



CSBAG BUDGET NEWS BRIEF



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Advocating for a People Centered Budget that Dignifies Humanity



Agriculture committee member questions ministry's efforts

"We have been very clear that we want a policy [for irrigation]. Much as we want money for irrigation, the ministry is supposed to push for these proposals, but they have kept quiet."



Farmers busy tilling the land. The deputy chairperson of the Agriculture committee has challenged government for its lack of resolve in relation to advancing key proposals, such as the establishment of an emergency agricultural fund and the irrigation policy.

The deputy chairperson Parliamentary committee on Agriculture, Hon. Robert Miggadde, has said there is no political will by the government to commit funds for the establishment of an agricultural bank, to offer friendly credit facilities to farmers. The MP has also pinned the Ministry of Agriculture for reluctantly handling key proposals such as an emergency agricultural fund, and the irrigation policy which he said are still pending approval by cabinet. "There is no political will at all, the ministry for agriculture has not pushed enough for the proposals that we recommended during the 2017/18 financial year budget consideration," Miggadde said. During the 2017/18 budget consideration, the committee on agriculture recommended that the government considers among other things establishing the agricultural bank, and also approve the irrigation policy to deal with agriculture challenges such as drought.

In May minister for agriculture Vincent Ssempijja told legislators that the ministry was still pushing for the consideration of a number of policies such as the irrigation policy which he said would be approved by June 30th.

Credit facilities

Speaking on Thursday, during the national agriculture financing day in Jinja, finance Minister Matia Kasaija, urged farmers to make use of the agricultural credit facility (ACF) which he says enables farmers acquire loans at a maximum of 10% per annum. He noted that the government had injected into the facility which is ran in partnership with commercial banks, Sh120b, to enable farmers get affordable loan facilities. However according to analysts, this is a clear indication that the government is not about to invest in an agricultural bank. Despite efforts by the government to invest in various financial institutions for friendly credit financial services to farmers, farmers and CSOs insist that an agricultural bank is the only way farmers can get unconditional and affordable credit facilities.

"It is only the agricultural bank, that can understand and listen to challenges affecting farmers, we still demand that the government sets up an agricultural bank," Julius Mukunda, the executive director CSBAG told Minister Kasaija on Thursday in Jinja. According to the agriculture committee, the agriculture ministry has not also delivered on its pledge to deal with pests and disease management in the country to deal with diseases such as worms, caterpillars, which have continued to destroy people's crops. In March this year, crop destroying army worms, invaded the country, leaving many crops devastated. As result, the ministry indicated that it would allocate enough funds to deal with pests and diseases as a priority during the current financial year. However, four months down the road, caterpillars have again invaded Luweero district, destroying people's cash crops. "Pests, vectors and diseases in crops and livestock, remain a big challenge, the ministry is however determined to control pests, vectors and diseases this financial year," Ssempijja said.

Questionable work

The ministry for agriculture, set June 30, as the deadline for approval of the irrigation policy by cabinet, however according to Miggadde, this has not yet been approved. "We have been very clear that we want a policy [for irrigation]. Much as we want money for irrigation, what we think is good and the ministry is supposed to push for these proposals, but they have kept quiet," Miggadde added. Before the passing of the FY2017/18 budget, the committee recommended that government establishes an agricultural emergency fund, to deal with emergencies such as hunger, drought but nothing much according to the committee, has been done. He however commended the government for a number of policies such as the one on agricultural extensional services and fertilizers.

UPCOMING CSO EVENTS

Event: Launch of the Civil Society Advocacy Roadmap FY 2018/19

Convener: Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group

Venue: Hotel Africana, Kampala

Date: Wednesday, 26th July 2017

OUR WORK IN PICTURES



Ministry of Finance official, Ishmael Magona (2nd right) explaining the debt sustainability strategy to CSO representatives as CBAG Budget Policy specialists David Walakira (extreme left) and John Akoraebirungi (middle) look on last week. |@CSBAG2017



Finance minister Matia Kasaija speaks during the Agriculture Finance day as CSBAG Executive Director, Julius Mukunda and other officials look on in Jinja last week. |@CSBAG2017



CSO representatives from different regions listening to David Nsubuga, a macro-economics consultant during the Public Finance Management training held at Esella country resort last week. |@CSBAG2017