

Poor performers in gender and equity denied money

By Cecilia Okoth
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Finance minister Matia Kasaija has said no ministry, department or government agency shall have their budgets approved if they do not meet the 50% mark of implementing gender and equity.

"My ministry is very strict on this. If a ministry or department does not get that pass mark, I will not issue a certificate. And permanent secretaries and executive directors who do not present the certificate for gender and equity compliance cannot have their budgets approved by Parliament," Kasaija said.

The minister made the remarks during a gender and equity stakeholders forum at Sheraton Kampala Hotel yesterday, where he also launched the national training curriculum and manuals for technical officers.

Kasaija said whereas the pass mark of 50% was set by Parliament to establish the gender and equity content for ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), there were still other sectors that do not attain this mark, while some just pass marginally.

"Gender and equity planning and budgeting does not mean a separate budget for women and marginalised groups, but broadly an inclusive budget that addresses the different development concerns for all. Hence its importance in inclusive economic growth. We do not want to leave anybody behind and, therefore, every Ugandan must be given the opportunity to make money and become rich," he said.

In February 2015, President Yoweri Museveni assented to the Public Finance Management Act. Provisions of gender and equity budgeting of the Act,

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oblige MDAs to address gender and equity issues in the budget framework papers, ministerial



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policy statements, specify measures, allocate budgets to address the different needs of men and women, people with disabilities, older persons, youth and disadvantaged and remote regions for all inclusive development.

Poor performers

While appearing before

the Parliament budget committee on Wednesday, Sylvia Muwebwa, the Equal Opportunities Commission chairperson, said 12 MDAs risked missing out on budget allocations for failure to comply with gender and equity requirements.

Whereas a total of 131 MDAs presented their ministerial policy statements, only the gender ministry emerged best, scoring 88%. The Inspectorate of Government also met the 50% pass mark.

Those that performed below average included the Law Development Centre (26%), Uganda Cancer Institute (29%), Uganda Virus Research Institute (24%), Uganda Investment Authority (27%) and Uganda National Oil Company (31%).

Others included Uganda's missions in Tanzania (43.0%) and in Abu Dhabi (36%), Lira

University (40%), Masaka Referral Hospital (37%) and Uganda Financial Intelligence Authority (40%).

The committee chairperson, Amos Lugolobi, who represented Speaker of Parliament Rebecca Kadaga at the launch, said technical persons in all MDAs needed to be trained to ensure that they are able to undertake gender and equity planning and budgeting at all levels.

"This is a huge task that needs substantial resources. While government has provided funding to undertake gender and equity assessments, there should be more funding for capacity building, monitoring and evaluation at national and local government levels," Kadaga said.

She called on development partners and donors to support the process of strengthening gender and equity programming in Uganda.