

Press Statement

Tsh176million squandered through congratulatory adverts!

After the 31st October 2010 general election, various government departments and parastatal organizations spent Tsh 175, 639,750 on 217 congratulatory messages to winners, in the form of advertisements which have been published in various newspapers and other forms of media from the 8th of November 2010 to the 8th of December 2010.

Who was congratulated?

According to a research project conducted by Sikika, a non-governmental organization dealing with health governance issues, the bulk of the adverts were put in place to congratulate the winning presidential candidates both in Zanzibar and the mainland. Most of them started pouring in after the swearing in ceremony held on the 6th of November 2010. A total of 132 adverts were published exclusively congratulating presidents at a cost of Tsh 108, 239,300 while a total of Tsh 25,350,500 was spent on 32 adverts congratulating both the Presidents and Prime Minister. Six adverts were published congratulating the Presidents, Prime Minister and Ministers at a cost of Tsh 4,863,000

Where did the money come from?

In the research, Sikika explains how the adverts proved to have devoured taxpayers' money as organizations that placed the adverts are directly funded by the government. The National Development Corporation (NDC) was the highest spender as it paid Tsh 10,185,900 for eight adverts, while the President's Office (MKURATIBA) was next on the list as it spent Tsh 9,574,300 for 16 adverts. Parastatal Pension Fund was next on the list as it paid Tsh 8,356,700 for 12 adverts. This is just a mention of a few of the organizations that spent money on these congratulatory adverts.

Who received how much?

Findings indicated that Tanzania Standards Newspapers Ltd received most of the money through advertisements, receiving, Tsh 88,430,900 in revenue, followed by IPP media solutions which received a total of Tsh 31,575,600, and Mwananchi Communications, which received a total of Tsh 31,350,000. Business Times Limited received a total of Tsh 13,816,250 and New Habari Ltd received a total of Tsh 10,075,500, while Free Media Ltd received Tsh 1,512,000.

Problems in the Health Sector and what the money could buy

Irenei Kiria, the Executive Director of Sikika, highlighted the problems crippling the health sector and what the money could do. "Such amount of money could be used for developmental issues in areas such as health and education. For example, the health sector is crippled by countless problems that include lack of human resources, finances, medicines just to mention three", he said.

Sikika has been in the forefront in reminding the government to do away with unnecessary expenditures as it recently, in collaboration with Policy Forum, released a brief on [unnecessary expenditures](#).

Recommendations from the research

In the research, Sikika elaborates that sending or publishing of congratulatory messages does not in any way benefit the taxpayers, Instead, the organizations should focus on their mandates and engage in activities that benefit the general public rather than spending money on the unnecessary luxury of congratulatory messages.

Also, citizens on the other hand must make sure that they don't turn a blind eye while their money is being abused. Instead they must keep their eyes open and deal with such problems that deprive them a lot when it comes to service delivery.

Using this research, Sikika appeals to the government to stop abusing taxpayer's money and consider channeling it to better use; otherwise unnecessary spending will become a norm. In other words, the government should remain committed to its promise stopping unnecessary spending for the benefit of the tax-payers and channel the money into development projects.

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