

## CSOs task Gov't on improved service delivery in FY2016/17



From Left, Ms. Marilyn Kabaleere, Program coordinator -PELUM, Mr. Sam Mutabaazi, Executive Director-URSSI, Ms. Imelda Namagga senior programme officer-UDN, Mr. Julius Mukunda, Coordinator-CSBAG, Mr. David Walakira, Budget policy specialist-CSBAG during a press conference at CSBAG offices.

**“The UGX26.3trillion budget for the financial year 2016/2017 has drawn concerns among the civil society actors who say if development expenditure is poorly implemented efficient service delivery would not be realized.”**

On the eve of the CSO Public Budget Dialogue, CSOs organized a press conference convened today, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016 to update the public about the civil society organizations perceptions about the National Budget for the Financial Year 2016/17. At the same press conference, CSOs shared with the nation the CSO report on the Government budget performance for the financial year 2015/16.

Reading the CSO Statement, The Coordinator of Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), Julius Mukunda cited that in FY 2015/16 of the approved development budget of 9.7bn only 3.3 billion was released, which hampered service delivery as some development projects were not implemented. “We also note that poor releases in the FY 2015/16 hit some votes hard e.g. the Ministry of Health that had only 16% of its approved budget released on account of the poor performance of the development budget. Ministry of Education and Sports, Kyambogo University, Ministry of water and Environment & NARO among others had a release performance of less than 50% as per the consolidated quarterly expenditure limits released by Ministry of Finance. “We are concerned that if this trend continues it will affect the FY 2016/17 budget implementation,” Mukunda said.

The Civil Society Organizations (CSO) expressed concern that the FY2016/17 development budget of UGX10.9 trillion may not help in improving service delivery if the sectors don't have development plans.

He pointed out that only 8 out of 17 sectors had development plans among them Accountability, Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Tourism, Energy and Mineral Development. The CSO noted that the majority of sectors' strategic planning is not aligned to National Development Plan II and this will contribute to low compliance of sectors.

Flanked by the Executive Director of Uganda Road Sector Social Initiative (URSSI), Sam Mutabazi, Imelda Namagga Senior Programme Officer Uganda Debt Network (UDN) and David Walakira the CSBAG Budget Policy Specialist, Mukunda noted that poor release of funds in FY 2015/16 which affected the last financial year could also affect this year's budget. “We are worried that if this challenge is not addressed by Government it will hamper the FY2016/17 budget implementation,” he said.

CSOs called on citizens to express their commitment towards collaborating with Government to monitor budget execution and service delivery to ensure value for money is realized. Mukunda pointed out that there is no strategic intervention towards resourcing of skilling Ugandans despite the budget's theme: **“Enhanced Productivity for Job Creation”** as the education system creates job seekers rather than job makers. “We have witnessed with shock welders being imported from Bangladesh and other Asian countries because our welders in Uganda are not certified,” he said.

The CSOs outlined some of impediments that might affect the implementation of the FY2016/17 budget to realize efficient and effective service delivery as poor implementation, Government's limited capacity to finance budget sustainably, and non-compliance of Public Finance Management Act (PFMA,2015), worrying service delivery outcomes citing the misappropriation of sh4trillion on roads as well as the worrying debt levels. The CSOs commended Government for increasing funding on critical sectors which have direct impact to citizens such as agriculture increased by sh342.98b, education by sh424.52b, health sh553.27b. “This is a good indicator the CSO voices were heard during the budget process,” they said.

Government was also lauded for ensuring that most sector sectoral allocations in FY 2016/17 are relatively aligned to the NDP target. Among these are agriculture whose NDP target is 782.5bn against 823.42 FY 2016/7 Budget allocation, Water and Environment's NDP target is 592.7bn against 689.39bn budget allocations, Social development has an NDP target of 67.3bn budget its budget allocation is 192.26bn. The sectors lagging behind on this target are Health and Education although there has been a tremendous improvement towards hitting the target.

In his remarks Mutabazi emphasized that Government should plan accordingly to realize target outputs. “Implementing activities without prior planning will not enable government to achieve results,” Mutabazi said. Namagga warned that Government should not overburden tax payers on repaying the worrying debts estimated at sh29.9b. Walakira urged tax bodies and citizens to pay taxes to get better service delivery.