



PRESS RELEASE

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TI-UGANDA CALLS FOR INCREASED TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PROCUREMENT OF “ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES” DURING THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID 19 IN UGANDA.

Transparency International Uganda would like to commend and appreciate Government of Uganda for its courageous leadership in the ongoing fight against the global pandemic (COVID 19). In a similar accord, we recognize the efforts and sacrifices made by frontline workers for example; Doctors, Nurses, Security personnel among others putting themselves in harm’s way to ensure that this pandemic is mitigated in Uganda.

As the country is struggling to keep up with this pandemic, a number of social and economic reforms have been put in place to include among others;

On Tuesday, 31st March 2020, The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development tabled before parliament a supplementary budget of 284 Billion shillings to help in the fight against the Covid 19 pandemic in the country. This was to be distributed across different sectors as follows; 62 billion to the health sector, 59 billion to disaster management, 36 billion to local government, KCCA, 30 billion and 14 billion to the ICT sector. In addition, on Saturday 4th/04/2020, the OPM rolled out the food rations distribution program in Kampala and Wakiso being the pioneering districts.

Most of the activities being undertaken during this pandemic require procurement of different items like Personal Protective Equipment, IEC materials, food stuffs among others by multiple agencies within the government to address the crisis, contain the outbreak and treat patients. Being a state of emergence, most of the procurement may not follow the lengthy paper-based procurement procedure but instead be classified as emergency procurement. While emergency procurements are provided for under the PPDA Act, they must remain publicly accountable for every contract concluded and funds spent. That is, contracts and relevant documentations to these procurements must be available to enable one track if the vital materials were provided as contracted and in-turn inform the public how public money is being spent.

Unfortunately, corruption often thrives during times of crisis, particularly when the oversight institutions are incapacitated to fully execute their work. For example; they are faced with challenges like inadequate funding and restricted movement of staff due to the lockdown. The country has experienced instances of mismanagement of public funds during crises. For example; Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) was in 2018 faced with incidences of gross mismanagement,

fraud and corruption in Ugandan refugees operations with allegations about numerous theft of relief items for refugees, among others.

How the government will manage the emergency public procurement will play a major role in determining how COVID-19 shall be contained and how many lives shall be saved.

It's based on this that Transparency International Uganda calls upon government to execute an Open and transparent contracting process in the procurement of the essential items during the pandemic. This will allow red flags of corruption to be more easily spotted, leaving corrupt actors less space to hide.

The organization also urges the general public to report any corruption tendency to our toll free line 0800333044 and any other contacts provided by the government agencies mandated to fight corruption in the country.

About TI Uganda

Transparency International Uganda (TIU) is a national chapter of Transparency International, the global coalition against corruption. TIU is a registered NGO with the Uganda NGO Bureau contributing towards a corruption free Uganda where the citizens actively condemn corruption and demand for accountability while leaders and public officials uphold the principles of good governance.

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