I am very pleased to be here to release the results of the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) examination taken from 14th October to 16th November, 2019.

Once again, I thank the Chairperson, the UNEB Board, the Executive Secretary and staff of UNEB for a job well done.

I note that the conduct of the UCE examination was very smooth throughout the five weeks that the examination lasted. I must also pay tribute to all Area Supervisors, the heads of examination centres and the invigilators who played very crucial roles in the field conduct of the examination.

For the last five years, UNEB has been reporting that at PLE more girls than boys have been registering and sitting the examination. I am glad that the increased numbers of girls are beginning to be reflected both at this level and higher levels. We have seen that for the first time, more girls than boys have registered for UCE. I was gratified to note that at the recent graduation of Makerere University, 50.5% of the graduands were female as compared to 49.5% male.
The NRM Manifesto 2016-2021 clearly indicates that as a result of Universal Secondary Education (USE), we have witnessed a huge leap in girls’ enrolment. As a country, we ought to ensure that girls’ education is a strategic National development priority. We have to see to it that girls are not only getting into school but are completing all levels of education with the skills needed for the world of work. There is a saying to the effect that if you educate the girl child you educate a nation. We shall continue to address factors such as unsafe school environment, early pregnancies and early marriages that impact negatively on girls’ retention in school. In the same vein, I want to encourage all the boy children to remain and complete school.

We are also continuously improving provisions for learners with special needs. In a special way, I wish to congratulate our students with special needs who have made it and thank all those who supported them. Let us continue to work towards leaving no learner behind.

I am pleased to note the improvement in performance. The pass levels are higher with a lower failure rate compared to the previous year. The lower failure rate also means less wastage as more learners are able to transit to the post-UCE level of education. Areas of improvement in various subjects have been pointed out by UNEB. I implore the head teachers and the teachers to make efforts to improve on these areas.

I have noted from the brief given to me by UNEB that there is a very unfortunate development in the teaching process in many schools now. I understand it is referred to as compressing the syllabus, where the curriculum, carefully designed to be taught over a four-year period, is now taught for only three years. Teachers therefore rush through the curriculum content and skip some topics.

In addition, teachers teach at awkward hours like 6.00 a.m. in the morning and late in the evenings and over assess the learners through too much homework and tests. All these leave the learners with very little time for their own preparations and study.
I would like you to know that, the entire curriculum and co-curricular activities are meant to develop the learner in a holistic manner. I therefore, implore you to ensure that all learners access physical education, clubs and other talent development activities.

There are also areas of weaknesses, some of which have been persistent, especially in English and Science subjects. The teaching of English Language has degenerated into encouraging learners to cram passages from textbooks to reproduce in their composition writing and to use high sounding words which the learners themselves do not understand. All these are aimed at drilling the learners for the UCE examination.

Performance especially in Sciences still shows the weakness that UNEB has reported over the years. Government, with assistance from the Government of Japan (JICA),

put in place the Secondary School Science and Mathematics, commonly known as the SESEMAT project to provide hands-on in-service refresher courses for teachers of Science and Mathematics. This is meant to improve the capacity of our Science and Mathematics teachers in teaching the subjects practically. However, available evidence indicates that many teachers go back and continue with the same theoretical teaching method, all in the name of covering the syllabus. I understand that parents have been making contributions in order to sustain this programme in their regions. Many schools collect this money but do not remit it to the coordinating centres. Some school directors have even argued that being private schools, they should not be part of the SESEMAT project. This is a national project for teachers in both Government and private schools and must be treated as such.

I am asking the Permanent Secretary to ensure that schools comply with remittance of the SESEMAT collections in order to sustain the programme.
and to take appropriate measures against non-compliant schools, whether they are private or public.

I wish to say this: the lower secondary level or O Level is still a basic level meant to equip the learners with foundation knowledge and skills they will need for other levels of education in future. For that matter, the learners must be exposed effectively to the entire curriculum in all the subjects they take in order to get all-round education. Passing the examination is a desirable by-product of the learning process, but never an end in itself as many providers of education services now seem to believe.

To ensure that the goal of lower secondary or O Level is realized, the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Education and Sports has revised the Lower Secondary Curriculum to make it competence based and it will apply learner-centered methodologies.

As a result, the Ministry has trained lead facilitators, national trainers and master trainers who will train a total of 20,000 senior one teachers on the new curriculum. There will be continuous professional development for teachers in the subsequent years. I am glad to announce that the roll out will start with senior one this year, February 2020 and will be implemented gradually until the end of the cycle. The assessment for this curriculum will be both formative, meaning continuous assessment and summative meaning the sum up examination done at the end of term or year, to ensure that, the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes exhibited by a learner during the learning process are assessed.

I note that malpractice at this level has significantly gone down this year compared to previous years. All stakeholders need to heed UNEB’s theme and take personal responsibility for the integrity and security of our national examinations. It is one effective way of fighting corruption.
I congratulate the candidates who have performed well and thank the teachers who prepared them. To those who did not do well, I encourage you not to drop out but take another chance. With more effort you will succeed.

The Executive Secretary has mentioned a number of agencies and individuals who contributed significantly in the smooth running of the examination. I thank them all.

The Senior Five (S.5) Selection exercise will be conducted at UMA Show ground, Multi-purpose hall from the **13th to the 14th of February, 2020.**

*It is now my pleasure to release the 2019 Uganda Certificate of Education results for public use.*

*Thank you and God bless you!*