

Increase funding to accountability agencies



From Left, Freddy Kabumba, Economist, Inspectorate of Government, Fredrick Kawooya, Manager Policy Advocacy and Campaign, ActionAid Uganda, Hans Twinomugisha, Manager, Executive Support Services, Office of the Auditor General, Uganda and Julius Kapwepwe, Programme Coordinator, Uganda Debt Network

If corruption is to be tackled head on there is need to increase funding to the agencies involved in combating graft in the country. The call was made at a CSO dialogue discussing financing for accountability institutions in Uganda organised by Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) at Hotel Africana on Friday Dec 9, 2016.

Daniel Lukwago who presented a paper on the financing spectrum of accountability institutions in Uganda pointed out that without significant funding injected in institutions fighting corruption, the fight against corruption will remain a " it is critical to increase the funding to Anti-corruption agencies for effective service delivery" he mentioned.

He pointed out that although there is notable increase of funding to the Accountability Sector's budget in nominal terms has increased from UGX 507.2 billion in 2012/13 to UGX 864.7 billion in 2016/17* *excluding **Treasury Operations**, the percentage share of accountability sector budget to the

overall budget in the three financial years has been reducing from 5.7% in 2013/14 to 5.5% in 2016/17, and this is expected to reduce further to 5.3% in 2017/18. This could be an indicator of declining importance of the Government towards the accountability sectors.

A deeper analysis revealed that Ministry of Finance and URA get the biggest funding i.e. 3 quarters of the Accountability sector at the expense of other institutions like PPDA, OAG, and UBOS among other. It was revealed that although the approved budget of the IGG, DEI, FIA, OAG, PPDA, LGs (Grant for Monitoring & Accountability), MoLG (Inspection) and MoPS (Inspection) has increased slightly, their share of the total national budget has been declining from 1.04% in 2012/13 to 0.62% in 2016/17. Specifically the budget allocation to the OAG has declined from UGX 61.4 billion in 2013/14 to UGX 51.2 billion in 2016/17. "This is a worrying trend given the increasing audit mandate of the OAG, Lukwago warned.

The budget allocation to the PPDA increased from UGX 8.8 billion in 2013/14 to UGX 14.2 billion in 2016/17. And although this is commendable, PPDA still faces a funding gap of UGX 10 billion according to the PPDA Strategic Plan 2014 /15 – 2018/19.

A deeper look at the PPDA budget allocation for the last four financial years of 2013/14-2016/17, revealed that 30% of the budget goes to PPDA Support services and the yet he most critical component of monitoring compliance with the PPDA Law only took 12% of the PPDA budget This is a worrying trend given the increasing audit mandate of the PPDA.

There is need to address challenges affecting the accountability sector such as low level of compliance, laxity in the implementations of recommendations made by oversight role agencies, poor service delivery and low public demand for accountability among others. Lukwago recommended that the OAG should reorient its budget to ensure that it allocates more funds towards value for money audits while the IGG should put more funds towards prosecution and litigation function. As for the PPDA the resolution is that they should allocate more funds towards monitoring compliance in accordance with the PPDA law.

Hans Twinomugisha, the Manager Executive support services at OAG informed participants that despite limited funding the agency has done a commendable job in auditing reports that have led to either the prosecution of the culprits or return of the misappropriated funds to government coffers. He cited the return of the money by the Chinese after the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee quizzed the Chinese and demanded for the return of the money.

"It's not all lamentation but it was a result of audit report that is why the money was refunded. We need more actions and more efforts to do the follow up," Twinomugisha said.

"Reports from Auditor General have not been acted upon year in year out. What is the relevance of the body?" Andrew Cheptoe from Kapchorwa said.

Discussing the paper titled "How can we sustainably finance accountability institutions to effectively deliver on their mandate" Fredrick Kawooya, Manager Policy Advocacy and Campaign at Action Aid Uganda proposed the harmonization of the accountability bodies to avoid duplication of roles. "We must highlight where the funds should go to ensure value for money," Kawooya said. He informed the audience that \$300m is lost annually due to corruption. "We need to find mechanism to address graft. Without it, I find it defeating for them to function," he said.

Freddy Kabumba an Economist from IGG explained to participants that the agency's fund go towards renting and a solution has been found of constructing its own house which will start soon. This he said will enable the agency to channel more funds to investigations.

Funding Gap

- Based on the ASSIP 2014-2019, the sector has a funding gap of UGX 221.7 billion.
- The biggest funding gap is under the **objective of improving compliance with accountability rules and regulations amounting to UGX 101.7bn**