



Opposition presents alternative Budget

budget in April at the tail end of the 11th Parliament.

What are Opposition's priorities?

The Opposition's budget priorities are organised around four broad thematic areas, each bringing together related sectors under one umbrella.

According to Opposition leaders, grouping sectors in this manner reduces duplication, streamlines planning, cuts bureaucratic bottlenecks and lowers administrative costs across government.

Mr Ssenyonyi argues that this framework provides a practical roadmap for national development.

"Our commitment is to advance policies that genuinely serve the interests of all Ugandans, and we will continue to hold government accountable. Our quest is to see a Uganda where every citizen can live with dignity and purpose," the Opposition budget document states.

The first and most prominent pillar focuses on safeguarding lives. According to the 350-page budget proposal, this includes strengthening healthcare, education, social protection and the general well-being of citizens.

The cluster encompasses sectors such as health, education and sports, gender, labour and social development, local government and the Kampala Capital City Authority.

The Opposition argues that these sectors deserve priority because they represent the areas where citizens interact most directly with the state and where service delivery failures are often most visible.

The second cluster focuses on sustaining livelihoods through economic production and rural development. It covers agriculture, fisheries, trade, tourism, lands, housing, industry, environmental management and urban development.

The third thematic area seeks to strengthen institutions responsible for governance, justice and accountability.

The fourth cluster concentrates on infrastructure and connectivity, including transport, energy, minerals, information and communication technology, East African Community affairs and foreign affairs.

Different from govt priorities

Running under the theme "Safeguarding Lives, Livelihoods and Institutions", the Opposition budget advocates greater invest-



Leader of Opposition Joel Ssenyonyi. IBRAHIM PHOTO/KAVUMA

ment in education, healthcare and agriculture, among other sectors that directly affect citizens.

This stands in sharp contrast to the government budget, which places heavier emphasis on mineral development, industrialisation, science, technology and innovation, manufacturing and digital transformation as the key drivers of economic growth.

Government's budget is built around the theme "Full Monetisation of Uganda's Economy through Commercial Agriculture, Industrialisation, Expanding Services, Digital Transformation and Market Access."

Mr Ssenyonyi argues that while economic growth remains important, government's priorities do not adequately reflect

Meanwhile, the government has indicated that some existing programmes may be revised or withdrawn. One example is the decision to stop paying medical interns.

Health Minister Dr Chris Baryomunsi recently explained that internship should be viewed as part of professional training rather than formal employment.

"It was agreed that internship should be considered a continuation of training because the numbers are also many, given the increasing number of medical schools," Dr Baryomunsi said shortly after the parliamentary vetting exercise.

He added that full employment should begin after completion of internship and qualification as a doctor.

"The policy has been passed and we shall see how it works as we move forward," he added.

Also, the government recently announced plans to stop funding national public holiday celebrations beginning in the 2026/27 financial year, a move many observers will watch closely to determine whether it translates into meaningful savings.

A consistent message

Unlike the government, which has consistently promoted science, technology and innovation as the primary engines of economic transformation, the Opposition has repeatedly prioritised direct investment in citizens.

The approach is not new.

In the 2024/25 alternative budget unveiled in April 2024, Mr Ssenyonyi emphasised efficient service delivery, accountability and zero tolerance to corruption.

At the time, he said, the Opposition's budget philosophy was rooted in the belief that every Ugandan deserves access to basic services, including clean water, healthcare, education and housing, regardless of economic status.

Those same principles continue to define the 2026/27 alternative budget and reinforce the Opposition's long-standing call to the government to rethink its approach to improving livelihoods.

Ultimately, Mr Ssenyonyi believes Uganda already possesses the resources needed to improve economic outcomes if spending is guided by discipline and focused on priority areas.

He has consequently urged Parliament, the Executive and development partners to embrace fiscal discipline and prioritise programmes that improve the welfare of ordinary Ugandans.

Whether government will heed those calls and redirect spending towards programmes that directly tackle poverty, unemployment and the rising cost of living remains to be seen.

OPPOSITION PRIORITIES

- Social Services and Human Welfare
- Economic Production and Rural Development
- Governance, Justice and Accountability
- Infrastructure and Connectivity

the challenges confronting ordinary Ugandans. "Today, many families are struggling with the rising cost of living. Young people are searching for decent jobs and there are concerns about whether public institutions are serving people as they should."