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IS THE PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH TO PLANNING AND BUDGETING FAILING?

INTRODUCTION

In the Financial Year (FY) 2020/2021, the government of Uganda adopted the programmatic approach to planning and budgeting as the implementation approach for the third National Development Plan (NDPIII), to replace the sector-wide approach.

This approach was chosen because it enables formulation of national priority development objectives and realizes these objectives through corresponding national programs formulated and implemented in a coherent, coordinated and participatory manner to ensure sustainability.

The NDP III covers the period between 2020/2021- 2024/2025 and under this plan, there are 20 programs of government that were designed to cover the development issues we face as a country and these include; human capital development, agro-industrialization, mineral development, integrated transport infrastructure and services, tourism development, sustainable development of petroleum resources, private sector development among others.

The program approach focuses on implementation of the NDPIII programs on delivery of common results and is expected to increase collaboration among government departments in the implementation of government activities and hence reducing the duplication and wastage of resources.

Over the past three years, the government has made efforts to fully transition from the sector wide approach to programmatic approach. However, with one year left to the end of the NDP III, several challenges have been highlighted regarding the implementation approach to planning and budgeting and this raises questions about full alignment of the approved budgets to programmatic approach to planning and budgeting.

The Auditor General in his report on budget performance for the FY 2022/2023 noted that the current legal framework does not fully support the programmatic approach. The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA-2015), and the Public Finance Management Regulations (PFMR-2016) still referred to sectorial committees, and sector budget framework papers which was inconsistent with the programmatic approach.

He also noted that resource allocation is still not based on program priorities and yet program working groups are expected to allocate resources based on program priorities within the different entities.

It was also noted that Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Local governments did not fully participate in the development of the Program Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs) which affected ownership of these PIAPs by the entities. The entities, both MDAs and LGs have therefore struggled to prepare program-based Budget Framework papers (BFPs) which has affected the implementation of the programmatic approach.

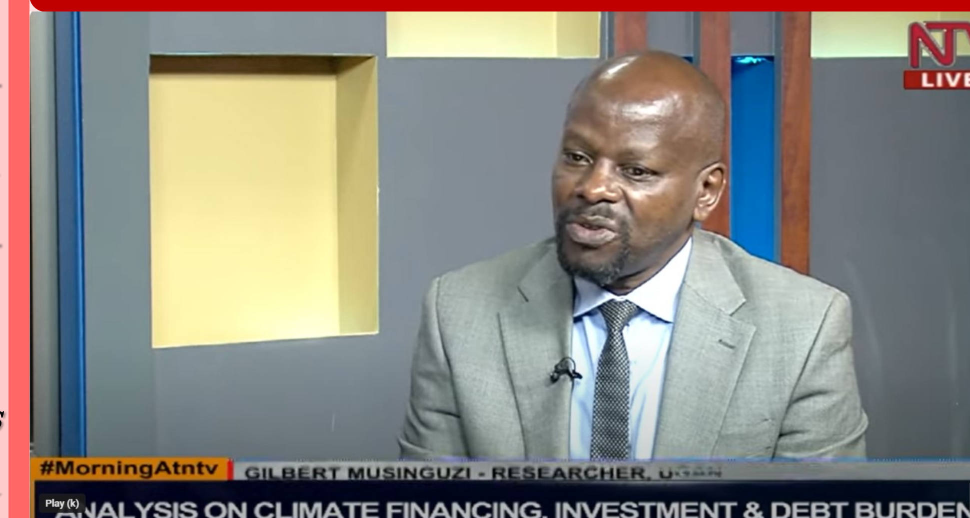
The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is responsible for the overall coordination of the NDPIII programs. However, the OPM has not effectively executed this role mainly due to limited resources and lack of staff to undertake the monitoring.

As the NDPIII nears completion, ***is implementation of the NDPIII projects possible?*** The delay in the implementation of these projects could cause a carry over to NDPIV which could crowd out new projects.

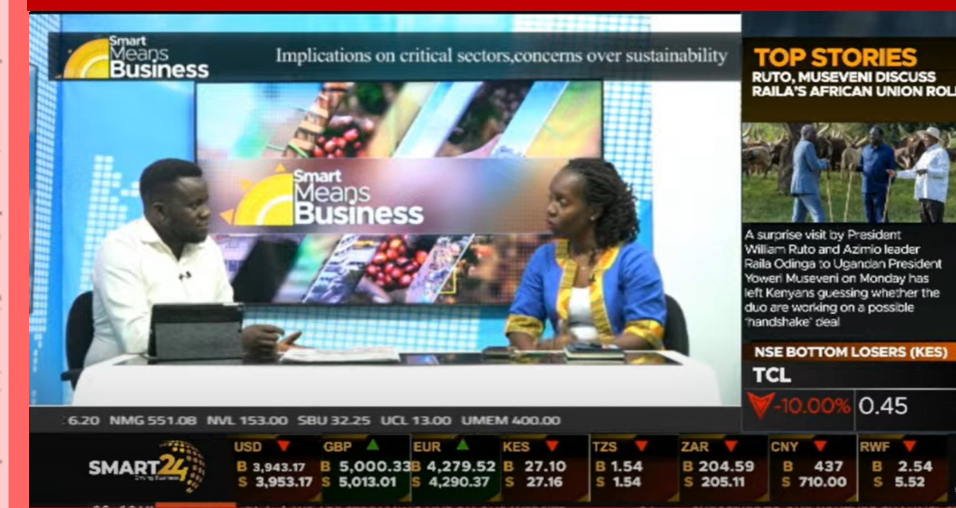
With all these areas of concern, it is clear that the programmatic approach was prematurely adopted hence the delay in the implementation of the NDPIII programs. For complete alignment of the programmatic approach to planning and budgeting to be achieved, the following measures should be taken; Strengthening OPM with more resources to ease monitoring and evaluation of NDPIII in the remaining period, ensuring that resources are allocated based on the different program priorities, training of MDAs and LGs by the National Planning Authority on the use of the PIAPs for successful adoption of the programmatic approach to planning and budgeting, and also ensuring that amendments within the existing legal framework are expedited to facilitate full alignment.

Quote "*Out of the 1076 outputs reviewed by the Auditor General in FY 2022/2023, only 401 had so far been fully implemented, 583 partially implemented and 92 not implemented. This was attributed to the late release of funds, delays in undertaking procurements, weaknesses in contract management, delayed completion of works, staffing gaps among others.*"

UDN IN MEDIA



Watch more on climate financing, investment and devd burden click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV24KtVbbv0



Watch more on the implications on critical sectors, concerns, over sustainability : Click on the link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBPbfa2JTzc

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