

District leaders, CSOs want more funds to strengthen service delivery inspections



Participants listen to the CSO presentation during the Local Government Budget Consultative meetings at Ridar Hotel, Seeta, Wakiso today. Inset is CSBAG representative, Imelda Namagga presenting the CSO position paper. |@CSBAG2017

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The Civil Society Movement has implored the government to consider increasing funding for inspection of sectors such as health and education for improved service delivery.

According to the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) under their body, the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), despite the limited funding, there are delays in receiving school inspection and monitoring grants by schools.

“At times, funds for inspection are received when schools are on holiday, thus activity implementation is hurried to beat the accountability deadlines,” Imelda Namagga, from Uganda debt network, a CSBAG member organization said. She made the remarks on Monday at Rider Hotel Seeta, while presenting the CSOs’ position paper on the *challenges to service delivery and budget implementation: a CSOs perspective*, during a budget consultative meeting organized by ministry of finance, for district leaders and members of the civil society.

In their presentation, the CSOs noted inadequate infrastructure, such as latrine coverage, classroom coverage and the dwindling funds for capital development, despite the high demand for staff houses, classrooms and pit latrines. In Wakiso district, the CSOs stated that some schools have poor and dilapidated infrastructure for example Buwambo Church of Uganda primary school in Gombe division, Tikalu COU in Wakiso district and Kirinya primary school in Bweyogerere Kira municipality.

Way forward

As a way forward, the CSOs asked that monitoring and inspection funds be remitted to local governments in July and February respectively for proper planning. In the health sector, the CSOs cited inadequate /poor infrastructure for health centres adding that most of the already existing structures are in a sorry state.

“For instance, in Namayumba HCIV in Namayumba Town council, in Wakiso district, the maternity is very small and cannot accommodate a large number of mothers. It also has no mortuary,” Namagga said. She also brought to the attention of the meeting, drug stock outs, for example at Entebbe Grade B Hospital which has to cater for not only the Entebbe residents, but also the entire Wakiso district.

On agriculture, the CSOs, appealed to the government, to ensure clarity of roles between the production department and Operation Wealth Creation officials, saying the two are not working in partnership since production officers are only invited to witness distribution of inputs. They recommended that OWC officials work under the supervision of production officers, adding that there should be effective coordination among the two parties.

Responses

Responding to the presentation, district leaders commended the CSOs, saying the findings especially on school infrastructure were genuine. “CSOs, have raised pertinent issues concerning Kirinya ward. This issue of the dilapidated pit latrine at Kirinya Primary School Bweyogerere has been a major concern, but we have since fixed it,” Frank Ssemukuya, the speaker Kira municipality said.

He asked the government to consider increasing funding for inspection of the education, health and agricultural sectors for better service delivery. Lubega Kajura, the District health officer Nakasongora district appealed to the National Medical Stores to consider delivering only drugs requested for by the health centres.

He noted that most of the times, NMS delivers drugs which are not requested for by the health centres, which creates drug stock-outs. However, representing the minister of finance, the commissioner finance in the ministry of finance Urban Mbulamuko told the local government budget consultative meeting that there isn’t enough money for procurement of drugs, saying priority will be given to essential drugs.

“It is true medicine is not enough. However, we need to ensure that critical drugs are availed and delivered in time,” he explained. He noted that the government was experiencing challenges with resources given the increasing population in the country. In their presentation, the CSOs urged the government to avoid political interference in resource mobilization by local governments.

“Local governments have failed to raise revenue due to political interference. They cannot collect revenue from small vendors such as gonja rosters, boda boda riders and milk sellers,” Namagga said. They recommended that the government rewards best tax performers and penalize the worst performers basing on their potential. The meeting was attended by CSOs, district leaders such as LC5 chairpersons, Chief Administration Officers (CAOs) Residential District Commissioners (RDCs) among other local leaders from the central region.