

MPs decry delays in getting budget documents

● House Clerk says cause was printing problems

By Patrick Kisembo

LEGISLATORS, attending the 20th parliamentary meeting, have expressed concern over delays in receiving copies of the government budget estimates, it was learnt yesterday.

Karatu Member of Parliament (MP) Dr Wilbrod Slaa, told this paper from

Dodoma yesterday that none of the MPs had received any copies.

"As we speak, none of us has any document of the budget estimates. This makes it difficult for us to discuss the budget and other parliamentary issues," Dr Slaa explained.

He said he did not know what had caused the delay in distribution of the documents.

According to the Parliamentary Standing Orders (2007 Edition), MPs need to have received copies of the government budget estimates 21 days before a Parliament budget session starts.

When asked for clarification, National Assembly deputy speaker Anne Makinda referred this

Continued on Page 2

MPs decry delays in getting budget documents

From Page 1

reporter to the Clerk of the National Assembly.

For his part, Dr Thomas Kashililah said the delay to get the documents was normal and it was not the first time to happen.

Kashililah said it was not correct to say the MPs did not have the copies because they had the documents which they used when debating parliamentary issues in their committees.

"What we are doing now is to bind committee documents and we will distribute them. These documents will not be used today but later," he said.

He however, admitted that

they had some problems with the printing department.

On the budget to be tabled today, he said the MPs were going to use the speech of the Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs' during discussions, adding that there would be no other documents apart from what the minister would have submitted.

He said the office was to have begun distributing some of the documents yesterday but did not assign a specific time when they would be given to the parliamentarians.

Yesterday Sikika executive director Irenei Kiria told the media that MPs were supposed to be given

copies of the budget 21 days as it was stated in the parliamentary standing orders.

Kiria said when budget documents were availed to MPs 21 days before the session as stipulated in the Standing Order, they should be publicly posted on the parliament website to allow citizens to follow debates in the House.

"In this way, the government would have fulfilled its responsibility to enable citizens to be informed of events of importance to them as per Article 18 of the Constitution," he noted.

Guardian, Thus 10, June