

CSBAG challenges Government on the PFMA 2015 compliance



CSOs and the Ministry of Finance team at 1st Quarter fund press release FY2016/17 at Ministry of Finance offices, Conference Hall | @CSBAG UGANDA

“CSOs under their Umbrella organization Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group warned Government that non-compliance to PFMA 2015, would result into misuse of public resources which would eventually affect the service delivery outcomes in FY2016/17.”

This was during the Ministry of Finance Press conference to release funds for Quarter one (July-September 2016) for the Financial year 2016/17. The press conference was held at the Ministry of Finance Conference Hall on 12th July 2016.

In his remarks, the CSBAG Coordinator Julius Mukunda commended Ministry of Finance for successfully coordinating the development and approval of the National Budget for FY2016/17 with in the stipulated PFMA, 2015 timelines. He however cautioned the Ministry about key

public finance management practices which if not adhered to would lead to loss of public funds. “Chair, we are yet to see deliberate strategies by Government to uproot corruption in this country. The degree of haemorrhage due to theft and shoddy work especially in the infrastructure is likely to undermine the objectives of Ugandans benefiting from the infrastructure. Mr. Mukunda said.

He also warned against the practice on supplementary budgeting. Which he said distorts the budget process and reduces confidence in our planning processes.

CSOs applauded Government on its continued strive to improve Public finance management in the country. Key to this is the progress made by Ministry of Finance towards the implementation of the Programme Based Budgeting. “We are glad that this FY 2016/17 the Programme Based Budgeting approach will be applied. This will help sectors focus to start reporting more strategic level budget achievements that impact quality of service delivery rather than focusing on routine activities like payment of contractors”. Mentioned the CSBAG Coordinator.

Other measures applauded include the reduction of LG grants from 58 to 10 a measure that will greatly improve coordination and reporting mechanisms from Local Governments. CSBAG also recognized the deliberate efforts by Ministry of Finance to involve CSOs in the planning and budgeting process which has contributed to increased citizens’ access to budget information. Furthermore CSOs appreciated Government efforts to increase funding to some critical sectors of Agriculture, Water and Environment, Education, Health and Social Development, which have direct impact on the citizen.

Also at this press conference the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to Treasury, Mr. Keith Muhakanizi, mentioned that quarter one expenditure limits were released on July 7th 2016 **amounting to UGX5, 747.401** bn including Karuma, Isimba and Debt and Bank of Uganda capitalization. Of this money, UGX 3,446.36 bn which is equivalent to 29.14% was sent to Government institutions for spending for Quarter one of FY2016/17

UGX 27 bn was released to cater for the planting season in the first quarter, UGX 127.8 bn (53.71%) released to NMS to meet its obligations for purchase of drugs. Under the education sector, capitation grants for the Local Government had been fully provided to cater for third school term. Muhakanizi commended CSOs for its advocacy which resulted into realignments of fund releases to the school year calendar and the farming seasons. He also sounded a warning to accounting officers to expedite the verification process of the payroll which in his perspective had taken too long thus denying citizens to access their had earned pensions. He also called out to Accounting Officers not to authorize any recruitments without parliament approval. “No recruitment should happen without funds being approved by parliament. Any illegal expenditures will be punished” Muhakanizi emphasized

He further informed the press that Government has directed all Accounting Officers to prioritize procurement of locally produced and UNBS certified goods and services. This will definitely boost local private sector. Muhakanizi said “

CSBAG at this press conference submitted the CSO Quarter three (January-March 2016) Budget Monitoring Report of FY 2015/16 to the PS/ST Mr. Keith Muhakanizi who embraced it with great pleasure and congratulated CSBAG for great work done in making the budget pro poor and gender responsive.

In attendance were CSBAG members who included Women and Girl Child Development Association, Uganda Parliamentary Youths Forum, Uganda Debt Network, Initiative for Social and Economic Rights, South Western Institute for Policy under Advocacy. Julius Mukunda, the coordinator appreciated the opportunity given to civil society to share with ministry of finance their recommendations after budget monitoring.

In conclusion, Mukunda requested Government to ensure proper implementation of government programs and work hand in hand with the CSOs for the best of budget monitoring to ensure service delivery improves.