

CSBAG calls for Prioritization of Critical Sector Programmes in FY 2019/20



David Walakira (Centre) presenting CSBAG's statement on the draft budget for FY 2019/20 at the Finance Ministry this morning. |@CSBAG 2019

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The Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) has called for prioritization of critical sector programmes in FY 2019/20. This was during a presentation of CSBAG's statement on the draft budget for the next financial year at a press briefing on Quarter

Four expenditure releases for FY 2018/19 held at the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (MoFPED) earlier today.

While presenting the statement, CSBAG's Budget Policy Specialist, David Walakira noted that the release of Quarter Four FY 2018/19 expenditures is being done at a time when the draft budget for the FY 2019/20 has also been submitted to Parliament for public scrutiny. He also noted that budgets for critical sector programmes like the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) were set to reduce in FY 2019/20. He added that in the current financial year, there has been noticeable wastage in the programme.

"We hope that this reduction is in response to public outcry of the obvious and observed wastage we witnessed in the purchase and distribution of agriculture inputs." Said Walakira.

The Director for Budget at the MoFPED, Kenneth Mugambe, confirmed that the NAADS budget is to reduce from UGX 249.977bn in FY 2018/19 to UGX 122.903bn in FY 2019/20. He said however that the overall budget for the Agriculture sector will go up.

"The budget for the NAADS programme has gone down. However, the total agriculture budget is set to increase by UGX 200 bn from UGX 892 bn in FY 2018/19 to UGX 1.1 tn in FY 2019/20 with more focus on value addition." Said Mugambe.

While presenting Quarter Four expenditure releases for FY 2018/19 on behalf of the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury at MoFPED, Patrick Ocailap, the Deputy Secretary to the Treasury said that a total of UGX 4,948,01 bn has been released for the last quarter of the current financial year for effective delivery of public services. He also emphasized that Accounting Officers should endeavor to perform according to expectations.

"All Accounting Officers must ensure that they pay wages, salaries, pensions, and gratuity by the 28th of every month, prioritize payment of service providers on time to avoid accumulation of arrears, display payrolls for salaries and monthly pension on government institutions' notice boards, and ensure timely submission of performance reports and accountability." Said Ocailap.

Keith Emmanuel Kisaame, a research fellow at Advocates Coalition for Development (ACODE) also noted that only 11% of the sub counties monitored by ACODE in Quarter Two of FY 2018/19 display budget information. He advised that punitive measures should be put in place to bring Accounting Officers to order.

Ocailap also thanked Civil Society Organizations for supporting the budget transparency initiative by monitoring service delivery and government programs across the country.