

## District leaders, CSOs decry inadequate funding to LGPACs



CSBAG's Budget Policy Specialist Patrick Rubangakene (extreme left) speaks during the panel discussion. Looking on is MP extreme right, Abim district chairperson Godfrey Okello (second left), MP Muhairwe(second-right) and Betty Iyamuremye during the panel discussion on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2019. ©CSBAG 2019

**The district leaders Civil Society Organisations have decried underfunding to Local Government Public Accounts Committees (LGPACs) saying this hinders them to execute their mandate effectively.**

This was during the 2019 CSO Anti-Corruption Convention held today 5th December 2019 under the theme "Promoting Accountability for National Development". This was jointly organised by anti-corruption agencies including Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU), Transparency International Uganda (TIU) and action aid Uganda among others.

Under umbrella body Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), CSOs decried inadequate funding as it renders the LGDPACs and other anti-corruption agencies helpless in fighting the corruption vice.

During the panel discussion the Abim district chairperson, Godfrey Okello revealed that Abim PAC receives only sh1m per quarter which is just a drop in the ocean.

Kakumiro district Chairperson Tibiwa told participants that his district is grappling with underfunding and the district has failed to raise local revenue and this affects the accountability committee. Pader district Resident Commissioner Omony Ogaba said there is need to increase funding for the LGPACs if they are to deliver on accountability issues.

Buhaguzi County Member of Parliament, Daniel Muhairwe agreed with district leaders saying more funds should be given to them. He also stressed the need to establish another Public Accounts Committee to track the implementations of Parliamentary resolutions to ensure that there is value for money. He agreed with Civil Society position of empowering LGPAC saying there is need to restructure it.

"The allocation is inadequate given the expanding audit mandate such as gender and environment," Patrick Rubangakene, Budget Policy Specialist with CSBAG told the audience.

He also pointed out that Local Government Public Accounting Committees (LGPACs) across the country were grappling with the same challenge of inadequate funding. "However, the budgetary allocation to LGPAC is still below the required amounts compared to available work load, he said.

Rubangakene said the budgetary allocation for Local Government accounting committees is below the required amounts and their problem is compounded by low collection of local revenue.

"Local Government Public Accounting Committees' can't afford field visits to substantiate queries," Rubangakene stated.

He informed participants that the problem is worsened by creation of more local administrative units as this makes it difficult to recover misappropriated funds as the officers are transferred to another location.

Other challenges the Local Government PACs are still grappling with include inadequate capacity, lack of office space and office equipment and delayed release of funds.

The CSOs recommended such as need to build capacity of the LGPAC and that they should endeavor to collect more revenue and appointment of young people to the committee as it is dominated by old persons who are retired. CSOs also called on women representation on these committees as required by law

"The constitution is clear that gender presentation on every level of management so Gender issues should be observed on DPACs membership," says Charity Ahimbisbwe, the Manager Advocacy and Communications at Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDEU).

The Civil society actors noted that although there has been increase on funds allocated to anti-corruption agencies more needs to be done. The anti-corruption agencies include Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA), Public Procurement and Disposal Assets (PPDA), Directorate of Ethics and Integrity and Office of Auditor General (OAG).

### 'Directorate for Ethics & Integrity budget cut'

Information from annual performing reports revealed that the Directorate for Ethics and Integrity (DEI)'s budget was decreased to sh5.152b in FY 2018/19 from sh5.525b in FY 2016/17. The reports furthermore indicated that national anti-corruption strategy coordination was allocated only 500m (5.82%) of the total DEI budget. Being the Secretariat of the Inter Agency Forum (IAF), the low funding impacts negatively on the ability of the DEI to coordinate anti-corruption efforts in Uganda.