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Open Budget Survey Report 2017 – Uganda 2nd in Africa.



4th on the left is Hon. David Bahati (Minister of State Planning) launching the 2017 Uganda Open Budget Survey results and next to him is Mr Yiiga, Christopher (UDN Board Treasurer) at Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development conference hall on 22nd Feb 2017.

UDN in collaboration with UNICEF Uganda, International Budget Partnership (IBP) and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) have released Uganda's Open Budget Survey 2017 results report. The report (Open Budget Survey Index) measures the extent of various national governments' compliance with the standard expectation - Making national budget information publicly accessible and giving citizens opportunities to participate in the national budget processes. The OBS Index report was launched by State Minister for Planning Hon David Bahati on Thursday 22nd February 2018 in the boardroom of Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development.

The Open Budget Survey (OBS) is the universal independent and comparative measure of budget transparency for national governments globally. The report gives an assessment of the degree to which governments of 115 countries provided opportunities for the public to adequately access national budget information and opportunities to participate in their national budget processes in the year 2016-17. OBS Index 2017 reveals that Uganda scored 60%. This score put Uganda at the second best in Africa after South Africa, while at the global scene Uganda was number 29.

Presenting the report on behalf of Civil Society, UDN's Policy and Governance Programme Manager Ms. Imelda Namagga had this to say. Out of 115 surveyed countries none was found to be offering participation opportunities considered adequate. ***"The average global score in public participation was just 12% which is categorized as limited, while***

the Sub-Saharan Africa average was 7%. Only 3 countries (Uganda, South Africa, and Ghana) scored above 20% while 10 countries scored zero."

Commenting on UDN's presentation of the report the MOFPED Director Budget, Mr. Kenneth Mugambe appreciated UDN for taking lead in the OBS together with the International Budget Partnership (IBP) and also participating in an initiative that improves budget transparency and accountability for public expenditure and service delivery in Uganda. He remarked that according to the OBS 2017, ***"Uganda scored 60% on average in budget transparency, which was substantially higher than the global average score of 42%."*** He attributed the good rating to his ministry's commitment to provision of comprehensive and substantial budget information to citizens."

Mr. Christopher Yiiga, (UDN Board Treasurer) said Uganda has made steady progress in promoting budget transparency at national level evidenced by the introduction of the budget website and a budget call center among others. He noted that ***"with such initiatives citizens are able to easily access budget information on line and use it to hold their leaders accountable."*** He called upon MoFPED, legislature and other lined ministries to ensure citizens' participation in the budget process as means of promoting better transparency, accountability in the budget process.

Julius Mukunda (CSBAG ED) was appreciative that Uganda is still the best in the region for Budget transparency however attributed the 60% in OBS 2017 to absence of citizen's budget on the MoFPED website, adding that ***"Uganda can improve its overall score of budget transparency by publishing a Citizens Budget online in a timely manner."***

Hon. David Bahati (Minister of State Planning) said ***"There is an improvement in engaging citizens unlike in the 70's when there was no budget to discuss."*** He noted that the budget should be open in order to advance accountability and ensure there is delivery on services. ***"Money they budget for is for Ugandans and they deserve to know how money is being budget and used."*** Acknowledging that being in the 2nd in the continent and getting CSOs appreciation was no mean achievement, the Minister further pledged that government will continue to be transparent in terms of budget by even taking budget engagements to sub counties and districts.