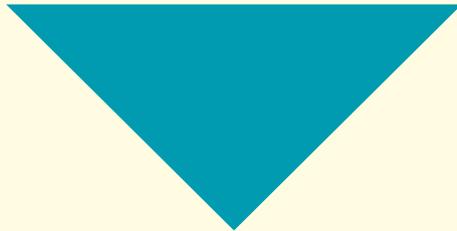




Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group

CSO BUDGET COALITION POSITION PAPER FOR FY 2017/18



BUGISU SUB-REGION

MAY 2017



This position paper was developed by a cohort of CSOs in Bunyoro Sub-region including: ACTION AID-Masindi, Recreation for Development and Peace (RDP), World voices-Kibaale, Kibaale District Civil Society Organisation Network, Kakindo Orphans Care, Wanseko Business community, Hoima District Older Persons Association (HODPA), Mid-western Region Anti-Corruption Coalition (MIRAC), Hoima Union of Disabled Persons (HUDIP) and Aspire Transformation Agency



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1.0 Introduction

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 resource mobilisation and utilisation for equitable, gender responsive and sustainable development. Since 2004, 85 Civil Society Organisations (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 marginalised groups of people in Uganda. To this end, CSBAG works towards achieving its vision: "A Uganda with a people centred budget that dignifies humanity" through its mission: "Working towards ensuring that budgets at local and national levels are financed, designed, implemented and monitored to promote prudent and transparent allocation of national resources for the benefit of marginalised groups."

CSBAG's core business is to influence budget processes at local and national levels in Uganda. To execute its core business function, CSBAG facilitates its members to achieve their mandate; works in nine thematic groups aligned to sectors of Government; dialogue with duty bearers at subnational and national levels; and conducts awareness campaigns on pertinent budget issues. As such CSBAG works with like-minded CSOs, Local Governments, Ministries, Developments and Agencies (MDAs), parliament and most importantly citizens.

1.1 About the paper

This position paper was developed by a cohort of CSOs in Bunyoro Sub-region including: ACTION AID-Masindi, Recreation for Development and Peace (RDP), World voices-Kibaale, Kibaale District Civil Society Organisation Network, Kakindo Orphans Care, Wanseko Business community, Hoima District Older Persons Association (HODPA), Mid-western Region Anti-Corruption Coalition (MIRAC), Hoima Union of Disabled Persons (HUDIP) and Aspire Transformation Agency.

2.0 About Bugisu Sub-region

Bugisu Sub region is made up of five districts that include Mbale, Sironko, Bulambuli, Manawa and Bududa. The Sub-region has a potential for agricultural production and tourism as some parts are within Mt Elgon that forms part of Mt Elgon Park and fertile soils that favor agriculture both in the mountain and low lands. However, the Sub-region has been facing some challenges including landslides in Bududa and flooding in some parts of Bulambuli and Sironko districts. These have created massive displacements of people, destroyed infrastructure including roads, schools and strained service delivery including health and education.

2.1 Objectives of the Bugisu Sub-region Budget Coalition

The Coalition aims at:

- a) Synergising skills and abilities for the common good of the community;
- b) Efficiently and effectively utilising available spaces at subnational and national levels to influence the budget;
- c) Creating periodic capacity building opportunities for local CSOs to monitor budget processes in their districts;
- d) Sharing best practices on how to resolve operating environment challenges as far as budget advocacy and monitoring are concerned; and

Creating a common force for dialogue with Government and Development Partners on issues of the budget.

3.0

Key Service Delivery Issues

CSBAG undertook consultations in the Sub-region that was attended by representatives of CSOs and Local Governments in the Sub-region to discuss key constraints to service delivery and the challenges can be mitigated. The meeting took place in Mbale and was attended by CSO representatives from the Sub-region that are passionate about influencing public budgets as a means of enabling citizens live a better life. A number of issues were raised as discussed below. The issues have been categorised into the service delivery sectors under the mandate of Local Government according to the Local Governments (1997) Act.

3.1 Health Sector

It is important to note that Local Governments are charged with operational planning, management and delivery of health services. These are executed by carrying out: health service delivery, supervision, monitoring, resource mobilisation, and allocation and enforcement of the health related laws and regulations. Districts and Municipal councils are responsible for Health Centre IV's, III's and II's facilities, and Village Health Teams (VHTs). Issue raised under the health sector included:

3.1.1 Non-functioning health structures and referral system

The health structures are non-functional in most districts of Bugisu Sub-region. This among other cases was evident during the recent distribution of mosquito nets without involvement of Village Health Teams (VHTs) who in most cases are familiar with households in their localities and as such can be instrumental in providing sensitisation on the use of the nets. Besides, the healthcare referral system is also not operational. As such hospitals are congested with patients with minor cases which could easily be handled by lower health centres. Furthermore, the ambulance system is non-existent and as a consequence, the gap has been exploited by politicians who donate ambulances to their electorates. However, it is of concern to note that such ambulances (donated by politicians) are neither of minimum health standards nor affordable by the locals.

Recommendations:

- The Government both local and national should utilise existing structures in provision of health care service to reduce the cost of public administration and improve efficiency in healthcare system. This should be accompanied with capacity building of existing structures instead of creation of parallel structures like the State House Drug Monitoring Unit.
- Government should revive the Public Ambulance System and referral system to save life as well as reduce congestion in higher health facilities like Mbale Regional Referral Hospital, Bududa Hospital, among others.

3.1.2 Low staffing levels in health facilities

Most health facilities in Bugisu Sub-region are faced with a challenge of inadequate health workers especially medical officers. This is a common scenario at health centre IV's which as per the healthcare policy are supposed to have a resident doctor. Most affected facilities among others include; Mbale and Bududa hospitals. Besides, most medical doctors are biased towards working with local government due to labour immobility (cannot easily be transferred to other districts or health facilities in the country).

Recommendations:

- The Government should invest in capacity building of health workers; recruit more health workers; and introduce centralised recruitment of medical officers to attract medical doctors to districts without medical doctors.
- Government should ensure that all Health Centre IV's are staffed with a resident doctor to handle critical health cases and operationalise the healthcare referral system.
- Government can also employ retired health workers on contract basis to supplement the available healthcare workforce.

3.1.3 Shortage and delayed delivery of medicines by National Medical Stores (NMS)

Drugs and other medical supplies like gloves and syringes are not sufficient to treat overwhelming patients especially in health centre IV's like Busiu, Bugobero and Budadiri. Similarly, delayed delivery of medicines coupled with theft has worsened the health status in the districts. In most cases patients are referred to private clinics to purchase medicines. It is

of concern to note that most of these clinics are owned by public sector health workers.

Besides, it is surprising to note that despite the drug shortages, NMS destroys expired medicines annually and leaves us puzzled whether the healthcare system in Uganda is operational and efficient.

Recommendations:

- The Government should strengthen and sufficiently facilitate the health monitoring and inspection unit(s) of the Ministry of Health and district health departments instead of creating parallel monitoring units.
- NMS and health officials should be tasked to account for the delayed delivery of medicines on a prescribed timely basis.
- Government should consider allocating a budget line for AIDS/HIV counseling and testing at district level.

3.1.4 Limited accommodation for health staff

This is common at Health Centre IV's, III's and II's which has constrained handling of in-patient cases at these health facilities. The situation has been worsened with the dilapidated state of the existing staff quarters.

Recommendation:

- The Government should construct more staff houses at each health facility and also ensure that the existing houses are renovated and maintained in good conditions for human habitation. At least each staff member should be allocated a residential house at a health facility in the long run.

3.2 Education Sector

According to the Second Schedule of the Local Government (1997) Act, the education and sports functions and services that are under the jurisdiction of district and municipal councils include but are not limited to provision of education services, which cover pre-primary (nursery), primary, secondary, teacher education, science, technology and innovation, special needs, and technical and vocational education. Despite the clearly articulated as Local Government mandate in provision of education services, the sector is performing poorly most especially in Government aided schools. Key issues raised by the Bugisu Sub-Regional Budget Coalition in the education sector include:

3.2.1 Inadequate classrooms and other physical infrastructure

The size and number of classrooms in most schools are not enough to accommodate the ever increasing number of pupils. A case in point is Nyondo Primary School in Mbale district which has on average 150 pupils in one class more especially in lower classes of P.1, P.2 and P.3; Bubulo Mixed and Shikhuyu Primary Schools in Manafwa and Bududa districts respectively. It should be noted with concern that a comprehensive plan has not been put in place to solve this challenge as most of the education budgets in the districts cater for wage and non-wage recurrent expenditures with dismal capital expenditure allocations.

Recommendations:

- The Central Government through Local Governments should commit more resources towards construction of classrooms in affected schools. In the long run the Government should aim at having the recommended classroom to pupil ratio of 1:45.
- Local Governments should allocate a grant for operation and maintenance (O&M) of classrooms and furniture from their locally generated revenues. If possible in some cases parents through Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) should be encouraged to contribute towards maintenance cost of classrooms and other school infrastructure.

3.2.2 Inadequate Supervision of Government aided and Private Schools

We as CSOs not with much concern that district and Ministry of Education and Sports officials rarely supervise both Government aided and private schools contrary to the requisite minimum of once a term. This has negatively affected academic standards in the Sub-region. Limited supervision is attributed to limited non-wage recurrent expenditure budget specifically for school supervision allocated to the sector both at national and local levels. As a matter of fact, Government should have provided funding under conditional transfer for school inspection in FY 2017/18 budget targeting districts with the lowest academic performance. However, to the contrary there is no such funding in the budget. It is important to note that limited supervision has exacerbated teacher absenteeism which has further worsened performance.

Recommendations:

- The Government should increase the budget for supervision possibly through conditional transfer for school inspection window specifically targeting districts with low academic achievements.

- Government should also adequately fund and facilitate Centre Coordinating Tutor system under the umbrella of Core Primary Teachers' Colleges to conduct school supervision.
- Lower Local Governments Political leaders and technocrats like the LC III, LC II and LCI, and Sub-County Chiefs and Parish Chiefs should be empowered and trained to monitor and supervise schools in addition to School Management Committees.

3.2.3 Inadequate Funding to the Sector

Both at the national and local levels, there is limited funding to the education sector especially on the non-wage recurrent and development expenditures. Contrary to the policy recommended UPE capitation grant of UGX. 10,000 to each pupil per year, the Government only provides, UGX. 7,000 per year. Besides, due to political propaganda, parents and guardians especially in rural areas have been discouraged from making any contribution towards education of their children to supplement the little Government transfers. This has constrained provision of education services especially in rural and urban poor areas.

Recommendations:

- The Government should adhere to the set policies and provide the necessary amount of grants (UPE, USE and UPOLET) to finance provision of educational services.
- Parents and guardians through PTAs and local political leaders should be encouraged to contribute an affordable amount of money towards the education of their children. If possible Districts and Mbale Municipal Council should enact Ordinances to effect this policy.

3.3 Agriculture Sector

Of importance to note is the fact that purpose of Central Government transfers to Local Governments for agriculture services is to support services that increase the level of agricultural production and productivity of priority agricultural commodities and promote bulk marketing and trade. Issues raised under the production and marketing (agriculture) sector in Bugisu Sub-region include:

3.3.1 Poor structure of markets for produce coupled with sanitation challenges

This is the case of among others in; Bushika and Bukigayi markets in Bududa district. The structures in these markets are not developed and in most cases traders use makeshift infrastructure to conduct business. Businesses are severely affected during rainy market days. Besides, some of the available improved markets constructed under the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture have been deserted due to poor locations (located in places with no business activity)

Recommendations:

- The Government through the commercialisation of agriculture programme should consider constructing and improving market structures with consultation with locals. Big Bugisu Sub-region markets like Bushika and Bukigayi should be given priority.
- Local Governments in Bugisu Sub-region should use part of the proceeds from market dues to improve the sanitation in these markets mainly focusing on garbage collection and clearance of drainage channels.

3.3.2 Inadequate electricity especially in rural areas

Most rural areas are not connected to the national electricity grid despite the continued Government spending on the implementation of the Rural Electrification Programme. Most affected districts are Bulambuli, Bududa, Sironko and Manafwa. This has hindered agricultural industrialization and value addition. Besides, agricultural produce storage facilities like silos and granaries are non-existent in the Sub-region. As result, farmers have been left to the whims of middlemen who exploit them during harvesting periods.

Recommendations:

- Government should extent its Rural Electrification Programme to cover all parts of the Sub-region in addition to ensuring consistent availability of power.
- CSBAG strongly believes that investment in agricultural storage facilities like Government silos and warehouse receipt system can go a long way in reducing wastage and hunger as well as farmer exploitation by middlemen.

3.3.3 Inadequate supply of farm inputs under Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) Programme

Farm input supplied under OWC are inadequate and of substandard quality. For instance a household is supplied with 5kg of maize and beans without consideration of transport costs to the collection centres which in most cases outweigh the monetary value of inputs collected. In addition, the programme is marred with corruption and distribution of low quality products given the fact that award of supply contracts in most cases is politically motivated. The programme is also implemented by the UPDF with little or no technical knowledge on agricultural extension services. This has left the farmers as the net losers in the entire programme.

Recommendations:

- The Government should increase the input allocations to each farmer under OWC programme to at least 50kg of inputs per household if the programme is to increase production and productivity.
- Qualified extension workers should be hired and facilitated to do the work instead of the Army.

3.4 Water and Environment Sector

According to the Local Government (1997) Act, Local Governments are responsible for delivery of water services in liaison with the Ministry responsible for natural resources and where applicable forests and wetlands. Besides, Local governments are also responsible for environmental management and conservation. Issues raised under Water and Environment sector included:

3.4.1 Limited financing to the Water and Environment

Despite the importance of Water and Environment sector, there are still critical financing and coordination issues in Bugisu Sub-region. It is of concern to note that despite deplorable state of Water and Environment sector in the Sub-region, the funding to the sector has been declining. This is the same scenario at the national level where, for instance, the Water and Environment sector remains underfunded with a budget of only 699.13 billion. This has negatively affected the national targets on access to safe and clean water as well as conservation of the environment.

Recommendations:

- CSBAG recommends that the Central Government should endeavour to release funds to local governments on time.
- Districts and/or the Central Government should allocate a special vote for Water and Environment activities like WASH in Health Centres, UPE and USE/UPOLET schools. This proportion of the grant should particularly be used for WASH activities by recipients without any reallocation whatsoever.

3.4.2 Low functionality of water facilities in rural areas resulting from limited investment in operation and maintenance as well degrading watersheds

The functionality of water sources for rural areas in Bugisu Sub-region is poor, partly because of low financing for operation and maintenance (O&M). Due to budget constraints, O&M is left to the local people who do not have enough expertise in the field leave alone the financial resources. There exists a similar trend at the national level with only UGX. 2.2 billion proposed budget for O&M in FY 2017/2018.

Recommendations:

- CSBAG recommends that the Bugisu Sub-region district Water sectors prioritise O&M financing for rural and urban areas by implementing internal reallocations on O&M for urban and rural water supply.
- Locals should also be encouraged to contribute towards O&M possibly through enactment of ordinances by district and municipal councils.
- At national level, we propose that government should increase the amount allocated to water sector O&M budget to both the ministry and local governments.

3.4.3 Environmental degradation and garbage collection

There is an issue of environmental degradation in the Sub-region. This takes the form of tree cutting, swamp reclamation for agriculture and poor disposal of garbage especially in Mbale Municipality. All districts are affected by this challenge and it has contributed to frequent landslides which devastate economic activity in the sub-region. Surprisingly as noted above, the Water and Environment sectors in the Sub-region are insufficiently funded to carry out their functions including monitoring and conservation of the environment.

Recommendations:

- Districts and municipal councils environmental authorities should step up monitoring environmental related activities by private individuals and Government to ensure compliance to accepted standards focusing on forestry, river and wetlands management.
- Strengthening the implementation of National Environmental Management Authority/National Forestry Authority laws as well as sensitisation of the locals can also remedy.
- Government should adequately provide garbage collection services in urban centres as well as clearly mark collection centres. Through consultations, locals in urban centres should be charged a fee for garbage collection.

3.5 Works and Transport Sector

NDP II aims at increasing the stock and quality of strategic infrastructure to accelerate the country's competitiveness. Under the Local Government (1997) Act, Local Governments have the responsibility of delivering road services including; the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of roads which are not under the Central Government. Roads under Local Governments are classified as District, Urban, or Community Access Roads (DUCAR). Below are the issues that were raised under the Works and Transport sector:

3.5.1 Poor quality of roads and lack of value for money during project implementation

Most roads constructed and maintained by districts in the Sub-region are in a poor state due to poor quality services during construction process. An example is Butenza-Bubyangung Road in Sironko District; Bududa-Busano Road in Mbale and Bududa Districts. This is worsened by the fact that in some cases, the contractors are connected to political leaders and technocrats in the districts which hampers supervision and hence compromises the quality of services delivered by such contractors; as such there is no or little value for money for the roads constructed.

Recommendations:

- The districts and Municipal Council contracts committees should blacklist contractors with shoddy work.
- The bidding process should be made transparent through

enforcement of open bidding procedures as well as dealing with political influence.

3.5.2 Substandard equipment delivered by the Central Government for road works and maintenance

Most of the equipment delivered by the Central Government (Ministry of Works and Transport) to Local Governments (Roads and Engineering Departments) have since stopped working barely two years after their delivery. All districts in the Sub-region have been affected. This has constrained the districts' efforts in maintaining roads under their jurisdiction.

Recommendations:

- The Government should provide sufficient funding to Local Governments for O&M of road equipment.
- In the short run districts and Mbale Municipal Council should use part of their locally generated revenue for O&M.

3.6 Social Development Sector

Under the Local Government (1997) Act, Local Governments have the responsibility of services relating to social rehabilitation, labour matters, probation and welfare, street children and orphans, women in development, community development, youth affairs, and cultural affairs. Given this, the Social Development sector aims to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, increase protection of workers, and expand social protection. With these roles in mind, the following issue was raised as far as the Social Development sector is concerned.

3.6.1 Limited coverage of SAGE and YLP Programmes and funding of Social Development Sector

No district in Bugisu-Sub-region is covered by the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) yet there are many elderly (senior citizens) in the Sub-region. This has left the older persons vulnerable.

Recommendation:

- The Government should extend the SAGE Programme to cover Bugisu Sub-region and in addition, funding for community based services should be increased at least to UGX. 150 million in each district and municipal council for a FY.

4.0 Conclusion

We as CSOs in Bugisu Sub-region strongly believe that the above recommendations if considered and implemented by Government and respective Local Government will go a long way in improving service delivery in the region.

We acknowledge the fact that it could be impossible or extremely difficult to implement the entire package in a single financial year, however, we shall be grateful if Central Government and Local Governments show commitment towards implementation of these policy options with a defined time frame as we strive to achieve a people centred budget that dignifies humanity.

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VISION:

A Uganda with a people centered budget that dignifies humanity.

MISSION:

CSBAG works towards ensuring that budgets at local and national levels are participatory, pro-people and address the needs and aspirations of all Ugandans especially the poor and voiceless.



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