

CSOs Applaud Budget Transparency Gains Demand Action on Debt during Launch of the FY2026/27 National Budget Month



A group photo of Finance Ministry officials, CSO representatives and the Private Sector during the launch of the National Budget Month FY2026/27. Source (MOFPED)

“Today is really to celebrate. We participated through the whole national budget process, we fought our battles, we won some and lost some, so let’s celebrate what we won. Among them is a resilient economy the numbers speak for themselves, including stable inflation, exchange rate stability, and projections of double-digit GDP growth.” Julius Mukunda CSBAG Executive Director

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has officially launched the National Budget Month for the Financial Year 2026/27, with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) acknowledging progress in budget transparency.

The launch, held on June 1, 2026, at the Ministry’s Conference Hall in Kampala, was presided over by the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury, Dr. Ramathan Ggoobi, who reaffirmed the government’s commitment to transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in the budget process.

The FY 2026/27 Budget, passed by Parliament on April 24, 2026, is anchored on the theme: “Full Monetization of Uganda’s Economy through Commercial Agriculture, Industrialization, Expanding and Broadening Services, Digital Transformation and Market Access”. Dr. Ggoobi revealed that over **85%** of government expenditure in the coming financial year has been directed towards the ATMS sectors (Agriculture, Tourism, Minerals, and Science, Technology & Innovation) and their Supporting Enablers.

The National Budget Month, introduced in 2018, has become a key public finance management platform, featuring public dialogues, media engagements, publications, social media campaigns, and community outreach activities aimed at explaining government priorities and the role of citizens in tracking service delivery.

Julius Mukunda, the Executive Director of the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), hailed the increasing collaboration between the Ministry of Finance and Civil Society, noting that the partnership has significantly improved civic participation and budget transparency over the years. Mukunda noted, “Today is really to celebrate. We participated through the whole national budget process, we fought our battles, we won some and lost some, so let’s celebrate what we won. Among them is a resilient economy the numbers speak for themselves, including stable inflation, exchange rate stability, and projections of double-digit GDP growth”

However, Mukunda expressed serious concern about consistently high public administration expenditure. He also called for accelerated clearance of domestic arrears and warned against excessive domestic borrowing, which raises interest rates and makes credit unaffordable for small businesses. “High interest rates remain a key challenge. The level of domestic borrowing is still crowding out the private sector, and this is something that needs urgent attention,” Mukunda warned.

Arthur Bainomugisha, Executive Director of the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), called for the intensification of the fight against corruption, commending recent arrests of high-ranking officials. He suggested scrutiny of allocations to Parliament and how funds are utilized, adding that local governments need increased allocations to finance economic activities at lower levels. Bainomugisha also called for increased allocations to Water for Agriculture projects to counter dry seasons, emphasizing that climate resilience must remain a priority in national budgeting.

Jane Nalunga, Executive Director of SEATINI Uganda, commended the increase in budget allocation to Agro-industrialisation but questioned how the funds are applied, noting that even money put into research has not resulted in dissemination of technologies to help farmers. She also called for review of investor contracts to ensure Uganda’s interests—including labour standards, environmental protections, and taxation—are adequately protected.

In response to CSO concerns, Dr. Ggoobi assured stakeholders that domestic borrowing will soon reduce as domestic revenue mobilisation measures begin to bear fruit. He revealed that government plans to raise **UGX 44.5 trillion** in tax revenues in the coming year—approximately **52%** of the total budget resource envelope.

The Permanent Secretary also highlighted Uganda’s improving performance in international budget transparency assessments. According to the latest Open Budget Survey, Uganda’s budget transparency score improved from **58%** in 2021 to 59% in 2023, surpassing the global average of **45%**. Budget oversight also increased from **59%** to **67%** over the same period, compared to the global average of **52%**.

Dr. Ggoobi acknowledged that public participation still needs to be strengthened—ensuring that citizens do not only receive information but also actively question, track, and influence budget decisions. He expressed optimism that ongoing reforms will further improve Uganda’s performance in future assessments.

The National Budget Reading is set for June 11 and will be read by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. A series of post-budget engagements have been lined up, including:

- June 19, 2026 – Post-budget investment dialogue organised by CSBAG, ACODE, and UDN
- June 23, 2026 – National Private Sector Dialogue hosted by the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU)
- July 9, 2026 – Launch of the Open Budget Survey results

Regional post-budget awareness campaigns will be conducted across the country, while the Uganda Revenue Authority will lead post-budget tax dialogues.

As Uganda prepares for the formal reading of the FY2026/27 Budget, CSOs have reaffirmed their commitment to working constructively with government and Parliament to ensure that the budget delivers meaningful outcomes for all Ugandans.

Dr. Ggoobi commended several Budget Transparency and Accountability Partners for supporting these citizen engagement initiatives, including the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), Uganda Debt Network (UDN), UNICEF Uganda, SEATINI Uganda, the Uganda Revenue Authority, and the Private Sector Foundation Uganda. “*The success of any budget goes beyond its formulation and depends largely on effective implementation, monitoring and oversight by all stakeholders,*” Dr. Ggoobi concluded