POLICY BRIEF

Women's Economic Participation, Control and Outcomes in Uganda's Monetisation Agenda

A Critical Analysis of Uganda's FY 2026/27 Budget

Malkia Africa Network | June 2026

Budget presented by: **Finance Minister Henry Musasizi**, 11 June 2026, Kololo Independence Grounds

Web: www.malkiaafrica.org

Core Argument

Uganda's FY 2026/27 budget — the largest in the country's history at Shs 84.39 trillion — advances the monetisation agenda with unprecedented scale. Yet women's economic participation is expanding without proportional growth in control over productive assets, and without commensurate economic outcomes. The result is a structural gap between inclusion in the economy and actual economic power. Participation is rising. Control and outcomes are not keeping pace.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uganda's FY 2026/27 budget, totalling Shs 84.39 trillion, is the largest national budget in the country's history — a 16% increase over FY 2025/26. Delivered by Finance Minister Henry Musasizi on 11 June 2026 at Kololo Independence Grounds, it continues the theme now in its third consecutive year: 'Full Monetisation of Uganda's Economy through Commercial Agriculture, Industrialisation, Expanding and Broadening Services, Digital Transformation and Market Access.' GDP is projected to grow by 10.4%, expanding the economy to approximately USD 80.8 billion, partly driven by the commencement of commercial oil production. GDP per capita is projected to reach USD 1,420.

Women are not peripheral to this agenda. They constitute over 51% of Uganda's population, provide an estimated 70–80% of agricultural labour, and represent the majority of participants in Uganda's informal trade and micro-enterprise sectors. Structurally, they are the primary workforce of the monetisation strategy — yet they remain its least asset-endowed stakeholders.

This brief applies a three-layer diagnostic framework — Participation, Control, and Outcomes — to assess whether the FY 2026/27 budget translates women's economic activity into economic power. The Shs 2.4 trillion additional wealth creation investment, the Shs 2.2 trillion Agro-Industrialisation allocation (the highest ever), and the Shs 1.6 trillion Uganda Development Bank capitalisation all expand conditions for participation — without structurally addressing the determinants of control and outcomes. This is a diagnosis of architectural gaps that, at Shs 84 trillion scale, have larger consequences than at any prior point in Uganda's fiscal history.

> ***Core finding: Participation is expanding. Control over productive assets and commensurate economic outcomes are not keeping pace. At Shs 84.39 trillion — Uganda's largest-ever budget — the structural cost of this gap is also at its largest.***

2. CONTEXT: WHAT IS MONETISATION ACTUALLY TRYING TO DO?

The monetisation agenda is a specific theory of economic transformation, not a slogan. It is the organising framework of Uganda's Third and now Fourth National Development Plans. Understanding what it is designed to do and what it assumes is essential for any serious assessment of its gender implications.

2.1 The Five Operational Pillars

As articulated in the FY 2026/27 Budget Speech, the strategy rests on:

- Shifting households from subsistence to market production — the proportion of Ugandans in the subsistence economy has declined from 69% (2010/11) to 33% (2023/24). The FY 2026/27 budget targets a further shift of approximately 15 million people out of subsistence farming.

- Expanding formalisation and domestic revenue — domestic revenue is targeted at Shs 44 trillion, financing approximately 60% of expenditure, supported by new excise duties on fuel, alcohol, cement, cooking oil, motor vehicles, and betting.
- Increasing commercial agriculture and industrial output — Agro-Industrialisation receives Shs 2.2 trillion (the highest-ever allocation), covering agricultural research, irrigation, extension services, and agro-processing.
- Deepening financial inclusion and digital transactions — the Parish Development Model (PDM), covering over 2.6 million households at Shs 100 million per parish annually, receives additional capitalisation within the Shs 2.4 trillion wealth creation increment.
- Broadening market access — through the Standard Gauge Railway and road infrastructure (Shs 8.79 trillion), Uganda Development Bank capitalisation (Shs 1.6 trillion), and enterprise programmes including GROW and INVITE.

2.2 The Central Policy Assumption and Its Flaw

> ***"If more people enter the money economy, welfare improves automatically."***

This assumption holds where participants enter markets as owners of productive assets — land, capital, formal enterprises — with capacity to set prices, retain income, and accumulate wealth. It does not hold where participation occurs as landless agricultural labour, informal traders in oversaturated low-margin sectors, or micro-entrepreneurs without collateral or scale. For a significant proportion of Uganda's women, the second scenario is structurally more accurate than the first.

Uganda's 2015 Public Finance Management Act mandates gender-responsive planning and budgeting across all national expenditures. That legal obligation creates a duty to interrogate, not merely report on, whether the budget architecture serves women as economic agents rather than economic instruments. This brief fulfils that function.

3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: PARTICIPATION, CONTROL, AND OUTCOMES

Standard policy discourse on women's economic inclusion conflates three distinct phenomena: the extent to which women participate in economic activity; the extent to which they control productive assets and the proceeds of that activity; and the extent to which participation converts into measurable, durable economic outcomes. These require different policy levers, different data, and different success metrics.

PARTICIPATION	CONTROL	OUTCOMES
Are women economically active in monetised sectors?	Do women control productive assets and income?	Do women accumulate wealth and reduce vulnerability?

Trade, agriculture, services, informal enterprises, digital platforms	Land tenure, business ownership, credit access, household decision-making	Income growth, asset accumulation, business scaling, bargaining power

The framework's utility is relational. A budget that improves participation without improving control expands economic exposure without expanding economic power. One that improves control without improving outcomes signals market failures or value chain distortions that policy has not yet reached. Both patterns are present in the FY 2026/27 architecture.

DIAGNOSTIC PRINCIPLE
The central question is not: 'Are women economically active?' It is: 'What is the quality, structure, and durability of that activity, and who captures the value it generates?' The FY 2026/27 budget reveals a consistent pattern: investment is concentrated at the level of participation, with inadequate structural support at the levels of control and outcomes.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Participation Is Expanding — But Mostly at the Margins

Women's economic participation in Uganda is high and, under the monetisation agenda, growing. The FY 2026/27 budget will structurally accelerate this: improved transport reduces transaction costs; expanded PDM SACCOs extend credit to previously unbanked parishes; the Agro-Industrialisation programme increases demand for agricultural labour. The volume of women's market activity will increase.

But volume is not the relevant variable. Women's economic activity is concentrated in:

- Low-margin, high-competition informal sectors with low barriers to entry and commensurately low returns.
- Subsistence and semi-commercial agriculture, where women provide the majority of labour but rarely hold title to the land they cultivate or to the proceeds of commercial sale.
- Micro-enterprises with limited capitalisation, weak formalisation, and constrained scalability.
- Sectors where price-setting power rests with buyers — particularly in agricultural value chains where women are producers but not aggregators, processors, or distributors.

The budget's Shs 2.4 trillion wealth creation increment is significant. But UWEP, operational since FY 2015/16, has over its operational period reached approximately 11,256 women's groups covering an estimated 135,000 women. Against a female population exceeding 25 million, and women's agricultural labour estimated to contribute Shs 28+ trillion annually to Uganda's agricultural GDP, the investment-to-structural-impact ratio requires honest scrutiny.

KEY FINDING 4.1

High participation does not equal economic advancement. The budget will increase the volume of women's economic activity without, by itself, improving its quality, durability, or return.

4.2 Control Remains Structurally Constrained

This is the most analytically significant finding and the area in which the FY 2026/27 budget is most architecturally insufficient.

Women own approximately 7% of registered land in Uganda, despite constituting 51% of the population and providing over 70% of agricultural labour. With only 15% of Uganda's land formally registered, the informal land market through which the majority of transfers occur structurally disadvantages women, whose participation is constrained by income levels, legal literacy, and persistent cultural norms around inheritance and marital property.

The consequences cascade. Without land title, women cannot use land as collateral for formal credit. Without formal credit, they cannot capitalise micro-enterprises. Without capitalisation, they cannot formalise or scale. Without scale, they cannot access institutional markets. Without institutional market access, income remains volatile regardless of how active women are in the economy.

The FY 2026/27 budget contains no dedicated women's land titling initiative, no reform to collateral requirements for female-headed enterprises, and no restructuring of PDM SACCO models to account for asset-poor participants. The additional Shs 2.4 trillion in wealth creation is channelled through existing programme architectures that already operate within the same asset-access constraints.

The Shs 2.2 trillion Agro-Industrialisation allocation — the highest ever dedicated to this programme covers research, inputs, irrigation, extension, and agro-processing. Extension service delivery in Uganda has historically reached male-headed farming households at higher rates than female-headed ones. Without an explicit gender-targeting mechanism, this allocation risks replicating, at greater scale, an access pattern that already disadvantages women.

KEY FINDING 4.2

Women are present in the economy but under-owned in its productive assets. The FY 2026/27 budget expands access to credit, markets, and agro-industrial services without addressing the underlying asset deficit that determines whether those products generate or merely redistribute risk.

4.3 Outcomes Are Not Proportional to Participation

The gender productivity gap in Ugandan agriculture estimated at 13% by the World Bank and UN Women costs the economy approximately USD 67 million annually in foregone output. This is a structural gap driven by differential access to inputs, extension, credit, and land. Crucially, it is a gap that commercial agriculture expansion does not automatically close and may widen, if expansion occurs through institutional channels that women cannot access on equal terms.

The FY 2026/27 budget projects 10.4% GDP growth and per capita income rising to USD 1,420. These are aggregate figures. Aggregate growth in an economy where women are concentrated in its lowest-return sectors does not automatically generate proportional improvements in women's economic outcomes. The budget presents no gender-disaggregated growth projections, no gender-disaggregated PDM outcome data, and no gender-disaggregated agricultural productivity targets.

Three specific outcome risks are embedded in the FY 2026/27 structure:

- New tax burden on micro-enterprise. New excise duties on fuel, cooking oil, cement, and plastics, alongside expanded EFRIS digital compliance requirements, increase the regulatory burden on small enterprises. For micro-enterprises operating at thin margins — the majority women-owned — each compliance increment reduces net earnings.
- PDM repayment risk without income security. PDM revolving funds create repayment obligations. Without complementary income-stabilisation mechanisms, seasonal shocks concentrate downside risk on the most asset-poor participants — disproportionately women operating without collateral buffers.
- Value capture in commercial agriculture remains upstream. Women are predominantly producers and labourers. Value in agricultural chains accumulates downstream in processing, aggregation, and retail. Scaling commercial agriculture without addressing chain position scales women's labour input without scaling their value capture.

KEY FINDING 4.3

The monetised economy is expanding faster than women's structural capacity to benefit from it on proportional terms. At Uganda's largest-ever budget, this structural gap operates at its largest-ever magnitude.

4.4 The Monetisation Contradiction

Uganda's strategy assumes: more market activity = more prosperity. This is conditionally true for participants who enter markets as owners of productive assets with capacity to negotiate prices and absorb risk. For asset-poor, price-taking operators in low-margin sectors, this relationship is weak at best.

For a significant share of Uganda's women, the FY 2026/27 budget simultaneously expands market participation — generating income obligations, tax exposure, and compliance requirements while leaving structurally unchanged the asset base from which sufficient returns would need to be generated to meet those obligations.

> ***Monetisation is expanding economic activity faster than it is expanding economic power. The FY 2026/27 budget — at Shs 84.39 trillion, 16% larger than its predecessor — executes this contradiction at a scale Uganda has not previously attempted. Women absorb a disproportionate share of low-return economic activity while high-return positions in Uganda's expanding economy remain disproportionately held by men.***

5. BUDGET ALLOCATIONS: WHAT THE NUMBERS REVEAL

The following table presents key FY 2026/27 sectoral allocations as announced in the Budget Speech of 11 June 2026:

PROGRAMME / SECTOR	ALLOCATION
Security, Governance & Rule of Law	**Shs 10.21 trillion**
Transport Infrastructure (SGR, roads, aviation)	**Shs 8.79 trillion**
Human Capital Development (education + health + social protection)	**Shs 13.5 trillion (total)**
Education & Sports	**Shs 6.66 trillion**
Health	**Shs 5.23 trillion**
Agro-Industrialisation (highest-ever allocation)	**Shs 2.2 trillion**
Energy Development	**Shs 2.07 trillion**
Wealth Creation Programmes (FY2026/27 increment)	**Shs 2.4 trillion**
Uganda Development Bank (capitalisation)	**Shs 1.6 trillion**
Science, Innovation & Technology	**Shs 1.1 trillion**
Manufacturing & Industrial Parks	**Shs 1.03 trillion**
Water & Sanitation	**Shs 1.013 trillion**
TOTAL BUDGET	**Shs 84.39 trillion**

Security receives the largest single allocation at Shs 10.21 trillion — exceeding the combined allocations to Agro-Industrialisation, Energy, Science and Technology, and Manufacturing. The gender implications of this prioritisation warrant ongoing scrutiny under the PFM Act's gender and equity mandate.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Implication 1: Inclusion Is Not Enough

Policy frameworks measuring success by headcounts of women reached by PDM SACCOs, UWEP, or Agro-Industrialisation beneficiary lists are measuring the wrong variable. Inclusion in a market where you do not own productive assets and cannot set prices is exposure, not advancement. The FY 2026/27 scale of investment demands a correspondingly scaled shift in measurement: from participation headcounts to ownership rates, income retention, and asset trajectories.

Implication 2: Formalisation Must Be Capacity-Sensitive

The budget's revenue strategy targets Shs 44 trillion through new excise duties, expanded digital compliance, and broadened tax registration. For enterprises below viable scale thresholds without collateral, formal ownership structures, or market power — formalisation costs may exceed benefits, reducing survival rates in precisely the segment of the economy women disproportionately inhabit.

Implication 3: The Oil Dividend Must Not Replicate Existing Asset Gaps

The FY 2026/27 budget is the first in which commercial oil production is a live fiscal variable. Resource booms historically generate rapid asset price increases in land, formal enterprise, and financial instruments — captured disproportionately by those who already hold assets. Without deliberate policy intervention, Uganda’s oil dividend risks widening the gender asset gap at precisely the moment when closing it matters most.

7. POLICY QUESTIONS FOR THE DEBATE

These are researchable, answerable, and consequential for NDP IV implementation:

- Are women entering the monetised economy as owners, workers, or informal operators and what does PDM’s three-year data now reveal about which pathway predominates?
- Who captures value in women-dominated agricultural sectors and how does that distribution change as commercial agriculture scales under the Shs 2.2 trillion Agro-Industrialisation programme?
- Do new excise duties on cooking oil, fuel, and plastics improve or reduce net earnings for women-owned micro-enterprises at current operating scales?
- What is the gender distribution of Uganda Development Bank loan recipients under the Shs 1.6 trillion capitalisation, and does it include targeting mechanisms for female-headed enterprises?
- How will first oil revenues be structured — and does the fiscal architecture include any gender-equitable asset distribution mechanism?
- Does formalisation under the ‘Kisanja No More Sleep’ agenda improve women’s net earnings or increase their regulatory burden without commensurate return?

Malkia Africa Network generates field-grounded evidence on questions of this nature through its Evidence-to-Influence Engine — structured documentation of barriers faced by women practitioners, business owners, and community leaders across Uganda and the wider East African region.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations address policy architecture, not programme delivery.

Recommendation 1: Shift Policy Measurement

The Ministry of Finance should revise gender and equity compliance reporting under the PFM Act to require: (a) asset ownership rates, not only programme participation; (b) income retention after formalisation and compliance costs; (c) asset accumulation trajectories across PDM and UWEP programme cycles. This is a measurement reform, not a budget line — it requires institutional discipline, not additional fiscal resources.

Recommendation 2: Align Formalisation with Asset Support

The revenue mobilisation strategy must be calibrated to the asset reality of enterprises it reaches. PDM and UWEP credit structures should incorporate verifiable asset-building components alongside revolving loans; simplified compliance pathways should be piloted for enterprises below Shs 10 million annual turnover; and EFRIS compliance costs should not be passed to micro-enterprises operating below viable scale thresholds.

Recommendation 3: Anchor the Oil Dividend in Asset Equity

As first oil revenues enter Uganda's fiscal framework, the government should establish in advance a gender-equitable asset distribution mechanism. Options include: a women's land titling programme co-financed from oil revenues; a direct transfer programme targeting female-headed households below a defined asset threshold; and mandatory gender-disaggregated reporting on the asset distribution effects of oil revenue utilisation within three years of commercial production commencement.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen Women's Position in Value Chains

The Shs 2.2 trillion Agro-Industrialisation investment will generate its highest returns in processing, aggregation, and distribution — the downstream chain positions women currently do not occupy. Policy should map women's chain position in Uganda's five highest-value agricultural export sectors; prioritise collective market structures in sectors where women are primary producers without individual price-setting power; and require gender-disaggregated income distribution disclosure in all publicly co-financed agro-industrial investments.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Uganda's FY 2026/27 budget is ambitious and, in macroeconomic terms, credible. The Agro-Industrialisation allocation is at its highest ever. Infrastructure investment is reducing transaction costs across the economy. The PDM is extending the frontier of financial inclusion. The prospect of first oil revenues introduces a fiscal variable that could, if well-managed, accelerate structural transformation.

What this brief argues is that economic transformation at this scale is not automatically inclusive and that the structural gaps identified here, in control over productive assets and in the capacity to convert participation into durable outcomes, are not self-correcting. They require deliberate policy responses that go beyond programme delivery to interrogate who captures value in Uganda's expanding economy.

> ***Uganda's monetisation agenda is transforming economic activity at scale. Without addressing disparities in control over productive assets and the structural capacity to convert participation into meaningful economic outcomes, the largest budget in Uganda's history risks becoming the largest investment in economic activity without equivalent investment in***

> ***economic power. That gap between engagement and power is precisely where Malkia Africa Network operates.***

REFERENCES AND SOURCES

Primary Budget Documents

1. FY 2026/27 Budget Speech — Finance Minister Henry Musasizi, 11 June 2026 (New Vision live coverage)
2. Uganda Budget 2026/27: Sector-by-Sector Breakdown — UG Standard
3. Parliament Approves Shs 84.39 Trillion Budget — SoftPower News
4. Uganda FY 2026/27 Budget: 16% Rise Year-on-Year — CNBC Africa / Reuters
5. Launch of National Budget Month FY 2026/27 — Ministry of Finance, Uganda

Women's Economic Rights & Gender Data

6. Women's Rights to Land Ownership in Uganda — IGAD Land Programme
7. World Bank — Costing the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity: Uganda
8. UN Women — Financing for Gender Equality, Uganda
9. MGLSD — Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP)
10. World Bank — GROW Project (Uganda)
11. Ministry of Finance — Gender and Equity Planning & Budgeting Guide

MALKIA AFRICA NETWORK
6 Konde Road, Mutungo, Kampala | info@malkiafrica.org | +256 769 637 767
www.malkiaafrica.org