



CSBAG BUDGET NEWS BRIEF



302nd EDITION | 6th NOV – 11th NOV 2017

Advocating for a People Centered Budget that Dignifies Humanity



CSOs call for faster salary review to limit strikes, improve services

"Everyone knows that over 70% of the Government's investment has been in infrastructure like roads but they haven't helped much to transform people's lives."



CSBAG Executive Director, Julius Mukunda (left) speaks during the Oxfam International meeting on inequality and public spending in Entebbe last week. He said the salary review commission will help to regulate and solve the current challenges. | @CSBAG2017

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have asked the Government to hasten its plans of reviewing salaries for civil servants saying, this will help reduce various strikes by government workers that have hurt service delivery in different sectors such as health and judiciary. "Simply because we don't have a salary structure, you find that every Government agency has its own salary structure. Once we have the structure, it will regulate the way salaries are paid and who should be paid what," said Julius Mukunda, the Executive Director Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG). Speaking during an Oxfam International meeting on inequality and public spending in Entebbe recently, Mukunda said that the review will set a basis on why salaries of different government workers differ. He said the Salary Review Commission will be able to regulate 90% of the salaries but the MPs won't be affected since they determine their salaries.

to their concerns." Earlier, CSOs also asked the government to invest in skills, productivity, and agriculture if the current alarming levels of inequality are to be addressed in Uganda. The Oxfam International Uganda Country Director Peter Kamalingin explained that there's need for the Government to desist from over investing in infrastructure such as roads because they haven't helped much in fighting poverty and inequality. "Everyone knows that over 70% of the Government's investment has been in infrastructure like roads but they haven't helped much to transform people's lives. A utility audit should be carried out on infrastructure investment to actually find out how the communities are using them. In some areas people are using the tarmac roads to dry their maize and cassava," he said.

Step in the right direction

Sophie Kyagulanyi, a specialist in Governance and accountability explained that the salary review would be a step in the right direction by helping to define basic rates at which the salary level is determined. She said it will reduce the inequalities created by different salaries received by technical people. "It's a welcome idea and we hope that cabinet will expedite the idea and ensure that its part of this financial year," she stated. Benson Ocen Ekwe, the Executive Director for Public Affairs

Centre of Uganda (PAC Uganda), an NGO based in Soroti explained how the ministry for labour has been sidelined in all these salary issues yet under the law, the ministry should be the one handling the situation.

"My biggest problem with the Government is failure to follow the law. If you look at the settlement of labour disputes act, it clearly stipulates that it is the ministry of Labour which institutes a board to negotiate how to settle the dispute," he stated.

Failure to address inequality

Still on public spending, Mukunda also said that Uganda's public investments such as express highway construction take a lot of money and end up being used by the rich hence fail to address the inequality challenges. "Take for example express highways can only benefit those who have motor vehicles, but over 60% of Uganda's population is engaged in subsistence agriculture. In that way they are eliminating them to benefit from public investments," he said. He added: "Most of the budget is on public investments hence small budget is left to fund services medicine and schools, we spend sh10,000 in schools and this is not enough." An Oxfam report released recently showed a rising gap between the rich and poor in Uganda.

UPCOMING CSO EVENTS

Event: Review meeting on CSO Budget Advocacy

Convener: Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG)

Venue: Hotel Africana, Kampala

Date: Monday, 13th November 2017

Time: 8:30am-5:00pm

OUR WORK IN PICTURES



CSO participants attending the Disaster cluster planning meeting at Esella Country Hotel last week. | @CSBAG2017



A cross-section of participants from different countries attending the Oxfam International meeting on inequality and public spending at Innophine Hotel in Entebbe last week. | @CSBAG2017



Mbale Municipality Planner Mr. Watsomu making his presentation during the Bugisu Sub region CSO district Budget preparations last week. | @CSBAG2017