

CSOs Call for Salary Review Commission, Commend Gov't for Budget Transparency



(L-R) Prime Minister, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, Finance Minister, Hon. Matia Kasaija, Director Budget, Kenneth Mugambe visiting the CSBAG stall during the Service Excellence Exhibition at Kololo Airstrip earlier today | @CSBAG 2019

“...CSBAG’s partnership with Ministry of Finance and URA is testimony that Civil Society and Government can work together for a common goal.”

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) under their umbrella, Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), have implored Government to institute a salary review commission to harmonize salaries of public servants.

According to the CSOs, setting salaries for public servants including MPs, will greatly help eliminate salary disparities in the country.

“Institute a salary review commission so that everybody including MPs can have salaries that benefit us,” Julius Mukunda, the Executive Director

CSBAG said. Mukunda, made the remarks this morning at Kololo airstrip, during celebrations to mark the National Budget week ahead of the National Budget day on June 13. In his remarks at the event graced by Prime Minister Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, Ministers of Finance, Matia Kasaija and David Bahati, Mukunda commended Government for opening up spaces for citizens to participate in the national budget process, through which CSOs across the country are now able to influence Government Budget decisions at various levels.

“We are glad to report that for FY 2019/20, Government availed to us 118 Budget spaces which we engaged from Local Government to National level. These included the Sub county Budget conferences from October to December 2018, National Budget Conference held in September 2018, and the District Budget Conference,” he said.

He noted that following the CSOs’ monitoring of the budget performance in 244 facilities in the health, education, water and social development sectors, service delivery and accountability issues have been addressed by Local Governments ranging from procurement of desks for schools, repairing cold chain facilities, addressing sanitation concerns in schools and health centres, among others.

“This is testimony that when citizens are mobilized and organized to follow up on services promised by their government, there are better development outcomes,” Mukunda said.

Coming on board for the first time, the CSOs welcomed the partnership (Ministry of Finance and URA) exhibited this year to commemorate National Budget Month. According to Mukunda, the partnership is testimony that Civil Society and Government can work together for a common goal.

“Fellow citizens and CSOs actors, this National Budget month presents us an opportunity to showcase our contribution in promoting budget accountability in Uganda. We encourage government to continue this with this gesture beyond 2019 and in different regions,” he said.

In his speech, Prime Minister Rugunda commended the CSOs, and different Government Ministries and Agencies for working hard to improve accountability and service delivery.

Accounting for 2018/19 budget performance, Rugunda said that Government had registered success in infrastructure, energy, social services, education and agriculture sectors.

“In the education sector, 92% of the parishes have got government aided schools and literacy levels have increased to 74%,” Rugunda explained.

He added that the government had also registered an increase in the kilometers of paved national roads, from 3,50kms (14.6%) in 2008 to 4,55km (21%) in 2017/18 financial year.

On his part, Matia Kasaija, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development told stakeholders that the government had decided to introduce the Budget week, to ensure accountability and transparency in the budgeting process.

“Taxpayers are entitled to know how their taxes are utilized, and I want to say that the implementation of the 2018/19 National Budget has been a success,” Kasaija said.