

CSOs call for enhanced supervision as finance warns accounting of officers on delays



Mr. Lawrence Semakula Accountant General, Mr. Keith Muhakanizi, Mr. Mugambe Kenneth Director Budget and other Government officials listening to the Quarter 4 budget performance monitoring CSO report on 30th September 2016 at Ministry of Finance Offices. | © CSBAG 2016

“The Civil Society Organizations have called on Government to strengthen the monitoring and supervision of Local Government programmes for effective and efficient service delivery for the citizenry”

Under the umbrella of Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) the civil society presented their budget monitoring quarterly report before Government officials during a press briefing at the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED) on Friday September 30.

The civil society group observed that there is inadequate monitoring and supervision especially in the health and education sectors. “The CSBAG Budget Policy Specialist David Walakira pointed out that the findings in the CSO monitoring visits reveal that only 52.9% of the 46 Health centres were monitored while some Health Centres such as Chegere in Apac had not been visited since 18th December 2015.

As for the education sector 70% of the 254 schools visited had not been not monitored by any district official in Quarter four (April-June 2016) of the financial year 2015/16. “This finding illustrates the dire need for improved monitoring of schools as it is among other things that affects the presence of teachers and head teachers in schools during working hours,” the civil society stated.

He informed the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury of MOFPED, Keith Muhakanizi that the CSOs monitored 254 Uganda Primary Education (UPE) schools and 46 Health Centres in 18 districts. The districts include Omoro, Apac, Gulu, Amuru, Mubende Kagadi, Soroti, Serere and Lyantonde. Others are Kibale, Kumi, Nebbi, Namutumba, Kanungu, Kween, Kapchorwa and Masindi.

The civil society also took the opportunity to inform Government officials the critical areas which need serious attention such as understaffing. Walakira noted that according to the data collected there was a 26% staffing gap on average from all the 46 health centres monitored and this affects the quality of service delivery provided at these health centers.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FY 2016/17 QUARTER RELEASES

53% of the total UGX 26,360.45bn FY 2016/17 budget has so far been released

UGX 5,833bn was released for Qtr 1 (Jul-Sept 2016)

UGX 4,314bn released for Qtr 2 (Oct-December 2016)

On the high cost of credit in the economy, the civil society emphasized the need for Government to be open to the idea of exploiting the different options with a view of addressing the high cost of credit in Uganda for improved inclusive economic growth.

CSOs highlighted two key areas they picked from the just concluded local government budget consultative workshops that need attention of Ministry of Finance and these included the system and network challenges which cause unapplied EFTs that eventually disrupt payments for service delivery. CSOs also cautioned that Ministry of

Finance should not accommodate Local Government appeals made during these local government budget consultations to amend Sec. 17 (3) of the PFMA, 2015 where they require authorization to remain with unutilized funds for at least two months after a given financial year has ended. CSBAG argued that the PFMA in its current form is very clear on what Local Government should do should such circumstances arise.

In his remarks, Muhakanizi the Secretary to the Treasury agreed with the CSOs observations on the need to strengthen monitoring and supervision if effective and efficient service delivery is to be realized.

Muhakanizi warned of Accounting Officers who fault on timely submission of warrants, lack of accurate information on banks details and delays in submission of quarterly performance reports among others which causes delay in release of funds.

He assured the country that measures to address the gaps identified have been taken and these include continuous training of Accounting Officers on the release process, transferring of all Local Governments to IMFS. CSOs however called on stringent measures for such errant accounting officers whose non-performance continues to affect budget implementation which denies citizens timely access to service delivery.

On the issue of suspended funding by the World Bank, PS/ST mentioned that Government is in talks with World Bank and are working on addressing the social protection issues that World Bank raised. Present at the quarterly press conference were Kenneth Mugambe the Director of Budget and Lawrence Semakula the Accountant General among other Government Officials.

QUARTERLY RELEASE TIMELINES

THE REQUIREMENT	CHALLENGE ADHERING TO REQUIREMENTS
1. By 10 th day of the 1 st month of the new quarter, MFPEP issues expenditure limits	• Change in transfer systems to IFMS in FY 2016.17 caused delay in releases
2. Within a week after limits have been issued, Accounting Officers are required to submit to MFPEP requests for Accounting warrants for wage, pension/gratuity, other non-wage and development budget	• Timeliness of releases advice from sector line ministries
3. Approval/rejection of release warrants and transfers is effected within 48 hours	• Delays by Accounting Officers in submission of warrants by MDAs
4. Upon approval LGs enter warrants of invoices for direct transfers to health facilities, sub counties Town councils, schools and tertiary institutions	• Delay in submission of quarterly reports by Local Governments
5. Payments then can be effected by Accounting officers	• Delay in payments by Accounting officers even when funds are available and work has been executed