

PPDA, CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNER ON ACCOUNTABILITY

By Moses Kigongo

In a move to deepen transparency in Uganda's public procurement system, the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) has entered into a partnership with the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG). The collaboration launched last week is designed to strengthen the oversight of government projects, reduce corruption and empower citizens to take an active role in safeguarding public resources.

While delivering his remarks, Aloysius Byaruhanga, PPDA's director of performance monitoring, described the partnership as a "critical bridge" between government institutions and communities.

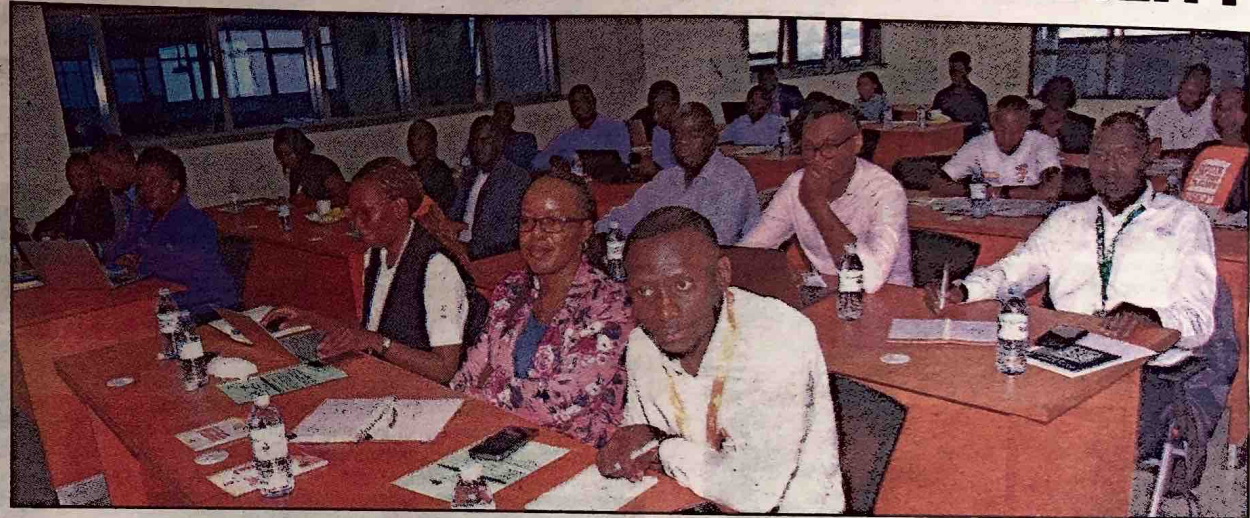
"We have decided to bring CSBAG on board because we want the community to work with us – since they are the ones always on the ground. They will complement our oversight work in areas we cannot reach directly," Byaruhanga said.

He underscored the importance of community leaders, especially local councillors, as vital actors in overseeing government contracts for infrastructure projects, such as hospitals, roads and schools.

"We want the community to take centre stage in demanding transparency and holding contractors accountable. These projects are funded by taxpayers and are meant to benefit the public, not to enrich a few unscrupulous individuals," Byaruhanga added.

He expressed concern that some PPDA field officers had been operating in isolation, treating their responsibilities as private rather than public. He also called on CSBAG to lead community sensitisation efforts and to educate citizens about their

CSBAG and PPDA members who witnessed the partnership launch at PPDA head offices on Nakasero road while listening to the remarks from their officials



right to access information and their role in monitoring government contracts.

To further support this citizen-driven accountability, Byaruhanga introduced the Contract Monitoring System (CMS), which is a digital innovation launched by the Government with support from development partners, such as GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation).

The CMS is a mobile and web-based platform that allows citizens, CSOs and local leaders to monitor government contracts in real-time. Through features like GPS tracking, multimedia reporting (photos and videos), and One-Time Password (OTP) verification, the system enables quick and credible documentation of project progress or deficiencies.

"We want compliance, zero corruption and, above all, more citizen participation in PPDA activities, especially those related to monitoring



Mukunda

public expenditure," Byaruhanga said.

Since its rollout, CMS has been piloted in districts across Uganda, including Karamoja, where community monitors have used it to track over 20 government-funded

projects. The system has already led to the identification and correction of several irregularities, including incomplete school buildings and poor-quality construction works.

The integration of CMS with community oversight mechanisms is expected to reduce wastage, enhance service delivery, and instil public confidence in government projects.

WHAT CSBAG SAYS

Speaking on behalf of CSBAG, executive director Julius Mukunda commended PPDA for extending the olive branch to civil society organisations, many of which have traditionally been viewed with skepticism by public institutions.

"We are happy to be brought on board in the fight against corruption in the public sector. For long, some government entities have treated us with suspicion, but this partnership signals a new era," Mukunda said.

He emphasised CSBAG's readiness

to provide accurate and evidence-based reporting to inform advocacy and decision-making processes.

"We have already started documenting cases where government projects were either abandoned midway or never implemented at all, despite having budget allocations. This is the kind of information we will bring to the table," he added.

Mukunda also expressed optimism that the CMS would serve as a powerful deterrent to corruption in contract awarding processes.

Uganda loses billions of shillings annually due to procurement irregularities, contract mismanagement, and poor accountability in public spending. Efforts by oversight institutions such as the Office of the Auditor General, Inspectorate of Government, and Parliament's Public Accounts Committee, have helped flag issues but often come in after the damage is done.