuition fees — AG

BY UMARU KASHAKA

The Auditor General, John Muwanga, has questioned the operations of nine public universities over fees collection and land management.

The universities are Makerere, Gulu, Lira, Muni, Kabale, Soroti, Busitema, Makerere University Business School and Mbarara University of Science and Technology.

Muwanga's latest report for the financial year ended June 30, 2018, said the above universities had not fully implemented the measures put in place to ensure collection of all fees due to them.

"This led to accumulation of tuition arrears amounting to sh11.841b as at June 30, 2018. The arrears were mainly identified in Makerere at sh3.5b, Kyambogo amounting to sh4.5b and Gulu was at sh1.4b," he said.

He said further analysis indicated that tuition arrears in the six universities span over a period of one year, with sh4.058b outstanding for two years and sh0.363b outstanding for three years and more.

"The under collection of tuition fees affects implementation of planned activities and achievement of intended objectives. I advised the universities' management to ensure adequate adherence to guidelines set out in the fees management policies," he said.

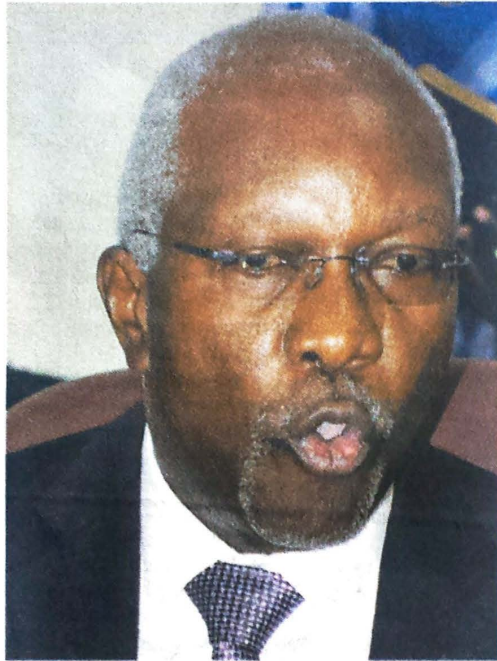
The vice-chancellor of Kyambogo University, Prof. Eli Katunguka, said the bulk of the money arises from Primary Teachers' Colleges (PTCs).

"PTCs are supposed to collect money and remit it to Kyambogo, but many of them collect the money and use it. So, we have been auditing them and they will have to pay that money before they get the results. We expect them to pay about sh3.7b, which is still outstanding," Katunguka said.

He also noted that some students register for a semester and fail to pay fees along the way.

"When they don't pay fees, they don't sit exams and we don't consider them as students of the university. It is also difficult to say you must pay fees by a certain date. If you have not paid, then you will not be allowed to study. We tried that method and it did not work, largely because of politicians who were pleading with us to let them continue studying. Some of them are children of politicians," he explained.

Makerere University vice-chancellor, Prof.



Auditor General John Muwanga

## PROF. ELI KATUNGUKA VC KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY

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Barnabas Nawangwe said the arrears were due to weaknesses in their management systems.

"We do not have integrated management information systems, so some students manage to forge exam permits and sit exams without paying. We can only catch them at the exit," Nawangwe told *Saturday Vision*.

He said the new management information system by the government should help them

overcome this problem.

### ■ PRIVATE BUSINESSES

Muwanga also said physical inspections of the university premises revealed that five out of the nine public universities had over 380 private businesses (mostly small scale) occupying university facilities and space, without tenancy agreements or a memorandum of understanding.

"This implies that the tenants illegally occupied the premises since there were no official tenancy agreements with the businesses. Due to lack of tenancy agreements, the tenants were neither paying the universities tenancy fees nor utility fees for electricity and water consumed, thus occasioning a financial loss to the universities," he said.

Muwanga added that he advised management to develop policies on administering business operations at the universities.

The audit also reviewed tenancy agreements and rental collections for two universities, which revealed that the universities were supposed to collect sh2.179b from tenants as per their tenancy agreements, but only collected sh1.162b, resulting into a shortfall of sh1.017b during the financial year.

"This presented an average increment of 143% in shortfall from sh0.460b experienced the previous financial year. The uncollected rental fees may become irrecoverable from the tenants, leading to revenue loss," he said.

He advised management of the universities to put in place measures to ensure that all rental fees due to the universities are fully collected.

Muwanga also noted that despite a general increment of provisions for library resources between financial year 2016/17 and 2017/18, the allocations to library by all public universities were at an average of 1.1% of the approved budget estimates below the prescribed allocation of 10%, contrary to the University and Other Tertiary Institutional standards regulations, 2005.

He said insufficient funding to the library limits the universities ability to facilitate research and growth in the existing and newly developed areas of study.

"I advised management of the universities to ensure that adequate funds are allocated for this function, in line with the regulations," he said.