CSBAG Position paper on the Education Ministerial Policy Statement FY 2016/17

About CSBAG

Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) is a coalition formed in 2004 to bring together civil society actors at national and district Levels to influence Government decisions on resources mobilization and utilization for equitable, gender responsive and sustainable development.

Since 2004, CSOs under the umbrella of CSBAG have engaged Government in influencing the budget process to ensure that both the local and national budgets address the needs and aspirations of the poor and marginalized groups of people in Uganda. Annually CSOs under CSBAG analyse the national and Local Government budget documents with which they develop alternative budgets proposals that are provided to Government technocrats and policy makers for consideration.

1. Introduction

Education is critical in enhancing the quality of labor productivity and its contribution to economic development. Over the years, the education outcomes in Uganda have remained a challenge characterized by literacy and numeracy limitations. The 2015 UWEZO report on learning assessment indicates that two out of three pupils (67%) tested (Primary three to Primary seven) were unable to read and solve division meant for Primary 2 level. Specifically, nine out of ten primary three pupils were unable to both read and solve division meant for Primary 2 level. The same task couldn't be completed three out of ten pupils in Primary 7 (UWEZO, 2015).

As challenges the sector faces persist, financial year 2016/17 offers the sector a platform to renew its focus and find solutions. It also marks the second year of implementing the second National Development Plan (NDP II); giving the sector a chance to evaluate how far it has gone in attaining the national education objectives for the current five year planning period.

2. Highlights of the Sector Budget Performance

In FY 2016/17, the Education sector has been allocated UGX 2,454.61bn out of total national MTEF budget of UGX 20,336.81bn (MoES, 2016). This allocation represents an increment of UGX 425.55bn from the FY2015/16 budget. This is increment is attributed to changes in the donor budget which has almost doubled. The donor budget is projected to grow by about 98% (from Ushs 200.48bn to Ushs 396.92bn) in FY 2016/17 with adjustments to provide for the depreciation of the Ugandan Shilling against the United State dollar (USD). In addition, the sector budget is also projected to rise in order to provide for the salary enhancement for staff, including those in education institutions (see Table 1 for details).

Table 1: Sector Allocations for FY 2016/17(bn shs)Excluidng Taxes and Arrears

MDA	Wage	Non-wage Recurrent	Domestic Dev't	External Financing	Total Excl. External financing	Total Incl. External financing	Total	Total With NTR
Ministry of Education and Sports	12.824	145.37	69.227	396.92	227.418	624.339	663.741	
Education Service Commission	1.04	4.655	0.653	-	6.348	6.348	6.348	
Makerere University	100.077	24.006	10.159	-	134.243	134.243	134.23	227.871
Mbarara University	23.929	3.943	3.799	-	31.671	31.671	31.671	39.628
Makerere University Business School	16.264	3.440	2.800	-	22.504	22.504	22.504	65.831
Kyambogo University	32.184	8.238	0.723	-	41.145	41.145	41.145	96.115
Uganda Management Institute	1.682	0.346	1.500	-	3.528	3.528	3.530	27.670
Gulu University	18.463	4.146	2.500	-	25.109	25.109	26.144	35.984
Busitema University	15.565	7.548	1.078	-	24.190	24.190	25.538	32.191
Muni University	3.530	3.469	4.550	-	11.549	11.549	11.59	12.157
UNEB	3.950	27.504	-	-	31.454	31.454	31.454	70.952
Lira University	3.702	2.748	1.500	-	7.949	7.949	7.949	10.152
National Curriculum Development Centre	3.966	4.570	-	-	8.536	8.536	8.536	8.982
Kabale University	4.691	2.439	0.600	-	8.229	8.229	-	8.229
Soroti University	3.385	1.622	6.000	-	11.007	11.007	11.007	11.007

District Primary Education incl SFG	871.32	72.53	54.20	-	998.05	998.05		
District Secondary Education	193.62	127.05	8.86	-	329.53	329.53		
District Tertiary Institutions	34.47	27.50	-	-	61.96	61.96		
District Health Training Schools	-	4.49	-	-	4.49	4.49		
KCCA Education Grant	24.82	6.07	1.30	-	32.20	32.20		
Total	1377.28	474.39	206.02	396.92	2,057.69	2,454.61		

Source: *Medium Term Framework for the FY 2016/17, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and Ministerial Policy Statements, Ministry of Education and Sports.*

In additional, Votes have been created under the Sector from Quality and Standards and Higher Education Vote Functions (303 NCDC; 301 Lira University; 308, Soroti University; and 307 Kabale University) which also partly explains the increment in the sector budget. However, it is notable that Sports remains under the Physical Education and Sports vote function. Over the years, the management of sport in the country has been ad hoc in nature without any long term strategy characterised by national teams having to fundraise before participating in major events on the sporting calendar. Thus sports would benefit from having a dedicated vote function.

Recommendation

i. Parliament should task MoES and MoFPED to designate a Vote function dedicated to Sports Development which should come into force in FY 2017/18.

3. Sector Issues

a) Establishment of more Universities without addressing current challenges in existing Universities

Uganda currently has eleven (11) universities and institutes of higher learning that receive public funding. Three of these (Lira, Soroti and Kabale Universities) will now have designated vote functions in FY 2016/17. However, the merits of the continued support to the universities notwithstanding, the additional support is further adding more pressure to an already constrained resource envelope for the sector's higher education vote function. Currently, all the universities are faced with funding deficiencies that have caused costs such as tuition for students to rise almost every other year. CSOs opine that government should first rectify the critical human and financial resource challenges in the universities already funded and any additional funding ought to be directed towards improving vocational training.

Recommendation

i. MoES should justify to parliament the marginal benefits of increasing the number of universities funded as opposed to channeling that funding to vocational training.
ii. Government should halt institutionalization of more Universities and concentration be placed on effectively furnishing and revitalizing existing institutions in order to effectively provide for the current student needs.

b) Inadequate funding for Special Needs Education (SNE)

The move to separate the budget for SNE from that of guidance and counseling as is widely commended by civil society. It is envisaged that the funds allocated to SNE will be better targeted. That notwithstanding the financing for Special Needs Education remains meager even in FY 2016/17. As per the Ministerial Policy Statement, limited financing resulted in failure to implement activities such as the training of 375 teachers in 6 CPTCs, undertaking Non Formal Education (NFE) Teacher Trainers (CCTs) orientation on the utilization of Yr. curriculum and NFE face-to-face training in FY 2015/16.

While the MPS for FY 2016/17 provides for increase in financing for Special Needs Education from UGX 3.183bn to UGX 3.548bn, this financing is still deemed low for given the backlog of challenges to be dealt with. This is envisaged to continue limiting efforts towards ensuring inclusive and specialized education for Persons with disability such as enhancing the existing resource centers to centers of excellence; procurement and purchase specialized instructional materials for learners in both primary and secondary schools; train, register and examine NFE teachers; dissemination of the SNE policy; among others will be incapacitated by this limited financing. Furthermore this financing is way below the 10% of the education sector budget as provided for in the Persons with Disability Act 2006.The sector is also still failing to implement the 1:10 teacher to pupil ratio due to adoption of inclusive education.

Recommendation:

i. There is an urgent need to increase the level of funding for SNE to at least UGX 5bn as this will enhance the existing efforts to teach the children with special needs and to cover gazetted SNE schools in the LG.

c) Coding of Primary Schools:

Coding is the process which leads to a community or private school (in a community with very few or no government schools at all) receiving government support mostly in form of funding and trained teachers. For the last three years MoES has not coded any primary school, though over 2500 schools have applied for the same. As per the MPS, Over 615 sub counties were identified from the school mapping exercise to have no government secondary school, 312 sub counties of which have no form of secondary school whatsoever. Coding of such schools is very crucial in responding to the Government policy of ACCESS to education by all Ugandan children. Considering the national annual population growth (3.4%), such a period without coding any community school translates into quite a number of legible children deprived of access to education. Failure to code schools is due to lack of funds to cater for: construction of more classrooms and other infrastructure, payment of teachers' salaries and provision of instructional materials.

Recommendation:

That a number of 185 primary schools be coded within FY 2016/17 at a grand total cost of UGX13.7bn.

d) Compliance to NDP II

The NDP II education strategy focuses, among other things, on reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training by at least 20% by 2019/20. Beyond the NDP II, SDG Goal 4; ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all is also very relevant and set to be achieved by 2030. The education component of the NP II will focus on:

- Strengthening Early Childhood Development (ECD) with special emphasis on early aptitude and talent identification;
- Increasing retention at primary and secondary levels, especially for girls, as well as increasing primary-to secondary transition;
- Increasing investment in school inspection;
- Reviewing and upgrading the education curricula

Status of NDP Implementation

According to the Ministerial Policy Statement for FY 2016/17,the survival rate to Primary seven improved dismally by 3.1% from 30% in 2004 (27% boys and 29% girls) to 33.10 % (33.20% boys and 32.90% girls) in 2014. Gradually, the survival rate to Primary seven has improved by 3.1% from 30% in 2004 (27% boys and 29% girls) to 33.10 % (33.20% boys and 32.90% girls) in 2014.

Essentially these imply that for every 10 students enrolled in USE and UPE, only 3 of them will survive till Senior 4 and primary 7 respectively. According to the ESSAPR, the completion rate to primary seven is 67.4% .Based on the survival rate, 1 of these 3 that survive to primary seven will not even complete.

Furthermore net enrollment in pre-primary education stood at 9.5%, which is not significantly different from the general enrollment rate which is 9.7%; signified that only 10 of the 100 children expected to be enrolled in pre-primary school, are actually enrolled.

Secondary school enrollment also suffers similar challenges with net enrollment of 24.1% indicating that 24 of the expected 100 students are in secondary school. The Retention rate of USE students improved by 1.1% from 26.6% (2010-2013) to 27.7% in 2014.

Regarding the financing for Education, the NDP II envisioned that UGX 3,919.4bn is what is sufficient to on deliver the sector targets in year 2 (FY 2016/17). We note that the projected allocation for education in the NBFP FY 2016/17 is only UGX 2,479.665bn representing a 36.7% points off the NDP II target.

Recommendations

i. The MoES should provide an annual status on compliance to NDP II targets.
ii. The status update is based on 2014 statistics, thus the MoES should provide a 2015 status to the Committee which should serve as a baseline for measuring progress

e) Poor Quality of Education

The quality of education in the country continues to be a challenge. According to the Ministerial Policy Statement for FY 2016/17, the proportion of senior two students rated proficient in Mathematics declined from 46.9% in 2013 to 41.5% in 2014. While the proportion of students rated proficient in English language and Biology increased from 43.1% in 2013 to 49.3% in 2014 and 14.5% in 2013 to 20.5% in 2014 respectively, these continue to fall short of the required standards. While these challenges prompted the review of the lower secondary curriculum, the sector is projected to have a shortfall of UGX 2.6bn in FY 2016/17 to fund preliminary activities for the roll out of the revised lower secondary curriculum (CURRASSE) in 2018.

At primary education level, in terms of proficiency levels, there has been an increase in the percentage of primary three pupils rated proficient in literacy from 57.6% in 2010 to 64.2% in 2014. At the same time, the percentage of pupils in primary three rated proficient in numeracy has over the years improved from 42.9% in 2003 to 72.7% in 2014. Although this is commendable, it is however worrying to note that the proficiency rate at primary six continue to register a declining trend down to 39.4% and 38.3% from 45.2% and 40.8% in 2012 for numeracy and literacy respectively. **Despite the declining enrollment levels as children advance in primary school which should translate into better pupil to teacher ratios, the declining levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy point to a deeper rooted problem such as limited teacher effectiveness in higher primary levels.**

Recommendations

i. CSOs under the umbrella of CSBAG recommend that teachers undergo reskilling and capacity building so as to be able to provide appropriate support to pupils and thus enhance the pupil proficiency levels in upper primary levels.

ii. Furthermore we recommend that the review of the higher primary curriculum be implemented so as to enhance Value for Money in the section.

f) Analysis and Recommendations of Selected Unfunded Priorities in the Education Sector

No	Unfunded Priority	Comment	Recommendation
1.	60bn required to install lightening arrestors	Safety of pupils and students particularly in lightening prone areas is a critical requirement	Consider prioritization of financing to meet this demand. In the absence of additional funding ,the Ministry should consider writing project proposals to its development partners and appealing to private sector agencies appealing to Social Responsibility aspects of key players in the private sector
2.	14.4bn required for Scheme of Service(promoting teachers)	Teacher promotion is critical to enhancing morale which inturn enhances teacher effectiveness and quality education	While important, priority should be given to increasing teacher salaries across the board.
3.	12bn required for recruitment of more science and English secondary teachers	This is critical to solving the sector human resource gaps	Consider prioritization of financing to meet this demand.
4.	2.6bn required to prepare for the roll out of the revised lower secondary curriculum	This is critical to ensuring that the curriculum is rolled out in time considering that it is long overdue.	Consider prioritization of financing to meet this demand. In the absence of additional funding, the Ministry should consider writing project proposals

			to its development partners.
5.	10.47bn required to cater for outstanding Presidential pledges	These pledges need to be critically assessed and integrated into the FY 2017/18 budget on the basis of merit	Not a priority for this FY
6.	10bn to support the program for skilling unemployed undergraduates	This seems to have a lot in common with the Youth Venture Capital Fund already in place.	Not a priority for this FY
7.	78.47 bn required to cater for counterpart requirement, VAT and import duty for donor funded projects	VAT and import duty should be part of the main tax budget for the sector which MoFPED provides for.	The Committee should ensure that this is mainstreamed into the overall sector budget for taxes.
8.	17.9bn to support increased demand on the Higher Education Students Financing Scheme	A high demand for additional loans does no necessitate additional funds given current budget constraints	This is not a priority for FY

g) **Gender and Sanitation**

Among the sector priorities for the FY 2015/16 is strengthening cross cutting programmes but specifically, gender equity. The enrolment rates especially in upper primary and secondary school continue to be skewed in favor of the boys. The limited availability of sanitary facilities in schools has been cited as one of the key reasons keeping adolescent girls from school (Adukia, 2013). Despite, the national Pupil to Stance Ratio at primary level improving from 1:63 (i.e.1:71 gov't; 1:41private) in 2012/13 to 52:1 (i.e. 58:1 govt; 33:1private), it remains low.

Recommendation:

i. Government should consider increasing the SFG component on latrine construction as well as providing a Cesspool emptier per sub region for 10 sub-regions.

h) Auditor General Report FY 2014/15 Queries in the Education Sector

a) Massive Expenditure on rent

Due to lack of its own headquarters, the Ministry of Education continues to incur rent on the various premises in Kampala to house its various departments. A total of UGX 2,937,116,784 is incurred annually as rent payments for these premises. In addition rental agreements were drawn in US Dollars whose movement against the local currency is unpredictable which causes difficulty in budget implementation. The huge expenditure on rent also stifles the implementation of other activities.

Recommendations

i. CSOs recommend that management should renegotiate with the tenants to have the rent charged in Uganda shillings as per the new guidelines from MoFPED on currency specifications for govenment contracts.
ii. Furthermore CSOs continue to urge the Ministry to obtain their own headquarters so as to reduce expenditure on rent.

b) Emergency constructions in Primary schools

The Ministry runs an Emergency construction program of Primary schools that commenced in 2005 with the following objectives;

i. To rehabilitate and strengthen primary schools damaged during disasters;
ii. To supplement and support local initiatives by parents in the rehabilitation and construction of schools in order to achieve universal primary education;
iii. To improve the pupil to classroom ratio.

During the financial year under review, the Ministry budgeted for UGX. 1,754, 900,000 in respect of the programmes. Accordingly, 19 primary schools were planned to be constructed.

Review of the records revealed the following matters:

- It was noted that primary schools which are hit by disasters/emergencies do not get immediate assistance and can take more than two financial years before they are assisted.
- Out of UGX.1, 754, 900,000 budgeted for construction and rehabilitation during the financial year, only UGX. 1,720,000,000 was provided to assist only 14 out of the planned 19 primary schools.
- The transfers lacked acknowledgement at the time of writing this report yet they were fully expensed under non-residential buildings.
- The Emergency construction of primary school's unit lacks a data bank of requests received, the assessments made and the schools that have been assisted overtime under this arrangement.

Accordig to the auditor general, MoES explained that the schools do not get immediate response mainly because of budgetary constraints. They also indicated that the e-data bank for the requests, assessments made and the schools that have been assisted overtime under this arrangement would be put in place.

Recommendations

i. The Auditor General advised management to liaise with MoFPED to improve on the funding for Emergency Construction Programme. An update on this matter should be provided by MoES.
ii. CSOs also recommend that the transfers to the beneficiary schools must be accounted for in a timely manner or failure to obtain these accountabilities result in enforcement of recovery of these funds.

c) Mischarge of expenditure

In FY 2014/15,a total of UGX.3, 399,286,780 was wrongly charged on items that are not provided for under those particular budget lines and as the Auditor General[1] points out ,this practice is an indication of budget indiscipline. While the Ministry attributed this to release of funds less than those that were budgeted for, warranting the use of the available limited resources to deliver services; this goes against the principles of effective budgeting. That notwithstanding, the deeper challenge arises from release performance.

Recommendation

CSOs recommend that the sector receives all the monies it has been appropriated given how constrained its budget is.

[1] Annual Report of the the Auditor General for the Year FY 2014/15,Central Government and Statutory Corporations