

UGANDA LAUNCHES FY2025/26 NATIONAL BUDGET MONTH: A CALL FOR INCLUSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION



On May 29th, 2025, the Government of Uganda officially launched the National Budget Month (NBM) for FY2025/26 at the Uganda Media Centre, under the theme: **“Full Monetization of Uganda’s Economy through Commercial Agriculture, Industrialization, Expanding and Broadening Services, Digital Transformation and Market Access.”** The launch, attended by UDN, top government officials, civil society organizations (CSOs), media, and development partners, marked a critical

moment in Uganda’s journey toward inclusive economic transformation.

Anchoring the Budget in National Priorities

According to Hon. Matia Kasaija, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the FY2025/26 budget is anchored in the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV), with a vision to grow Uganda’s GDP tenfold from USD 50 billion to USD 500 billion by 2040. The government’s strategic investment focus is on ATMS (Agro-industrialization, Tourism, Minerals including Oil and Gas, and Science & Technology), supported by enabler interventions such as peace and security, infrastructure, and human capital development.

However, as highlighted by the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), current allocations to these ATMS priorities remain modest only 5% of the budget. For instance, agro-industrialisation received UGX 1.8 trillion (2.6%), and tourism only UGX 427 billion (0.6%), a disparity that risks undermining the ambitious economic growth targets.

Strengthening Public Investment and Service Delivery

A major highlight of this year’s NBM was the official launch of the National Public Investment Management (NPIM) Policy. The policy is designed to enhance the efficiency, value for money, and timely completion of public infrastructure projects. “Every shilling invested must deliver real value,” stated Minister Kasaija, citing persistent inefficiencies in project implementation such as the Busega-Mpigi Expressway, which has faced delays and cost escalations due to poor



planning.

Patrick Ocailap, Ag. Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury (in picture below), emphasized that successful implementation of the budget requires effective stakeholder engagement throughout the process from planning to execution, monitoring, and feedback. Budget Month, therefore, includes regional dialogues, media engagements, and CSO-led forums aimed at demystifying the budget and bringing it closer to the people.

Civil Society’s Role: Accountability, Climate and Equity

UDN in collaboration with other CSO’s reiterated their commitment to transparent and accountable budget processes, particularly as Uganda rolls out its first year of NDP IV. CSOs lauded the government’s efforts in finalizing the Costed Service Delivery Standards (CSDs) and passing the PIMs Policy, both of which can improve service delivery and reduce inefficiencies.

However, concerns persist. The CSO statement raised alarms over:

- **Overly ambitious domestic revenue targets** (UGX 37.2 trillion), despite Uganda’s historically low tax-to-GDP ratio.
- **Rising domestic borrowing** (up 21.1% from FY2024/25), which strains private sector growth and increases interest obligations.
- **Stagnating or reduced funding to local governments**, which threatens service delivery at the grassroots level, especially in critical sectors like health and education.

On climate action, UDN and other CSO members applauded Uganda’s achievement in surpassing its FY2024 climate finance target (USD 552.3 million vs. USD 500 million), but called for actual budget outturns rather than mere tagging. They stressed the need for local government involvement and institutional capacity-building to implement climate-sensitive programs effectively.

Building a Just and Equitable Future

Hon. Kasaija underscored that transparency and inclusion remain central to Uganda’s budget journey. “A responsive budget process is one that leaves no one behind,” he stated, acknowledging CSOs as key partners in promoting budget awareness and accountability. The government has worked closely with civil society since 2018 to open up fiscal spaces for public engagement a model that has helped increase budget literacy, civic empowerment, and ownership across communities.

Conclusion

As Uganda begins to implement the FY2025/26 budget, all stakeholders, government, civil society, development partners, and citizens, must work together to ensure the budget translates into meaningful outcomes. National Budget Month provides a crucial platform for transparency, feedback, and course correction, laying the foundation for a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient Uganda

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