



CSBAG BUDGET NEWS BRIEF



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Advocating for a People Centered Budget that Dignifies Humanity



MPs Budget has been cut by Sh288bn - Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee Chairperson

In an effort to respond to concerns about Parliament's heavy costs on the public, CSBAG recently spoke to Jacob Oboth Oboth, the chairperson Parliamentary committee on Legal and Parliamentary affairs. Below are the excerpts

Qn. Who scrutinizes the Parliamentary Commission's Budget?

AN. The Parliamentary committee on legal and parliamentary affairs, scrutinizes, the budget for the parliamentary commission, of which I'm the chairperson.

Qn. What is your view regarding the fact that there might be a conflict of interest when parliament determines its own pay?

AN. This has been a big debate, but who should be determining parliament's pay, should we take it to court? Where do we take the debate on whether parliament should determine its pay? There are calls for a constitution amendment, for a salary review commission for salaries of all public servants; in the absence of the these reviews, parliament can only do what is within its power.

Qn. There have also been plans to reinstate the Constituency Development Fund. If it comes to pass, what structures have been instituted to guarantee its effectiveness and guard against the abuse of these funds?

AN. This is just a proposal which is not funded at all, we are just asking government to consider it. Government has not yet responded to the item, it is still under the unfunded priorities. Just in case it is approved, parliament is supposed to bench mark and see how to properly manage the funds.

Qn. The New Vision recently reported that Parliament wants its pay and allowances raised to cater for their funeral benefits, treatment abroad, housing, lunch and motor vehicle grants among others.



Members of Parliament attending a session recently. The Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee Chairperson says there is not enough money to cater for MPs, following media reports that MPs were hatching plans to have their benefits increased. |@CSBAG2017

What are your views about public comments that these demands are unfair to Ugandans and simply driven by the greed of the MPs?

An. I'm not aware about this, these are just allegations by the press, in fact our budget has been cut by Sh288b. Even the MPs gratuity has not been provided; it will have to be provided from other sources.

Qn. Regarding the proposal to buy a chopper worth Sh20bn for the Speaker, how does that relate to our priorities as a country, especially if you are to consider our unfunded and underfunded priorities in critical sectors like Health, Education and Agriculture?

AN. The president has been very clear on this. The government has no money for the chopper and that the speaker can always use the police chopper. To cut the long story short, it was long left out. It may still appear as unfunded but there is no money.

Question & Answer with CSBAG Executive Director, Julius Mukunda

Is it true that Government can't afford to meet the Parliament Budget needs or it's just a case of CSOs wanting the institution of Parliament to work with less facilitation?

Truth be told, our economy is struggling and this translates into how much Government can generate through revenue to finance the budget. As we may all know the budget for FY 2017/18 reduced from the initially proposed 30billion to 28.9billion which clearly indicates that the country is financially constrained, secondly Uganda's tax to GDP ratio currently stands at 13.5% which is significantly low compared to other East African countries.

It is equally important to note that Government of Uganda will domestically finance the FY 2017/18 budget by approximately 50% and the rest will be through borrowing. This indicates that government needs to cut down on the nugatory expenditures such as those proposed by the Parliament.

CSO EVENTS THIS WEEK

Event: Training of EEA affiliated organizations on developing Green Budgets and proposal writing among others

Date: 8th May, 2017

Convener: Enabling Environment for Agriculture

Venue: Lake View Hotel, Mbarara

OUR WORK IN PICTURES



Former African Union Chairperson, Ms Dlamini Zuma receives documents from CSBAG's Lydia Kobusinge at the Accountancy and Accountability conference that was held at Speke Resort Munyonyo last week between May 2-5th. |@CSBAG2017



Conference participants receiving information from the CSBAG exhibition stall at the Accountancy and Accountability conference at Speke Resort Munyonyo last week. |@CSBAG2017



Handing out booklets to participants. The CSBAG stall was kept busy during the conference which was held between May 2-5th. |@CSBAG2017