



PRESS RELEASE

WE CALL FOR MORE TRANSPARENCY IN THE UTILISATION OF COVID-19 FUNDS

KAMPALA, June 10, 2020: Covid-19, is a viral respiratory infection that has led to the loss of thousands of lives and has led to the hospitalization of millions more. It was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on March 11, 2020 and in Uganda, the first case was registered on March 21, 2020.

According to the Ministry of Health, 657 people have contracted the disease, 118 have recovered from it and is monitoring some 7,777 contacts, there have been no fatalities. So far, 137,808 samples have been tested.

Uganda has subsequently put in place mechanisms to curb the spread of the virus including; mandatory quarantine for all returnees, night curfew, food distribution to the most vulnerable, a creation of several seclusion zones, closure of schools and places of worship and a revamp of various medical centres to act as hospitals for those affected.

To address the pandemic, the Government mobilized resources both locally and internationally. A number of supplementary budgets have been passed by Parliament and a number of institutions that include the ICT ministry, Internal Affairs, the Police, Security and the Ministry of Health have been beneficiaries of these budget allocations.

A number of agencies including the U.S Government, USAID, International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, Ireland, Denmark and local donations have been received in all, the Government of Uganda has realized funds to the tune of over Ugx.8tn to fight Covid-19.

However, there is no clear accountability of how these funds have been spent. The Government Procurement Portal is devoid of breakdowns of these funds and there are no plans indicating exactly how these monies will be spent.

For instance, funds for personal protective equipment (PPEs) had been allocated, but the increase in the number of health workers contracting covid19 has come at a time when health workers have persistently complained about insufficient PPEs.

There is still limited transparency regarding the use of the funds already disbursed and there are fears that these funds may end up lost through corrupt activities. The secrecy of the procurement of medical supplies to address the pandemic is also not helping the fight against Covid-19.

During the Covid-19 lockdown it emerged that funds earmarked for the procurement and distribution of food was allegedly misused, insufficient amounts of food were procured, poor quality food was distributed and the procurement procedures were flouted.

It also emerged that there was corruption in the implementation of the presidential guidelines on the lockdown as these were selectively applied and there is still no clear resolution to the MPs who had spent the sh20m erroneously awarded to them to monitor service delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic in Uganda.

Additionally, reports we are receiving from citizens across the country indicate that; there is no clear criteria for distributing donated food by the District Taskforces, citizens have been made to pay for travel permits and educational materials distributed to districts are insufficient and in some cases one copy per subject for every sub-county.



Despite Ugx. 165m being released for District Taskforces to coordinate Covid19 interventions, this money has not trickled down to the sub-county taskforces. Most have remained redundant, even in the border districts where their interventions are critical.

Call to action

The Government of Uganda should publish all received donations, grants and loans and show how they have been used. This information can be published in newspapers or government online platforms.

We call upon the Government to desist from taking on new financial obligations until a full accountability of the funds already disbursed has been realized.

We also call upon the Government to expedite the prosecution of officials implicated in financial mismanagement and abuse of office during the Covid-19 pandemic and where possible recover all monies lost and hold all those responsible for misuse of office.

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