



UDN'S PERSPECTIVE ON REGIONAL BUDGET CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCES: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

UDN is a vital member of MOFPED's Budget Working Group and actively participates in budget consultative conferences. These conferences are critical in enhancing transparency, oversight, and public involvement in the budget process. Uganda has made commendable strides in these areas, and the regional conferences have the potential to yield positive results in the upcoming Open Budget Survey. We highly value MOFPED's dedication to listening to the views of citizens. Therefore, we strongly recommend implementing the following suggestions to maximize the budget's effectiveness.

Increase Budget Allocation to LGs to at Least 40%

Out of the Ugx 52 Trillion, over 70% is to be retained by the Center for budget of different Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and the paltry 25% is allocated to Local Governments. According to UBOS more than 70% of Uganda's population lives in rural areas while about 30% live in cities especially Entebbe Wakiso and Kampala. The greatest social economic service delivery point of need therefore falls in rural areas, and this is where the rural poor who are unable to pay for services stay.

Demonstrate to LGs That Their Views and Proposals Matter

For the last so many years that MOFPED has organized Regional Budget Consultative Conferences, government officials have always moved to regions and presented papers, and offered opportunity for LGs to make submissions. Many concerns and proposals have been made by LGs and CSOs hoping that at least some of the proposals might find their way through the final budget. The challenge has been that MOFPED always gives a budget ceiling and an already formulated structure with little room for accommodation of new ideas or budget line issues peculiar to LGs.

Capitalize School Feeding for Quality Education

46% (about 21 million) of Uganda's population are children. Research has shown that net enrolment for primary education stands at 91% with a completion rate of 51%. School dropout rate stands at 45% and higher in girl child. This is mainly due

to the following:

A) Lack of good feeding and nutrition for cognitive capabilities and is dire in Northern Uganda and karamoja regions, b) Child labour, cultural reasons and c) Early pregnancies and child marriages.

UDN applauds the MoES for the hybrid schools feeding policy. We appeal for an expeditious process into a fully costed and operationalized policy .

Equip LGs more and make Decentralization Meaningful

The recent elevation of 10 municipalities to city status was a bold giant step in the right direction by the short legged government, if resource envelope is a metric to go by. The new cities still remain with challenges but we cannot retreat from the big decision – so we make do with what we can progressively marshal. In the coming budget therefore we call for provision of some road equipment units especially to all new administrative units (including Cities, Municipalities and Local Governments; and fully maintaining all existing equipment.

Programme Based Budgeting Yet to Take Root Across the Board.

While there are pros and cons to one or the other of the two government approaches to planning and budgeting, depending on which school of thought one subscribes to, MOFPED's decision to migrate from sectorial planning and budgeting to Programme Based Budgeting PBB, when it comes to these regional budget conferences, apparently PBB has not yet taken root. This may need to be streamlined across the board for consistency by all budget cycle stakeholders.

Public Debt – If We Must, and Have Borrowed Let's Utilize the Funds Optimally

As UDN we believe optimization of debt resources for development, rather than contraction of public debt and the money staying redundant instead of immediately being utilized for the scheduled purposes, yet we cannot escape the attendant repayment of associated interest and principle. While in previous budget cycles we have severally witnessed cases of low burn rate due to a number of absorption inefficiency, in the next budget cycle we call for maximization of existing deployment of debt resources. The recent case of using such monies to purchase road equipment units was commendable, and such actions should be the norm rather than isolated cases.

UDN IN PICTURES



UDN/SCIU conducted joint Monitoring Visit in Karamoja to access Community schools that need coding



Mercy Owine, Save the Children Staff—Moroto during the monitoring of Community Schoos In Napak District.



UDN participated in the Regional Budget Consultative Meeting in Mbarara District

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