

## Districts in Bunyoro sub-region query shrinking Budget allocations



John Muheirwoha, Assistant commissioner Budget in Ministry of Finance speaks during the Local Government Budget Consultative meeting at the Hoima Resort Hotel. |@CSBAG2017

**“Drug stock-outs in health facilities affect the quality of health services and cause conflicts between health workers and clients who suspect that their drugs are stolen...”**

Districts in Bunyoro sub-region have decried the shrinking finances which are allocated to them by the central Government. During a Local government Budget consultative meeting that was organized by the Civil Society Advocacy Group (CSBAG) and Finance Ministry on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> September, the district leaders said the persistent reduction in budgets is crippling service delivery amidst the increasing demands from tax payers.

Funding to local governments from the national budget reduced from 38% in the 2007/2008 financial year to 12% in the 2017/2018 financial year, said Jeff Wadulo, the CSBAG parliamentary liaison officer.

Civil society demanded an increase in funding in local governments and key sectors such as education, health and community infrastructure.

Biira Nasser Kiwanuka, a coordinator of the Midwestern Regional Anti-Corruption coalition (MIRAC) said failure to budget for operational funds of ambulances has led to extortion of patients in many public health facilities.

“Our research has indicated that to use an ambulance, the client is asked to pay fuel amounting to about Shs150,000 yet that money is not receipted” said Kiwanuka who presented CSBAG research in Bunyoro.

Presenting on behalf of the health sector after group discussions, the Acting Kakumiro district health officer Robert Senteza asked the Central government to enhance the budget for medicine.

### Guard against drug stock-outs

“Drug stock-outs in health facilities affect the quality of health services and cause conflicts between health workers and clients who suspect that their drugs are stolen or misused” Senteza said.

He suggested that the inspection budget for the District health officer be raised from the average of Shs11 million to Shs20 million per quarter. Health workers petitioned Government to budget for an ambulance and fuel for each hospital and health centre IV to be able to handle emergency and referral cases.

The Masindi district Finance secretary Mr Kanaginagi Ateenyi asked the central government to budget for a Midwestern regional remand home which is hosted in Masindi district. “All juveniles in this region are detained at that facility but the central government does not allocate it funds. We use our limited local revenue to finance its operations” Ateenyi said.

### Improve collection of local revenues

John Muheirwoha, the Assistant commissioner of budgeting in the Ministry of Finance said local governments should enhance collection of local revenues given the limited financial envelop that is disbursed from the Ministry of finance.

He said there are some funds that are allocated to ministries at the centre but they are spent in local governments.

For example, he said, the office of the Prime minister receives funds for NUSAF yet the biggest part of that money is spent in local governments.

Willis Bashaasha, the Director of the President’s manifesto implementation asked local governments to include the presidential pledges that are institutional in nature in their budgets and plans.

For example, the NRM manifesto promises a health Centre II in each parish, a secondary school in each subcounty and a technical institute in each county. “Mainstream such promises in your budgets and plans as per the president’s promise” Bashaasha said.

Henry Mbaguta, the assistant commissioner of financial services asked local governments to submit their 2018/2019 budget framework papers to the ministry of finance by 15<sup>th</sup> November so that they are integrated into the national budget framework paper by 31<sup>st</sup> December.