

Event Launch: Open Budget Survey 2015-Afghanistan

Tuesday, September 29, 2015

Park Star Hotel, Charahe Ansari, Kabul, Afghanistan

Summary

Integrity Watch Afghanistan in coordination with International Budget Partnership launched the Open Budget Survey (OBS) 2015 report. The major aim of the event was to provide awareness to the public about status of budget transparency of Afghanistan in Open Budget Index (OBI) in 2015. The main objective of this event was to launch the Open Budget Survey 2015 report which indicates status of budget transparency of Afghanistan in the OBI. The launch also aimed at providing wider awareness on budget transparency, accountability and participation to the participants of the event and through media to the public.

Afghanistan scored 42 of 100 which means in OBI in 2015. It means that the government makes limited budget information publicly available, it does not provide citizens with sufficient information to fully understand the budget and hold the government to account. Therefore, unfortunately due to the decrease of score of Afghanistan in the OBI, and the limited transparency, and accountability Ministry of Finance, Supreme Audit Office, and Budget Commission of Parliament, none of representative of the participated in this event.

Participants:

The participants of the event were government officials, civil society organizations and media.



The event were opened by a power-point presentation by Samirullah Popalzai, Senior Advocacy Officer for Integrity Watch Afghanistan who has conducted this Open Budget survey 2015 for Afghanistan. In this session presented the aim of this survey, its methodology, and the status of budget transparency in 102 countries, regional countries and, especially in Afghanistan which

increased awareness of civil society organizations, journalists, and other participants of this event. During and after this session many questions were raised by participants and responded by the presenter which satisfied the questions of participants.

The second session of this event was a press conference about budget transparency of Afghanistan in the OBS 2015. The panelist of this press conference were Sayed Ikram Afzali, Executive Director, and Samirullah Popalzai, Senior Advocacy Officer of Integrity Watch Afghanistan. “Afghanistan’s fall back in making our national budget systems more transparent and accountable is of great concern,” said Sayed Ikram Afzali“.



In this session not only awareness of the participants increased, but also awareness of public increased about the status of budget transparency of Afghanistan in the OBI 2015 through media. Integrity Watch recommended the following recommendations to the government that should be taken seriously for the rapid improvement toward budget transparency in Afghanistan:

- The Ministry of Finance should produce and publish all key budget documents (Pre-Budget Statement, Executive Budget Proposal, Enacted Budget, Citizen Budget, In-Year Report, Mid-Year Review, Year-End Report, and Audit Report) in soft and hard to be made available widely. The Ministry of Finance should follow the Open Budget Survey guidelines in order to produce the key budget documents in a comprehensive manner for both internal and external use.
- The Ministry of Finance should allow and encourage citizens’ participation at all levels of budget processes, and ensure establishing of bottom-up budgeting to ensure citizens participation, especially while budget formulation, execution, and oversight processes at local, provincial and national levels;
- The Parliament should participate in the budget formulation process and allow and encourage citizens’ participation in the parliament during budget enactment process.
- The Supreme Audit Office should encourage citizens’ participation and awareness before the Audit Report sent to the Parliament for approval, during the consultation with Parliament, and after the approval of the report, and widely reflect the report’s recommendations through social media.

- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) should play a more active role in citizens' awareness on budget issues. CSOs should facilitate citizen's engagement in the budget processes through sharing of information and mobilizing public to hold government accountable through processes such as social audit and accountability.

About the Open Budget Survey 2015

The new report examines the current state of budget transparency and how it has changed over time; the degree to which opportunities for public participation in the budget process are present; and the strength of the two formal oversight institutions, the legislature and the supreme audit institution. The report is based on the International Budget Partnership's Open Budget Survey, the world's only independent comparable measure of budget transparency, participation, and oversight. The Survey is implemented by independent budget experts based in each of the 102 countries surveyed and anonymously peer reviewed by another expert on the particular country's budget. Governments in all survey countries are also invited to review and comment on the results, and many do so.

The 2015 Survey is the fifth round of this global assessment, which was first undertaken in 2006.

Pillars of Budget Accountability

The Survey consists of 140 factual questions that evaluate three pillars of budget accountability. Budget *transparency* is rated by the answers to 109 survey questions, which produce a score between 0 and 100 on the Open Budget Index (OBI). The second pillar is evaluated using 16 questions that rate opportunities for *public participation*. The final 15 questions of the Survey examine the strength of the *oversight* pillar comprised of the legislature and the supreme audit institution of each country, generating separate scores for each.

For the full report and other resources, including country-specific results, please visit:

www.openbudgetsurvey.org