

Conduct more service delivery monitoring at Local Gov't level, says Finance official



Commissioner Godwin Kakama of the Finance Ministry speaks during the LGBC meeting in Jinja yesterday, he urged CSOs to focus on the outputs as they advocate for increase in sector allocations. | CSBAG2018

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“There is need for more service delivery monitoring at the Local Government level where actual service delivery takes place,” says Director Budget at the Ministry of Finance, Kenneth Mugambe.

Speaking at the Local Government Budget Consultative (LGBC) meetings at Lake View Hotel in Mbarara yesterday, Mugambe also responded to the mismanagement of the seed school funds loans. He informed participants that: “Cabinet agreed that the money be used for infrastructure development of seed schools and Health Centre IIIs.” He added that the decision to put up the facilities will be agreed upon by the Local Governments and Central Government.

Earlier, Mr Mugambe who represented the Minister of Finance, reminded the audience that the LGBC meetings kick start the budget process for FY 2019/20. He added that the FY 2019/20 is the final year of NDPII. The meeting was attended by representatives of district local governments and municipality from the districts of Isingiro, Kamwenge, Kiruhura, Ntungamo, Mbarara, and Ibanda. Some of the cross cutting issues and contributions raised included giving many tax incentives to foreign investors at the expense of indigenous investors. The participants also noted that there is need to develop local firms.

Guard against wastage

Related to this, the District Project Development officers were urged to identify development projects at district level. Responding to the issue of indigenous firms, Mr. Mbulamuko Laban of the Ministry of Finance explained that the private sector development strategy targets mainly Small and Medium Enterprises. Additionally, he noted that government gives incentives both to foreign and local investors. Participants also raised the issue of some civil servants especially teachers and councilors who go without salaries and this is attributed to failure in the system. In response to the issue of teachers and councilors missing salary, Mr. Mbulamuko noted that some teachers do not have supplier numbers and as such cannot be paid through the system.

Another issue raised referred to the zoning system which is not followed as Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) send commodities that are not requested for. The RDC Mbarara District, James Mwesigye urged the Operation Wealth Creation officials to release money while considering the zoning issue. On the same issue, Mr Mugambe called for the operationalizing of the zoning system so that people get what they want from government programs like Operation Wealth Creation.

Relatedly Mr Mbulamuko said: “There is need for OWC officials to supply materials demanded by people in communities to avoid wastage of money.” He implored district officials to reject materials that are supply driven as opposed to demand driven.

The issue of understaffing in schools and inconsistencies in transfer of teachers in secondary schools was raised, with some saying there are no perfect replacements replacing a Science teacher with an Arts teacher. Responding to human resource gaps in schools and other officers at Local Government, Ms. Aryatuha Dorah noted that there is a resource constraint but there is need to plan the recruitment process in relation to the available resources.

Sensitize communities

Presenting the CSO position paper, Julius Kuzirimpa of South Western Initiative for Community Counselling Organisation (SWICCO) raised a range of issues. Mr Kuzirimpa applauded Local Governments for the notable milestones achieved in the FY 2017/18 in the various sectors. He however pointed out some key challenges and budget priority areas.

In regard to education, he talked about the issue of under staffing across most of schools in the Districts of Kamwenge, Ibanda, Kiruhura, Isingiro and Mbarara. He also referred to inadequate inspection by District inspectors of schools which has education service delivery. In response, it was recommended that inspectors of schools need to be fully facilitated to be able to carry out routine inspection. Mr Kurizimpa also said there is need to sensitize the communities about the need for education, especially for the girl child and the effects of early marriages during PTA general meetings.

Regarding agriculture, reference was made to the late supply of agricultural input materials like seeds, which are sometimes of poor quality. The CSO position paper also highlighted limited facilitation to the extension staff at the sub county level and tick resistant drugs/ fake products on market. Reference was also made to lack of access to markets of farmer products and prices that have not been favourable, yet some farmers take loans to apply fertilizers as well as hire labour.

In response to the challenges, it was recommended that the supply of Agro input materials should come in time for the seasons and that extension workers should be facilitated enough to reach farmers in time. In regard to the limited tick resistant drugs, it was recommended that the government should make more research on acaricides that can eliminate ticks and diseases in cattle. It was also recommended that storage facilities be constructed at sub county levels to improve proceeds from agricultural produce. The CSO position paper was developed by indigenous CSOs in the districts under the technical and financial support from the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG). The CSOs included Kamwenge District Indigenous Voluntary Development Organisation Network (KADIVDO); South Western Initiative for Community Counselling Organisation (SWICCO); Information Communication for Poverty Reduction Uganda (INCOPORE-U); Action for Development Uganda (ADU); Kazo Development Initiative (KADI) and South Western Institute for Policy and Advocacy (SOWIPA).