



*Press release, Monday 7 February 2011*

## **Make budget books available on time!**

Timely publishing of national budget information to the general public and legislators, by the government, is a vital step towards increasing transparency in the budgeting process. It also serves as a model for other countries all over the world.

A speech presented by Mrs. Monica I. Mwamunyange, Commissioner for Budget, on the 7th of December 2010, highlights that detailed information about budget allocation, execution, and medium term focus is obtained in various documents including Medium Term Framework (MTEF); Budget Digest; MKUKUTA Budget Books Volume I-IV; are available on the MoFEA's website ([www.mof.go.tz](http://www.mof.go.tz)).

But, a visit by Sikika on the website on Friday reveals that all the above-mentioned books of financial year 2010/11 are not available on the said website, something that is counterproductive as it deprives the general public the chance to monitor and participate in the budgeting process.

Sikika also noted with great concern that it has become a norm for Members of Parliament (MPs) to receive budget books late. As per Article 96 of the Parliamentary Standing Orders (2007 Edition), MPs need to have received copies of government's budget estimates twenty one (21) days before a Parliament budget session starts.

In addition, the government should share the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) documents with MPs. It is in the MTEFs that some levels of budget details are found. Usually, budget books present highly aggregated figures hence MPs may either unknowingly approve highly inflated budgets for some activities or approve funding for lower priority activities.

To enable MPs to make informed decisions when approving the budget in the forthcoming fiscal year, the government is urged to make the 2011/12 budget estimates available to MPs 21 days before the Bunge budget session starts. To enable citizens to follow budget discussions in the Parliament and possibly advise their representatives, the government should not only post the 2011/12 budget estimates on the Bunge website before the Finance Minister reads the Budget speech, but also simplify it so that it is understandable to anyone who reads it.

After the budget has been passed, the government should borrow a leaf from countries such as Uganda, who have already started making the budget books available to the public through the government website, by posting the budget books and documents on the website.

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