

Experts call for **Prudent Public Resource Governance for NDPIII**



CSBAG's Executive Director, Julius Mukunda (C) deliberating on Good Governance for Socio Economic Transformation at the Ongoing NDP III consultations organized by NPA and UNDP on 1st August 2019. | © CSBAG 2019

As the National Development Plan (NDP) II paves way for the third phase, there is a common agreement among state and non-state actors that more could have been achieved from the country's main development blue print than it is so far.

Just like the first development plan, the second plan didn't deliver on its targets, a fact that the National Planning Authority (NPA) concurs with.

While speaking at the third NDPIII Breakfast Policy Dialogue held at Serena on 1st August 2019 to discuss promotion of good governance and its

impact on socio-economic transformation, Dr. Joseph Nsekele Muvawala, the NPA Executive Director, mentioned that it would be unwise to expect a return where investment hasn't been done. "Do you think you can get good results from a planning framework that is not financed?" Dr. Muvawala rhetorically asked.

Going forward

Now that it is no longer a secret that the country's development plan II running from FY2020/21 to 2024/25 was not adequately resourced, the big question is, how will the next phase overcome the challenges that have so far rendered other development plans rather ineffective?

The Executive Director of the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), Mr. Julius Mukunda, one of the panelists called for effective and efficient use of public resources which can be achieved through prudent public finance management. He pointed out issues like supplementary budgets, poor public funds absorption, corruption, and poor public project management as key factors that have affected implementation of NDPII.

Mr. Mukunda argued that the problem is not lack of sufficient resources but inefficiency in public spending wondering why billions of shillings are returned to the national coffers every financial year yet a lot remains unaccomplished. This, according to Mr. Mukunda, exposes capacity challenges that Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) are grappling with, a factor that NDPIII needs to address.

He further questioned duplication of Government agencies and urged Government to operationalize its recent pronouncement to rationalize Government departments, commissions, and authorities stressing that it would also go a long way in reducing wastage of public resources in the next planning period.

The Executive Director of Pila Consult, Prof. John Munene, said that not until the principals of productivity, prosperity and modernity are properly grasped, the chances of NDPIII succeeding are minimal. He noted that Ugandans' productivity levels in the region, save for Burundi and South Sudan who are currently grappling with insurgencies, is the worst.

Discussing governance, Ms. Josephine Namusisi, a Management and Governance consultant, argued that lack of quality legislation has an impact not only on governance but all economic sectors as well. She therefore called for NDPIII to focus on this matter.

Before setting the agenda for panelists and the plenary discussion, Dr. Sallie Simba Kayunga made a presentation on governance and security trends, noting that NDPIII needs serious strategic focus. In his presentation, he observed that there is no correlation between creation of more districts and service delivery, something which Mr. Mukunda agreed with. Dr. Simba also argued that Parliament should be down sized to about 220 Members of Parliament, which would reduce the current high cost of public administration. He made the same argument for the huge Cabinet, proposing that all State Ministers' positions be phased out and replaced with Directors of Departments. He called for more civic education, without forgetting to improve the welfare of men and women in uniform.

The key stakeholders who attended the policy series said they wish to see NDPIII strengthen institutions, address corruption and ensure its implementation to a logical conclusion. This, according to the discussion that emanated from the plenary, can only happen with everybody playing by the rules of the game, setting right priorities and more importantly, aligning the operations of all Government MDAs towards the country's development blue print.