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Govt report ranks health sector lowest

Scorecard. With Prime Minister Dr Ruhakana Rugunda presiding over yesterday's meeting, Cabinet ministers had their departments scrutinised ahead of the budget conference.

BY IBRAHIM MANZIL
imanzil@ug.nationmedia.com

KAMPALA. The health sector ranked lowest in budget absorption at 65 per cent of its annual budget for the Financial Year 2016/2017 as government concluded a two-day internal assessment.

With Prime Minister Dr Ruhakana Rugunda presiding over yesterday's meeting, Cabinet ministers had their departments scrutinised ahead of the budget conference.



Waiting. Some of the patients wait for drugs at Awach Health Centre IV last Friday. PHOTO BY JOHN OKOT

Health sector

In Financial Year 2016/2017, only 56 per cent of the Health ministry's budget [translating to Shs708b] was released, out of which only 65 per cent was absorbed, from 87 per cent in the previous Financial Year.

On drugs out of stock in the sector, the report blamed "depreciation of the Uganda Shilling against major international foreign exchange where the suppliers' contracts for medicines and health supplies are denominated in foreign currency."

The Health Minister, Dr Jane Ruth Aceng, said whereas the Ministry is grappling with major challenges, there have been improvements in life expectancy and maternal mortality.

Ministry of Agriculture

The Ministry absorbed 98 per cent of its Shs673b national budget in Financial Year 2016/2017, up from 86 per cent of their Shs451b for Financial Year 2015/2016. In a sampling that saw 30 districts assessed for a comparative study, households that have three meals a day decreased from 83 per cent to 69 per cent.

National households that simply access one meal a day have also increased from 16 to 27 per cent of the population. 4.6 per cent of households are facing food crisis as they go without any meals.

Lands, Housing & Urban Development

Only 65 per cent of its Shs147b was absorbed in the Financial Year 2016/2017, lower than the stellar performance of 96 per cent that was registered in 2015/2016.

Low performance was attributed on "Government titles processed [standing at zero out of the planned 60], Ministry zonal offices equipped and operational [9 out of 13] and lease applications processed for different institutions [300 out of 600].

Ministry of Education

Whereas the Ministry spent 99 per cent of its 2015/2016 Shs2 trillion budget, the Financial Year 2016/2017 saw a decline in absorption to 86 per cent of its Shs2.2 trillion budget.

Enrollment in primary schools increased from 8.4 million pupils in 2013 to 8.6 million in 2017.

More 100,000 girls enrolled compared to boys, with the numbers standing at 4.2 to 4.3 million pupils in favor of girls.

In terms of primary education quality, 60.2 per cent of Primary 3 pupils rated proficient in literacy in 2016/2017 compared to 56 per cent the previous year. More girls completed primary school in 2016 at 63 per cent compared to boys at 60 per cent.

Water and environment

The Ministry has maintained a 99 per cent absorption rate in 2016/2017, similar to what the case was in 2015/2016.

It is noted that 325 boreholes were constructed, surpassing the planned 270, while 47 valley tanks were constructed against the planned 30.

Minister Sam Cheptoris said construction of valley tanks and boreholes across the country will continue.

Social Development

Out of the sector's Shs184b budget for the Financial Year 2016/2017, 99 per cent was spent, slightly down from 100 per cent the previous year.

The Ministry had its Youth Livelihood Program fund to thank for the progress registered, reporting 77 per cent of recovered resources out of a total disbursement of Shs85b benefitting 114,000 youth.

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