

Forum for Women in Democracy

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The goal is poverty eradication

The strategic goal of the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) is to fight absolute poverty to less than 10% by the year 2017 through the implementation of the poverty eradication action plan (PEAP).

The Ministry endeavours to implement sound economic policies and reforms, and maintain macro economic stability together with the promotion of both the financial and private sector, with the aim of creating a conducive environment for economic development.

Due to the concerted efforts of MFPED, trade opportunities like the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA); Everything But Arms (EBA) have been opened for Ugandans to take advantage of. The strategy adopted for this “production for export” requires expansion, diversification, quality and adding value to exports.

In pursuance of its mandate MFPED, implements activities for both women and men. This provides us with a tentative basis for suggesting that the sector is at best gender neutral. There is, however, need for FOWODE to embark on building partnership with Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), MFPED on how best data can be collected and packaged to reflect gender concerns that are addressed through the various policy initiatives, programmes and projects, especially the PEAP.

In the course of this FOWODE research, it was apparent that key officials in MFPED are under enormous time pressure as they undertake their national budget responsibilities. There has been less “engagement” and/or “ownership” of this study than had been anticipated.

There is need to integrate gender guidelines into the budget preparation and execution to ensure that MFPED engenders its functions, mandate and goal. There is also need to:

- Conduct sex disaggregated benefit assessments of policies;
- Conduct gender sensitive evaluation of public expenditure;
- Evaluate the gender implications of the macroeconomic frame work as well as the strategy for transformation of the economy.

Where as some data in MFPED addresses gender concerns like census statistics, departmental operations of areas that impact on

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men and women such as public administration, tax incidences, macroeconomic parameters have no gender-disaggregated data. It is very important that in future, efforts should be geared towards addressing such gender gaps. The tax policy department (TPD) spearheads the taxation policy planning. The taxation policies are gender neutral, hence there is need for progressive policies that are tuned towards empowering women to address the gender concerns arising out of the differentiated impact of the tax measures.

Treasury Inspectorate and Office of Accounts as well as Internal Audit play a key role in tracking the disbursements as well as the effective use of the meager resources. However, lack of clear linkage between financial accountability and physical outputs makes it difficult for these departments. Disaggregated data is needed to demystify the apparent neutrality of the budget. It will expose how tariffs, industrial relations, taxation, education policy impact on women due to their different location in the family and in the economy. Therefore, in terms of supervision of government programmes by Treasury Inspectorate and Internal Audit, there is need to refocus from looking at only physical outputs and value for money to include impacts of government expenditure on gender.

Gender analysis of MoFPED

Staff Composition by Gender

The recruitment and promotion of staff is based on merit and the key rule is that to be promoted one should possess a higher degree. Figure I shows the composition of staff by gender at each level.

With a staff establishment of 249, female workers constitute only 17% of the work force in the Ministry. The ministry has both a political and technical arm. There are no female candidates in the political arm; these appointments are outside the mandate of MFPED. The top technical management level comprises of 75% male and 25% female staff. Such gender inequalities are a manifestation of historical factors that inhibit the education of the girl child, other than the employment policy of Government.

At commissioners' level there are 24 staff (22 male and 2 females). Like the top technical management level, appointment is based on pure merit and experience.

At the Principal level, there are 31 members of staff (27 male and 4 female). This is the second highest level of decision making within the departmental set up.

Senior officers at the MFPED are 52 (81% male and 19% female). Senior officers report to the principal officers. They directly supervise the officers in their sections. At the officers' level, only 25% of the staff are female.

Support staff level, gender balance in the posts is almost equally realised with 45% of the staff female while male is 55%. The lower educational backgrounds of women see them occupying the lowly paid jobs. This is a compound result of historical, cultural, socio-economical factors.

Staff Training

In the area of training opportunities, in the FY 2000/01, out of 40 members of staff who had access to training opportunities, 25% were female while 75% were male. The percentile of males accessing training over the last three years has been

increasing at a rate higher than that for females.

WOMEN AND MEN STAFF OF MFPED

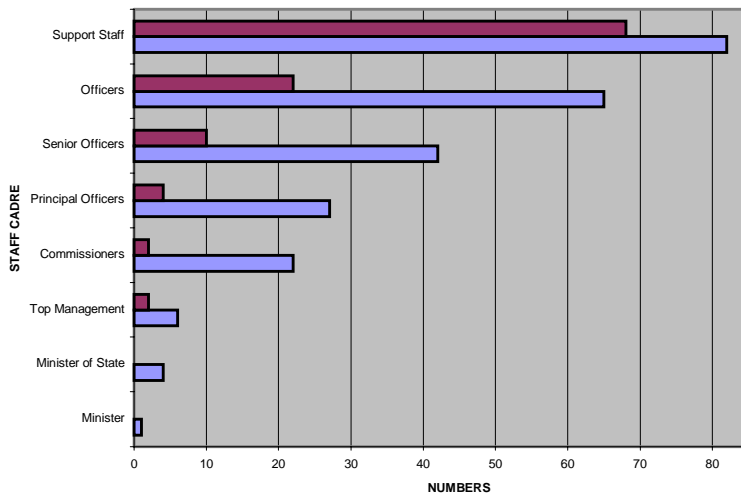


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Ministerial Policy Statement 2002/03

The Ministry's vision is to eradicate poverty by the year 2017. The mission is to promote economic development and ensure macroeconomic stability, and mobilize and allocate budgetary resources in a manner that meets the Government's strategic objective as identified in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP).

Where as the vision may indirectly embrace gender perspectives, the mission statement does not make any reference to gender as a key component of its intent. Inequalities exist between men and women in Uganda as a result of the different socially determined roles, responsibilities and capabilities of men and women. These differences are generally structured in such a way as to leave women in an unequal position in relation to men in their community with less economic, social and political power. This is evidenced by the different levels of access to livelihood resources possessed by men when compared to women. The equally limited access to productive assets, information and education has implications for the trickle down effects of economic development and macroeconomic stability. MFPED's policies are focused at improvement of the welfare of all (Ugandans) women, men, boys and girls. Specific reference to gender in the policies would go a long way in kick starting systematic gender management systems in Uganda.

In the implementation of the MFPED mandate, many reforms have been applied, such as deregulation, liberalization and privatization.

Where as liberation and downsizing of the public sector has promoted private sector investment at macro level, at the meso and micro level this policy does not take into consideration the copying capabilities of men and women. Research shows that job losses of spouses or women themselves have increased as a consequence. Where as deregulation is a means to reduce costs of employers from a gender perspective, limited maternity leave has implications on the health of the working mother and the child. The gender implications of each policy area are as follows:

1. *Maintaining macro economic stability to provide an enabling economic development in both the short, medium and long term.* This is cross cutting and necessary for all the other sectors of the economy to develop. Whilst the benefits of macro economic stability are gender neutral, the main driving force for the implementation of macroeconomic stability is free markets, however, this does not recognize and monetize the care economy notable for it's intense use of female labour.
2. *Promoting rapid, equitable and sustainable economic growth with emphasis on private sector development.* Government has established the Medium Term Competitive Strategy as an avenue for achieving private sector-led rapid economic

growth. This supports the strategic exports initiative and takes advantage of global initiatives like AGOA and the other trade opportunities now available to the private sector. It could be argued that despite the negative effects of liberalization, sustainable economic growth pursued through private sector-led development has provided avenues for providing micro-credit to many rural women and men. However, there is no definite criterion to ensure that both men and women equally benefit from the micro credit.

3. *Monitoring and analyzing the poverty levels and planning for its eradication in all parts of the country in both the short and long term.* This is broadly a gender neutral focused strategy as it specifically targets activities that improve the well being of all Ugandans like water and sanitation, primary health care, feeder roads, universal primary education and adult literacy programmes. No public expenditure benefit incidence has been carried out to evaluate the extent poverty levels of women and men has improved.
4. The tax measures to mobilize internal resources, are gender neutral at most. Externally, some of the bilateral and multilateral funding agreements and programme documents allude to gender as an aspect of development. However, in most cases, the good intentions are never actualized in terms of gender-focused implementation. On the contrary, internal resource mobilization is gender neutral or sometimes gender blind as no analysis is done to discover the differential impact of the measures on men and women. For instance VAT, import and export duty as well as income tax undermine the capacity of both men and women to participate and benefit from the economic growth. This is basically because:
 - i. direct taxes impact not only on the individual members as women and men, but also the purchasing power as households.
 - ii. indirect taxes have gender implications as both men and women consume different products to meet their practical and strategic needs.

There is no mechanism to ensure that specific departmental actions lead to the achievement of gendered outputs and outcomes in the economy. There is no mechanism for: sex-disaggregated beneficiary assessments and public expenditure incidence analysis; a gender aware policy evaluation of public expenditure; a gender aware budget statement; and sex-disaggregated analysis of the impact of the budget on time use and a gender aware medium-term economic policy framework.

Gender Analysis of the Budget Preparation and Execution

Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)

In principal, the parameters used to determine the MTEF are not gender sensitive, although gender concerns may at the end of the day be achieved. Ceilings are determined centrally through the budget process by ensuring that the sum of all sector ceilings are consistent with budgetary resources available and macro economic considerations.

The medium term resource allocation process especially at the sectoral level through the SWG should be specifically made gender sensitive. Once this is done then, the Long Term Expenditure Framework that awaits the PEAP review must be made to allocate resources based on gender needs and concerns.

Budget Call Circular (BCC)

The BCC is a key document in the budget preparation process, but there is no evidence over the years that gender considerations have been mainstreamed into the objectives and principles of this key policy document for budgeting. Additionally, it does not have specific reference to gender to guide the agencies to allocate the available resources with a gender perspective.

Guidelines for Approving Development Projects

The principle role of the Development Committee (DC) is to consider project and programme proposals, and to decide whether they should be included in the Public Investment Plan (PIP). The principal selection criterion is that all projects should demonstrate their relevance to the poverty eradication objective in order to be approved by the DC for inclusion in the PIP. For example, community development, portable water supply, health and primary education projects will have no difficulty demonstrating their relevance to poverty eradication.

Because of the community-based nature of the projects where gender equity is one of the key tenet principle, one can argue that there is implied gender sensitivity. However given that there is no specific reference to gender in analytical tools for reviewing projects one could argue that the process of project approval for including projects in the PIP is gender blind.

In principle the selection criteria is gender neutral as there is no specific parameter to gender focus in terms of target beneficiaries by gender (sex disaggregated data) as well as gendered impact assessment.

Sector Working Group guidelines

The guidelines do not specifically require SWGs to ensure gender sensitive budgets. In the past FY 2002/03, there was no mention of the need for gender sensitive budgets although, it is

mentioned in the guidelines for FY 2003/04. Gender mainstreaming is not consistently treated as a key variable to guiding SWGs to articulate a gender perspective and focus resource allocation to articulate both practical and strategic needs of both men and women. As such the output of the SWG is therefore not gender sensitive. This transforms into preparation and approval of gender neutral or gender blind National Budget Framework Paper.

Poverty Eradication Advisory Working Group Guidelines

The National Machinery for Gender Mainstreaming is represented at the poverty working group and gender is one of the key crosscutting principle, there is little efforts in exploiting this process to accelerate gender budgeting in general. Poverty Action Fund (PAF) programme is defined as a specific intervention or set of interventions within a sector or sub-sector that meets the criteria of delivering services to the poor and reduces poverty.

It is not clear how the PEWG ensures that once an activity is approved for PAF funding, execution of the activity is done with gendered outcomes in perspective. Whereas gender is regarded as a crosscutting issue, the operations of the PEWG do not seriously take advantage of the process. On the other hand also, there is no consistence of the degree to which PEWG is committed to addressing poverty with a gender perspective. For instance, in analysis of the BFPs for financial year 2003/04, PEWG, categorically states that they have decided to de-emphasize gender mainstreaming as a variable while analyzing the sectoral reports.

Budget Execution

Effective execution and monitoring of the budget requires that there are set variables to monitor and determine budget performance. In this case, the annual work plans, quarterly work plans and the cash limits are the key variables used in determining the performance of the budget. Currently, the ministry is preparing budget performance reports on a quarterly, semi annual and annual basis. Where as budget allocation process could have considered gender issues and any virement during budget implementation, they are bound to impact negatively on gender. In the event of limited resources, activities that are gender specific are bound to suffer resource allocations

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