



Press Release, 12 June 2013

Felicitations for making budget books public

Sikika commends the **Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs** for uploading the budget books on its website on time. The recent availing of budget information on the Ministry's website empowers citizens to follow the budget discussions and advise both the government and Members of Parliament (MPs) to address the citizens' pressing needs.

In the past, access to government budget books has not been systematic and in time. For several years, Sikika and other civil society organizations have repeatedly called for the government to publish the budget books online together with a user-friendly version.

These calls have been answered as the Ministry of Finance uploaded the budget books volume 2, 3 and 4 on the website www.mof.go.tz. Now, the budget books have become public documents, describing how much Tanzanian Shilling the government intends to mobilize and earmark for the various public institutions in Tanzania.

Because this budget information is critical for development, Sikika encourages all citizens to take the opportunity by visiting the Ministry of Finance's website and reflect on critical questions like their welfare and development of our country. Thus, to foster participatory development, the government needs to keep promoting information sharing:

1. The budget books should be posted on the website in a user-friendly format. Currently, they are published in PDF format, which is difficult to use if one wants to analyse the data.
2. Volume 1 of the budget, which is about revenue estimates, should also be uploaded on the website to allow citizens to compare both proposed revenue and expenditures.
3. Budget books should be uploaded on the website early before the parliament starts discussions to allow voters to advise their respective MPs on priorities.
4. According to the World Bank report published in 2012, only 11% of Tanzanians use Internet. To promote citizens accessing the budget books posted on the website, providing internet access in rural and remote areas is important.

The budget can only serve its citizens if it reflects their needs. Therefore, Sikika calls for everyone to; **make your voice heard!** Tell your MP to ensure that the 2013/14 budget avoids unnecessary government spending. In the proposed 2013/14 budget, for example, the government plans to spend:

- Tshs.360 billion for allowances, which is a 15% increase from the previous financial year;
- Tshs.163 billion for travels, which is a 11% increase from previous financial year;
- Tshs.79 billion for workshops, a 20% increase from last financial year;
- Tshs.24 billion for hospitality, which is 19% increase from last financial year;
- Tshs.71 billion for fuel and lubricants, a 6% increase from last financial year;
- Tshs.18 billion to purchase new vehicles, a 10% less than last financial year.

Overall, Tshs.714 billion is allocated for such expenditures in the upcoming government financial year 2013/14. These are expenditures with continuous annual growth despite the government's intention to control unnecessary spending since 2010.

As the Minister for Finance is expected to present the overall 2013/14 government budget plan on 13th June 2013, MPs should be keen to scrutinize and advice the government to cut down unnecessary expenditures and increase areas of direct benefit to citizens such as medicines, water, roads, education, the fight against HIV/AIDS etc.

Once again, we applaud the Ministry of Finance for uploading the budget books on its website, on time!



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