

# Promoting good governance

By Gilbert Kidimu

**T**here are continuing concerns over the maintenance of democratic space and the respect of fundamental human rights. Civil society operates relatively freely, and is warmly welcomed when delivering services, but regularly experiences harassment and intimidation at a local level when acting in an advocacy role, particularly when investigating mismanagement or corruption and social and environmental protection issues.

Uganda's NGO Policy (2010) is remarkably progressive, but civil society is increasingly under scrutiny by the authorities, and proposed amendments to existing legislation may further erode their space to operate.

The media faces similar constraints when reporting on sensitive political issues and is subject to intervention and control in these instances.

Under the 11th European Development Fund, EU support to good governance in Uganda has increased substantially, with grant support of up to sh65.7b.

As the EU's "Agenda for Change" makes clear, good governance is essential for inclusive and sustainable development.

"The objectives of development, democracy, human rights, good governance and security are intertwined with the private sector, civil society and local authorities all having an indispensable role to play," reads a statement on the European Union's website.

"The participation of citizens in decision-making processes and their access to accountability mechanisms, is fundamental to the promotion of transparency, sustainable development and poverty reduction," it adds.

The EDF support will focus on three main areas: strengthening the function of the State in its financial, democratic and social accountability, with particular emphasis on sound public financial management.

"The national reform agenda for public finance management and improved accountability has been pursued over the last years with some significant results, but is still far from being completed," reads the statement.

Secondly, it will focus on strengthening transparency and accountability as pillars of good governance, through support to oversight mechanisms, control functions and anti-corruption initiatives.

"The ability to hold to account those who govern or are in position of authority is crucial for better governance."

Thirdly, it will focus on improving access to fair and equitable justice, safeguarding human rights and promoting democracy and citizens' participation in civic and democratic processes.

The EU promises to continue to support electoral reform initiatives from both state and non-state actors through both its political dialogue and development cooperation.

"Civil society, including the media, will remain an important focus, as an independent and constructive partner of government in addressing good governance issues. Gender equality and women's empowerment is an essential component of democratic development and will be emphasised in all our programmes."

## Financial management and accountability

The Government of Uganda (GoU) has over the past two decades pursued strategic reforms in Public Financial Management (PFM) geared towards improvement in efficiency, accountability and transparency in the



Ugandans queuing to vote in the general elections on February 18. Below the EU chief elections observer Eduard Kukan (right) chats with a voter in Kampala

**PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AND THEIR ACCESS TO ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS, IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE PROMOTION OF TRANSPARENCY, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION**



management of public resources.

A new PFM Reform Strategy was launched on August 28, 2014. Supported by the EU, it provides strategic guidance for PFM reforms over a four-year period from July 2014 to June 2018.

According to the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, the strategy was informed by the findings of various PFM studies that noted, among others, that while the previous PFM strategy was aligned with the National Development Plan (FY 10/11-14/15) and remained relevant on the whole, weaknesses still existed particularly in the areas of compliance with set rules and regulations, as well as budget credibility and control.

A number of recommendations were proposed to address the gaps, and were adopted in the new PFM reform strategy.

## Strengthening Uganda's anti-corruption and accountability regime

DFID Uganda appoints a service provider (SP) to deliver one component of its Strengthening Uganda's Anti-Corruption and Accountability Regime (SUGAR) business case. This

component provides targeted technical, equipment and operational support to State institutions in Uganda that are involved in the deterrence, detection and sanctioning of petty, bureaucratic and grand public sector corruption.

This component is referred to as the "SUGAR Anti-Corruption Chain programme" (SUGAR-ACC) and comprises outputs 1-5 of the SUGAR business case. Delivering the outputs and contributing to the outcome of the Business Case is the purpose of these terms of reference.

The programme is meant to last five years starting March 2015.

## Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS)

The Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) is an ongoing reform process through a sector wide approach. It is an innovative approach adopted in 2001, the first of its kind in Africa, involving the administration of justice and maintenance of law and order.

According to the Uganda Prisons Services, it increases communication, coordination and cooperation among stakeholders who collectively implement reforms that have been

drawn from a single policy and expenditure plan, under the leadership of the Government of Uganda. Eleven institutions fall under the sector.

Under the JLOS assistance, the UPS has been able to commercialise maize production on six farms as a cost saving measure to the overall Prisons' food budget and the savings made have used to improve inmates' and staff welfare.

In terms of specific programmes under the 11th EDF focal sector, the EU will continue its support to the government's Financial Management and Accountability Programme (FINMAP).

It will also provide long-term technical support accountability institutions through a joint programme with DFID SUGAR. Further interventions in the justice, law and order sector (JLOS) are foreseen.

The EU will also provide extensive support to civil society organisations and to strengthening engagement between civil society and the Government of Uganda, including continuing its support to the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), a multi-donor pool fund supporting good governance in Uganda.