



Weekly

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Last week, ActionAid in partnership with the Uganda Police, launched the Corruption free Police stations campaign. The campaign is aimed at recognizing honest officers but also rallying the public to report all officers who ask and accept bribes in return for services. Log on to www.ipaidabribe.or.ug and see the trending most corrupt sector at the moment. Welcome to this edition of the Weekly!

I pay my taxes, so should my MP!



Pictures show hundreds of activists who marched on the Kampala streets to say no to the Tax injustice that the Members of Uganda's Parliament want to promote. The event was organised by ActionAid together with its partners under the Tax Justice Alliance. The message was simple, clear and precise; I pay taxes on my allowances, so should my

Hundreds of Ugandans last week took to the streets of the capital Kampala to protest against a move by Members of Parliament to exempt themselves from paying income tax off their allowances.

Over 500 citizens and activists from different parts of the country assembled at Railway headquarters grounds and marched to UMA show grounds in Lugogo from where they read a statement to the president asking him to stop the greed exhibited by Uganda Legislators.

With the police band in the lead, and several police officers guiding protestors throughout the journey, they marched on the streets carrying placards and banners, with messages castigating MPs for plotting to evade taxes.

'I pay my tax why not you,' read one of the inscriptions on a manila placard, among so many other messages. Protestors told onlookers that tax evasion is both undemocratic and irresponsible.

Mugoya Wilson, a protestor from Iganga district said that by exempting themselves from paying taxes, legislators are proving that they do not care about the welfare of the rest of the country. He added that payment of taxes should be a responsibility of every citizen, specifically those holding positions of leadership.

"The whole country can't survive without paying taxes. That is why you see everything whether you grow your maize or you want to sell, there is what we call a production tax. That is why we are here. They are saying they won't pay tax, why should they not pay?," Mugoya asked rhetorically!

Mary Kazibwe, a protestor from Luwero district said that failure to pay taxes affects the tax base from which government gets resources to extend services to its people While Ruth Logose, a councillor from Kibuku district asked the electorate to recall those members of parliament who are bent on sidestepping their responsibility.

"On the issue of MPs refusing to pay tax like on UGX 4 million constituency allowance, these people do not even come to the constituencies to talk to people. We want them to pay tax. The blood of government is tax," Logose said.

Mbabaali Sulaiman from Lyantonde district said Ugandans need to work collectively to stop the move.

"MPs should know that this country is not for them alone. once elected to parliament, their mandate is to pass laws that are beneficial to all Ugandans. We're not fighting them but we're fighting for the cause of the whole nation."

Fredrick Kawooya, the Policy and Campaigns Manager at ActionAid said that there are good signs that the tax exemption will fail since the president and the public are against it.

"Am happy with our president because he has returned it [Income Tax Bill] back to parliament. Let us appeal to our area Members of Parliament to stop the greed and honour their tax obligations."

Whereas the constitution allows for MPs to determine their emoluments, article 93(a) restricts parliament from proceeding upon a bill and or a motion on financial matters especially on taxation unless it is moved on behalf of government.

Kawooya says it is unfair that MPs in 2012 passed an amendment where employees who earn over UGX 10 million pay 40% in taxes (Pay as you earn). He says the march is a nationwide campaign to support the president's stand on income tax.

The bill has been returned to parliament by the President for the second time. According to Article 91(5) of the Constitution, when the president returns the bill twice and it is passed for a third time by parliament with the support of at least two thirds of MPs, the Speaker causes a copy of the bill to be laid before Parliament and the bill shall become law without the assent of the President.

A mile in her shoes.....

In the campaign dubbed "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes", men donned women's shoes and carried handbags in a match that started at the Railway grounds through the streets of Kampala to Simbamanyo building- the headquarters of the Ministry of Gender.



Uganda police officers last week joined ActionAid and other Women Rights Activists on the streets of Kampala in a march intended to campaign against Rape, Sexual Assault and Gender Based Violence.

In the campaign dubbed "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes," male officers donned women's shoes and carried ladies' handbags in a journey that started at the Railway grounds through the streets of Kampala to Simbamanyo building- the headquarters of the Ministry of Gender later ending at railway grounds with a public dialogue.

The activity was intended to highlight causes, effects and remediation to sexualized violence against women and the troubles women go through by virtue of their gender. This was part of the 16 days of activism campaign against Gender Based Violence.

Several men (including policemen) who were at the forefront of the campaign said that the experience was fun but hectic stating that walking the mile in women's shoes changed their perception about womanhood.

Mahamya Modaias, a tourist policeman, who was part of the campaign said Gender Based Violence still persists because of men who look at women as subordinates. He adds that the evil can be eliminated by treating women as human beings with rights and dignity.

Lukwago John, another Policeman said that his participation was to represent men who want to make better families. He called for tolerance from either side adding that the burden of womanhood is rather too much.

Alex Kikayi, a women Rights activist blamed social unfairness on Gender Based Violence and on faithful partners in relationships and marriages. He said support and persistence from either side can change the story.

After the march, participants gathered at railway grounds in the city centre for a dialogue on GBV. Hodan Addou, the United Nations country representative to Uganda said that men are duty bound to show that they are not only listening but taking the required action in communities to end Gender Based Violence. He added that although everyone has a role to play in ending Gender Based Violence, men hold the key to the goal.

Nivatiti Nandujja, the National Women Rights Coordinator at ActionAid called upon all stakeholders to work towards delivering women and girls from all forms of violence. She called upon the police to take keen interest at the high rates of gender based violence and facilitate the process of ensuring that women attain justice.



Pictorial of the walk in her shoes event.

Mining sector scores below average-scorecard



While Uganda is making progress in the Oil and gas sub-sector, the mining sub-sector is struggling, according to the first ever annual development scorecard focusing on oil, gas and minerals released last week at Sheraton Hotel in Kampala.

During the Breakfast meeting organised by ActionAid's Extractives Governance Unit, it was revealed that the general performance of the petroleum sector stood at 65%. This lacklustre performance was due to the fact that even though progress was made in the establishment of institutional, legal and reporting

frameworks, the enabling environment and safeguards were let down.

The scorecard considered four issues; the institutional policy and legal frameworks, the reporting practice, safe guards and control and the enabling environment.

During the launch, it was revealed that there are several gaps in the current policy, institutional and regulatory framework for the subsector.

"Various laws and regulations are not yet in place. These include lack of a regulatory framework that provides oversight of the licencing process, lack of a clear and due process to appeal licencing decisions in the oil and gas sector as well as lack of the legal obligation by the Uganda National Oil Company and petroleum fund executives to disclose their financial interests in oil and gas activities", said Dr Drake Kyalimpa, the lead researcher of the score card.

Harriet Gimbo, the Programs Director at ActionAid stated that while ActionAid is working to turn this around and ensure accountability and good governance in the extractives sector, it requires concerted efforts by Government, industry and development partners.

"The mining sub-sector is faced with a number of challenges and its performance score is unsurprisingly below expectations. We must work to ensure that the poor scores(40%) exhibited in the components of reporting practices and enabling environment are improved if the sector is to benefit all Ugandans."

The meeting closed with the official launch of the score card by officials from ActionAid and the National Planning Authority.

Above-Left: AAU's Harriet Gimbo and Don Bwesigye Binyonyi of The Africa Centre for Energy and Mineral Policy(Right) speak during the breakfast meeting.

Below: Don and Harriet were joined by officials from the National Planning Authority to launch the scorecard.

AAU Board holds last meeting of the year



The last board meeting of the year was successfully held last Saturday with 90% attendance by the members.

The meeting commenced with members observing a moment of silence for the victims of the clashes in Kasese. Unfortunately, Ms Orietta Varnelli, a board member who represents the international secretariat on the AAU Governing Board was unable to make it to the meeting. Her family was directly affected by the earthquake in Italy and are still on the recovery path.

On a brighter note, the board approved two policies, the Finance Policy and the Procurement & Disposal Policy that management with oversight from the board had worked on for the better part of the year. Congratulations to the Finance Director and the Administration Coordinator together with their respective teams who worked tirelessly and ensured that the policies were ready for final presentation and approval.

The focus of ActionAid Uganda board and management in the coming year is fundraising. A strong message from the board was management to brace for tougher times ahead as the operating environment is becoming more challenging in regard to fundraising. They advised that management take a more pragmatic approach in its fundraising strategy, to tailor strategies that would appeal to its funding partners and to focus on sustainability not only for the organisation but for the communities as well.

Members of the AAU Governing Board and the General Assembly during the Annual General Assembly mid this year.(File Photo)

Week Ahead

- ⇒ The Country Director is in Kathmandu Nepal to participate and speak at a meeting on Participatory Democracy.
- ⇒ The Programs Director will be in Kalangala this week to participate in the participatory review and reflection processes (PRRPs) and the plan for the ActionAid phase out from the district.
- ⇒ ActionAid will join Centre for Rehabilitation of Survivors of Acid and violence (CERESAV) in a charity walk for to denounce intentional acid attacks and burns of women and girls in Uganda.
- ⇒ The Eastern Uganda regional anti-Corruption Music Festival will take place this Thursday in Soroti.