



Press Release, Monday June 7, 2010
General Budget Support cuts: A case of shifting burden to citizens

THE government should protect against misuse and abuse of public resources to safeguard the development partners' budget support contributions for the benefit of the ordinary citizens.

This follows a report from the development partners who agreed to reduce the commitment to the General Budget Support (GBS) in Tanzania for the recently approved budget (FY 2010/2011) to \$534 million. This amount is \$220 million less than the last financial year 2009/2010 commitment.

The development partners announced this in a press release dated on Thursday 13 May, 2010. It not only had the government running around to look for other sources of funds, but also shifted the burden to ordinary citizens.

According to the press release, one of the major reasons for this reduction is the slow implementation of reform programmes, thereby making it difficult to achieve the expected outcomes. Resulting from slow pace of implementation, many targets like reduction of maternal mortality rate from the current 578 to 265 per 100,000 live births by 2010 (as per the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty) are far reaching.

Government's objectives have been difficult and take long to accomplish mostly because allocation of funds has not been efficient and effective across all Ministries, Departments and Agencies. A good example is from the budget books for the year 2008/09 and 2009/2010, where the amount allocated for seminars and related items stand at Tshs 683,747,329,980 and Tshs 530,337,691,576 respectively. As health activists, we find it unworthy to spend such a huge amount of money on unnecessary items like these while we have more demanding areas in the primary health services to concentrate on.

Misuse and abuse of public resources should stop immediately. Under the current financial situation, the government must improve its performance for the better of the country. Evidence of such issues is documented in the reports of the Controller and Auditor General. An example of this is found in the audit report for the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare for the year ended June 2008 and June 2009 of which Tshs. 325,574,300 and Tshs.77, 707,817 respectively were paid to the so called 'ghost workers'.

Sikika therefore, feels that the government should avoid unnecessary suffering of citizens by making sure that transparency and accountability is upheld when it comes to the allocation and implementation of budgets in order not to shift the burden to citizens.

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