ESID Working Paper No. 121

The shifting fortunes of the economic technocracy in Uganda: Caught between state-building and regime survival?[1]

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June 2019

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ISBN: 978-1-912593-20-0

[1] This paper was produced for the ESRC-DFID project, 'Investigating Pockets of Effectiveness in Developing Countries: A New Route to Building State Capacity for Development'.

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Abstract

Uganda's impressive levels of economic growth over most of the past three decades have often been linked to the performance of its economic technocracy, particularly the government's high-powered Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (MFPED). This paper argues that MFPED (or parts thereof) can indeed be seen as 'pockets of effectiveness', with the Ministry often managing to deliver effectively on its mandate, in a context in which this is not the norm. This can be explained in part by the functional and legally mandated nature of some of the tasks that MFPED delivers and in part by the strong levels of international support and oversight. However, we also find that MFPED's performance has varied considerably over time, despite these favourable factors, particularly in terms of its capacity to control the budgetary process and public expenditure. This variation can be traced to shifts within Uganda's political settlement, which moved from being broadly 'dominant-developmental' to 'vulnerable-populist' in character from the early 2000s onwards. This shift profoundly altered the 'embedded autonomy' that MFPED had previously enjoyed with regards its relationship with State House, in ways that have undermined MFPED's capacity to deliver on its mandate. Despite efforts to regain both power and autonomy in recent years, MFPED remains subject to the politics of regime survival in Uganda, in ways that undermine its effectiveness. Whilst this may loosen the hold of neoliberal economic governance in Uganda and enable alternative perspectives to emerge, the more immediate effects have been to damage prospects for policy coherence and economic growth in the country.

Keywords: Uganda politics, state capacity, pockets of effectiveness, politics of the finance ministry

Acknowledgements: This paper has benefited greatly from the critical inputs of anonymous reviewers, colleagues within this project and officials and advisors with direct working knowledge of MFPED. Particular thanks go to Charles Byaruhanga, Pritish Behuria, Martin Brownbridge, Fiona Davies, Merilee Grindle, Giles Mohan, Michael Roll, Alan Whitworth and participants at numerous project workshops and conferences (e.g. the 2018 African Studies Association Conference in Birmingham, UK). Their insights have been critical in shaping and sharpening the paper, although any remaining errors remain our own. We are particularly grateful to the staff within MFPED who offered their time and insights whilst being interviewed for this project, and also to our other respondents.

Bukenya, B. and Hickey, S. (2019) The shifting fortunes of the economic technocracy in Uganda: Caught between state-building and regime survival? ESID Working Paper No. 121. Manchester, UK: The University of Manchester. Available at www.effective-states.org

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Abbreviations

BoU	Bank of Uganda
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
MFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NRM	National Resistance Movement
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PDRP	Peace Recovery and Development Programme
PFMA	Public Financial Management Act
PS	Permanent Secretary
TSA	Treasury Single Account
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority

1. Introduction

Uganda's Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) has been hailed as playing a critical role in securing the impressive levels of economic recovery and growth that characterised the country's trajectory for much of the last three decades (Kuteesa et al. 2010). The Ministry has been particularly lauded for its capacity to manage the budgetary process (Simson and Wabwire 2016), with international indexes often ranking Uganda as one of the best-performing countries in Africa in this regard (e.g. OBI 2017). Walking around the Ministry, and talking to staff there, feels like a very different experience to doing the same in many other public sector organisations in Uganda. This helps cement the impression that MFPED operates along the lines of what have come to be termed 'pockets of effectiveness', that is, public sector organisations that function effectively in contexts where this is not the norm (Roll 2014). Unlike in many other parts of the country's public sector, MFPED staff arrive to work early, leave late and can identify efforts by the Ministry's leadership to inculcate the kind of 'organisational culture' associated with high-performing organisations (Grindle 1997). The influence of external support is apparent, from the high quality of the facilities and equipment that officials can access, including computers and vehicles, through to the close adherence to neoliberal principles of economic governance (Harrison 2010).

In an expert survey that we undertook in Uganda in late 2017, then, it was no surprise when most respondents identified MFPED as the country's highest-performing civilian public sector organisation.[2]Justifying their response, many drew attention to the Ministry's mandate and its critical role at the centre of government, with Ministry staff themselves noting that they cannot afford to fail. More critical outsiders noted that the Ministry only performs well with particular tasks that are of a logistical nature which they are largely in control of (e.g. around budget execution), and which do not require them to rely on and work through many other parts of government, and also because of the unusually high levels of external oversight and pressure to perform.

Importantly, several respondents also drew attention to MFPED's decline, with one noting that 'Finance would have been (considered high-performing) ten years ago, but not now'.[3] Our deeper investigation of MFPED's performance over time broadly supports this reading. Our evidence suggests the MFPED's performance, with regards to the effective discharge of its mandate over the past three decades, can be understood in relation to three main periods between the 1990s until today: a period of *reform and strong performance* from 1992 until the early-2000s; a period of *decline and capture* from the mid-2000s until 2012; and a period from 2013 to date that we tentatively characterise as involving *partial reform amidst continued decline*. Several performance indicators offer evidence for this trajectory, particularly with regards to the Ministry's declining ability to control the budget process. The

[2] This expert survey involved asking 33 experts on Uganda's public sector (including government officials, donor staff, private sector actors, journalists and academics) to identify the highest performing agencies in the country, to justify their choices and to suggest reasons for the variations in performance level observed.
[3] Senior government advisor, and ex-MoF advisor 6 November 2017.

research challenge is to identify the causal factors that have shaped this uneven performance over time. Michael Roll (2014) has suggested that PoE performance is influenced primarily by three factors: the political economy context; leadership and management; and the mandate of a given organisation. Given that the mandate of the Ministry has not changed during this period, that it continues to attract high-capacity staff and that many of the leading technocrats and technical advisors have been in post throughout the majority of this period, we argue that the explanation for this uneven performance over time lies primarily in Uganda's shifting political dynamics over this period – what we term the political settlement – as closely informed by a changing, transnational political economy context.

Methodological approach

MFPED's official mandate is 'To mobilize financial resources, regulate their management and formulate policies that enhance overall economic stability and development'.[4] To keep the scope of this paper manageable, we focus specifically on MFPED's capacity to effectively manage financial resources through a budgetary process that is directed towards economic development. The key indicators of performance that we use to evaluate MFPED's performance in this report (and other ministries of finance within this comparative study, which includes Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Zambia), are (a) the overall rate of economic growth and (b) the effectiveness and legitimacy of the budgetary process that it is responsible for formulating and discharging.[5] Clearly, economic growth is shaped by many factors that are beyond the control of a finance ministry, and we try and account for these as far as possible when discussing shifts over time. The budgetary process, which is much more tightly under the control of finance ministries, is evaluated in terms of public expenditure patterns over time, with a particular focus on deviations from state policy objectives and plans, and through international efforts to measure the quality of the budgetary process through 'objective' indicators. Importantly, to evaluate finance ministries through reference to the budgetary process is also to evaluate the context within which finance ministries operate, particularly in terms of domestic political pressures. The capacity of finance ministries to navigate their changing political context – or what is referred to as 'political management' within the literature on pockets of effectiveness in developing countries (Roll 2014) – thus becomes a key attribute of effectiveness.

Our analysis links these performance data to an in-depth qualitative investigation of MFPED's performance over time. This included over 40 key informant interviews with a range of senior and mid-level ministry employees and advisors (current and previous) of the Ministry, close observers from other parts of government, members of parliament, officials working with international development agencies and civil society representatives. Interviews were undertaken in mid-2016, late 2017 and parts of 2018, and the transcripts were systematically analysed via a 'framework' approach that included a deductive focus on themes drawn from the conceptual framework, whilst also leaving room for new themes to

[4] http://www.finance.go.ug/mofped/our-mandate

[5] We deal with MFPED's capacity to mobilise domestic revenue and enhance economic stability in separate studies of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and Bank of Uganda (BoU), respectively.

emerge inductively. Fieldwork was also undertaken within the Ministry in February 2018 to generate some direct insights into the working practices and organisational culture of the Ministry. By weaving together the evidence of objective performance indicators with insider accounts of how the Ministry was governed and how it operated from within, we offer a triangulated account of its performance over time. Our mixed methods approach was further strengthened by the use of process-tracing to identify some of the causal mechanisms at work, whereby we identified key moments of both crisis and reform and then traced these back to the key drivers at work. This in turn involved locating MFPED's shifting performance over time in relation to Uganda's changing political and political economy context since 1992, the year when the Ministry started to undergo systematic reforms. In particular, we argue that MFPED's trajectory must be understood in relation to Uganda's transnationalised political settlement, which from the early 2000s onwards has been increasingly defined in terms of a politics of regime survival, rather than developmentalism. Our paper builds on, but also goes beyond, existing accounts of how MFPED has performed over time (e.g. Kuteesa et al. 2010), both in terms of bringing the story up-to-date and telling it from a more independent 'outsider' perspective.

The next section briefly outlines some of the broad linkages between Uganda's political settlement, growth and public sector management over time, with reference to the role played by 'pockets of effectiveness' (PoEs) in this process. Section 3 examines the objective sources of performance data for MFPED from 1992 to date, and identifies an uneven trajectory that can be broken down into three main periods. Section 4 examines MFPED's performance over time, tracking how issues of bureaucratic capacity, autonomy and organisational culture have played out during our three distinct periods, with a particular focus on the budgetary function. The analysis presented in Section 5e discusses how the main factors that have been mobilised to explain PoE performance (politics, leadership, organisational culture) have played out in this case and what this means for MFPED moving forward.

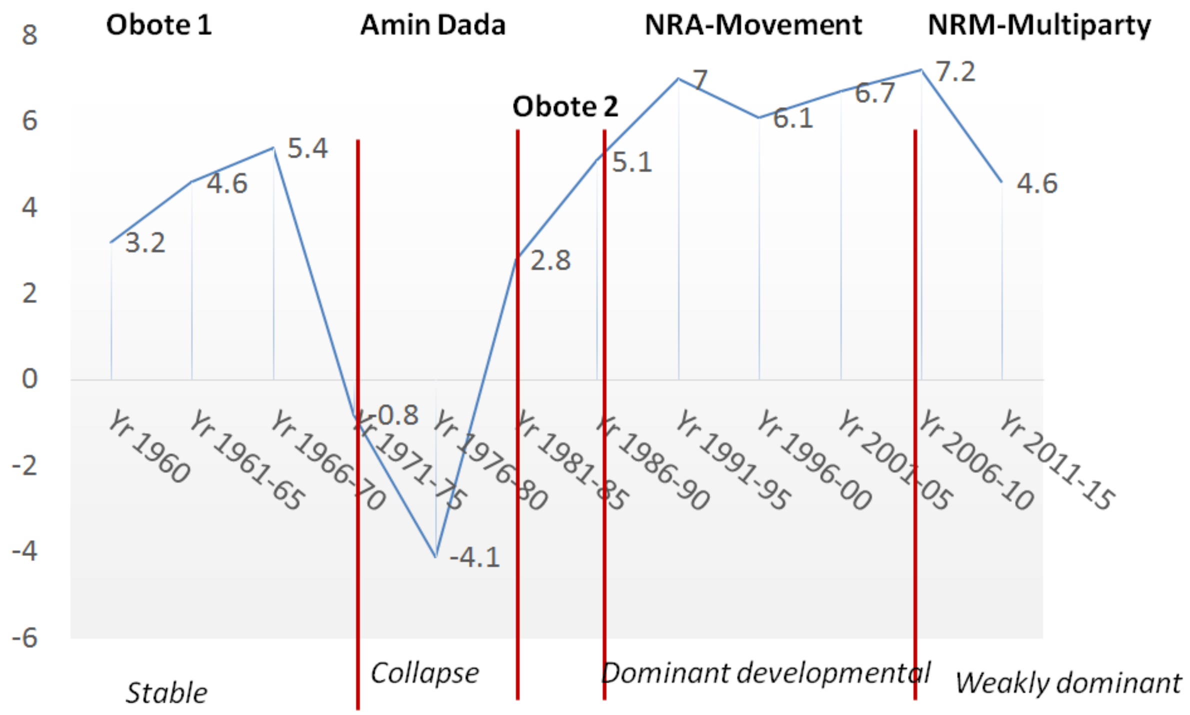
2. Political settlement dynamics and the politics of economic governance in Uganda

Uganda's development trajectory has been closely shaped by the shifting nature of its political settlement since independence, with a 'political settlement' defined as '"a combination of power and institutions that is mutually compatible and also sustainable in terms of economic and political viability' (Khan, 2010: 4).[6] According to Khan, it is particularly important to understand the balance of power between ruling coalitions and excluded elites capable of taking power (the horizontal distribution of power) and between ruling coalitions and the lower-level factions upon whom they rely to maintain themselves in power (the vertical distribution of power). After a brief period in which the political settlement in Uganda was broadly stable and dominant under Obote I (1964-1970), the country's political equilibrium was heavily undermined by the constitutional changes of 1967 and the onset of

[6] For a fuller discussion of political settlement analysis, see Behuria et al. (2017), Khan (2010, 2017) and Kelsall (2018). On Uganda's political settlement, see Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey (2013), Kjaer (2015), Whitfield et al. (2015).

militarised and narrowly ethnicised rule that was established in its aftermath (Mutibwa 1992, Reid 2017). The deepening of this mode of rule under Idi Amin (1970-1979) and Obote II (1980-1985) resulted in an economic collapse that was only reversed once the National Resistance Movement came to power in 1986 (see Figure 1). For over a decade, Museveni was able to rule without the threat of being overturned by excluded elites and without facing significant demands from within his broadly-based coalition under a no-party system. However, since the late 1990s, Uganda's ruling coalition has been characterised by its increased vulnerability to processes of elite exit, with some leaving to form opposition parties that would mount serious challenges at the ballot box (e.g. 2001, 2006), and to patronage pressures from internal factions. This increased vulnerability has invoked an increasingly personalised and populist form of rule by the president, which since the mid-2000s has been undermining the country's hitherto impressive development record. This pattern largely upholds the predictions of political settlements theory (Khan 2010), which proposes that the level of commitment to growth-enhancing institutions is likely to be strongest under 'dominant' ruling coalitions, and that rising levels of both horizontal and vertical power outside the ruling coalition will result in both declining commitment and enforcement capabilities.

Figure 1: Political settlement and growth in Uganda (1960-2015)[7]



Source: Bukenya and Hickey (2018).

[7] It is possible that the fall in average real GDP growth rates since the late 2000s also reflects other factors as well as the political shifts identified here. This includes a change in the methodology of calculating GDP (which was applied to 2008/09 onwards, but not used to recalculate previous years), and also because growth rates in the 1990s and early 2000s were boosted by factors which were essentially one off and could not persist indefinitely, irrespective of the political regime.

Given the extent to which Uganda's political settlement dynamics seem to have directly shaped the country's trajectory of economic growth since independence (see Figure 1), it seems reasonable to posit that one of the mechanisms through which this may have occurred could be through the effects of these dynamics on the quality of economic governance. For example, when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power in Uganda in 1986, it inherited a state bureaucracy severely undermined by the preceding one-and-a-half decades of political unrest, civil strife and economic turmoil. During the 1980s, the country posted some of the worst macro-economic indicators in sub-Saharan Africa: per capita GDP fell by 42 percent (Tumusiime-Mutebile, 2010). Government could no longer afford to fund public services, maintain physical infrastructure or sufficiently pay its workers (Sendyona 2010). Graduate economists recruited by the finance ministry earned under $10 per month, and were demoralised to the extent that they stopped turning up for work (Simson and Wabwire 2016).

Within the first decade of NRM rule, however, senior bureaucrats and advisors working within the then separate Ministries of Finance and of Planning and Economic Development reported how they were transformed into organisations that would play a critical role in rejuvenating Uganda's economy (Kuteesa et al. 2010). This transformation involved a new deal between rulers, bureaucrats and external actors that reflected the broader character of Uganda's transnationalised 'political settlement' at the time. Initially a socialist, President Museveni was forced to adopt structural adjustment reforms after the IMF threatened to end their support for this then conflict-ravaged country. By 1987, the president was supporting the then separate Ministries of Finance and of Planning and Economic Development to oversee the implementation of the Economic Recovery Program, involving reforms targeting the public sector, exchange rate and trade liberalization, among others (Bukenya and Muhumuza, 2017). However, his full conversion to liberal economics did not take place until 1992, when the then permanent secretary at Planning and Economic Development, Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile, persuaded the president that the reason inflation had reached 200 percent was weak fiscal discipline and that the solution was to impose strict fiscal discipline in the budgetary process. This appealed to the president's strong attachment to 'military discipline', the key to his victory in the civil war, as well as to his acute awareness of the need to maintain good relationships with powerful international actors (Mosley 2010).

This deal was underwritten by high levels of donor assistance, particularly from the World Bank, the European Union, the United Nations and European bilateral donors from Germany, Scandinavia and the UK. Large amounts of financial and technical support have informed every aspect of the Ministry's functioning and thinking, including with regards to macroeconomic management, sectoral planning, budget management and public financial management. It has also had a direct impact on performance. For example, the introduction in late 1989 of salary supplements paid by UNDP to most MFPED staff, followed by a similar scheme funded by the World Bank, played a critical role in incentivising staff to attend to their official work on a full-time basis and removed the need for moonlighting (Tumusiime-Mutebile 2010: 43). This scheme was extended across MFPED when Finance and Planning

merged. Expatriate assistants were a key feature of MFPED during the 1990s, focused on both delivering reforms and training staff (ibid: 44-45).
However, this combination of strong donor support, presidential commitment and bureaucratic capacity started to unravel in the mid-2000s. This is when Uganda returned to multi-party politics and underwent a watershed moment in political economy terms, whereby the discovery of commercial quantities of oil and the growing role of Chinese investment challenged the neoliberal hegemony of both traditional donors and MFPED within Uganda (Hickey 2013). Recent research has revealed that the management of the public sector in Uganda, over the past decade at least, has been increasingly approached as a matter of political expediency by the increasingly vulnerable ruling coalition (Bukenya and Muhumuza 2017), which has become willing to compromise even those 'pockets of effectiveness' that had hitherto been protected, in order to maintain at least some sense of statehood in the eyes of both domestic and international actors (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey 2016).

This paper sets out how the Ministry of Finance fits into these broader dynamics, not simply as a passive actor that has been subject to 'capture', but also in terms of how MFPED officials have manoeuvred within this context, including efforts to protect the Ministry's functioning from political interference. We also argue that discussions of economic governance in Uganda (as elsewhere in Africa) must be located within a transnational context that includes, but goes beyond, the role of traditional donors in supporting neoliberal forms of economic governance (Harrison 2010).

3. Uganda's Ministry of Finance as a 'pocket of effectiveness'

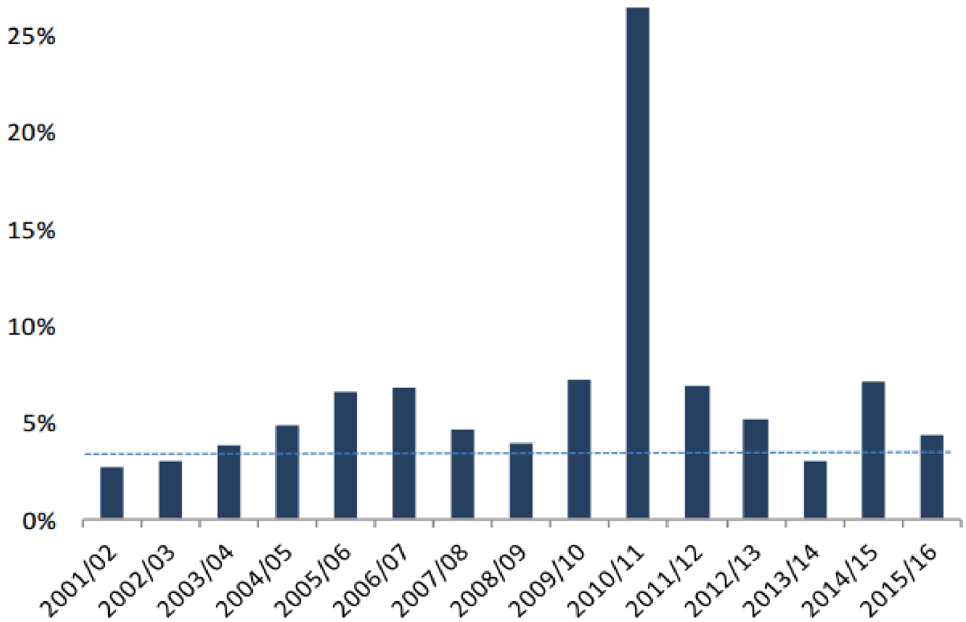
In this section we examine the Ministry's performance from the onset of reforms in the early 1990s through until 2018, with a focus on indicators associated with economic growth and budget management. The aim is to identify whether performance has varied over time and whether this maps onto particular time-bound periods.

Uganda's pattern of economic growth shows that economic growth was sustained at around 7 percent for the period from 1992 until around 2010 (see Figure 1). This is in comparison to an average of 3.5 percent during the previous ten-year period, a period characterised by some in terms of 'recovery', as opposed to the sustained growth maintained during the 1990s and 2000s.[8] Moreover much of this growth was pro-poor: the poverty headcount fell from 56.4 percent in 1992-93 to 24.5 percent in 2009-10 as MFPED also took on leadership of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan. The figures then start to dip from 2010, after which the average annual rate of growth has been closer to 4 percent and the poverty headcount figure has risen (UNHS, 2017: 84). Given that 2011 also recorded a significant increase in the rate of inflation, it would seem accurate to identify the period of 1992-2010 as a period of strong performance from MFPED, followed by decline thereafter.

[8] See Pritchett et al. (2018) on the importance of distinguishing between growth take-offs and sustained processes of growth.

However, other performance indicators suggest that a somewhat alternative periodisation is required. In terms of tracking the capacity of MFPED to control the budgetary process and direct resources towards economic development, we examined the extent to which supplementary budgets were deployed in relation to the rules governing this (which capped the use of supplementaries at 3 percent of the overall budget). As Figure 2 shows, these rules were followed until 2002-03, after which they were broken each year until 2013-14, with a particularly excessive episode in 2010-11, just before the 2011 elections.

Figure 2: Percentage supplementary expenditures (2001-2016)

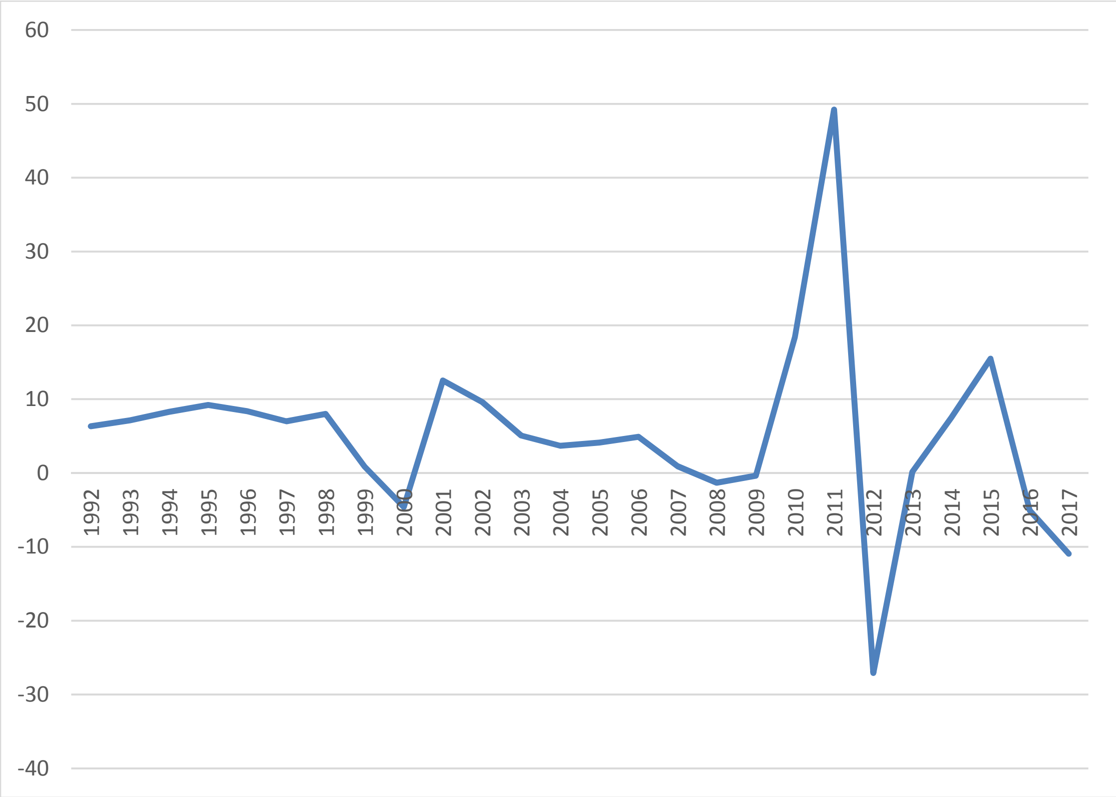


Source: IMF (2017).

The law on supplementary expenditures came in 2001, which means that we lack comparable data for the earlier period. A rough proxy for this could be taken from Figure 3, which sets out the annual percentage growth in public expenditure for 1992-2017. This seems to suggest that after a period of relative stability for most of the 1990s, evidence then emerges of a political business cycle (Block 2002), with spikes occurring around the election years of 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016, albeit to differing levels. This pattern of reasonably strong budget management until the early 2000s, followed by a period of declining rigour, is also supported by Figure 4, which shows that the gap between the resources allocated to public administration, security and justice and those actually spent in these sectors widened from the early 2000s onwards. As discussed later, these areas have become renowned as the budget lines that are most strongly associated with demands for supplementaries in pursuit of political objectives.

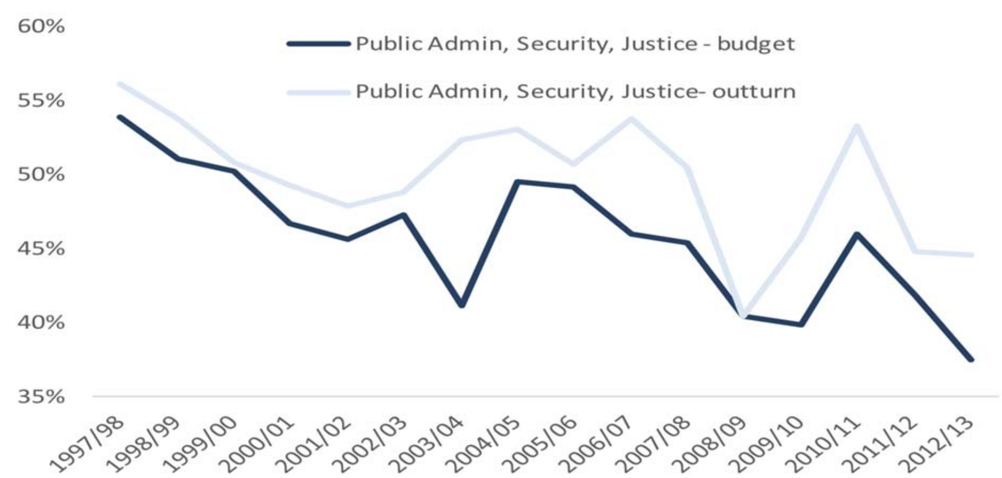
A further source of evidence on MFPED's handling of the budget process comes from Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessments, which have been undertaken

Figure 3: Annual percentage growth in government expenditure (1992-2017)



Source: World Bank.[9]

Figure 4: Public administration: Budget allocation versus outturn



Source: IMF (2017:30). Uganda Fiscal Transparency evaluation. IMF Country Report No. 17/130.

[9] See https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.CON.GOVT.KD.ZG?locations=UG

four times in Uganda from 2008 onwards.[10] Table 1 summarises Uganda's performance on selected indicators reported in each of PEFA undertaken to date in the country. The pattern of results is mixed, with aspects of budget management (e.g. on data) being performed at a high level throughout the last decade. However, other indicators also point to a declining level of performance during the late 2000s and early 2010s (e.g. on the 'extent of unreported government operations'), followed by improvements in almost all areas by 2017.

Given that indicators associated with budget management are more tightly linked to ministerial performance than more general-level indicators around growth, the increasing laxity around budget management and public expenditure from the early to mid-2000s that

Table 1: Trends in selected Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) indicators (2008-2017)

Indicator	2008	2009	2012	2017	Comments
Classification of the budget	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	No change
Comprehensiveness of information included in budget documentation	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	No change
Extent of unreported government operations	**B+**	**D+**	**D+**	**C+**	Only 1.9 percent of central government budget is unreported
Transparency of inter-governmental fiscal relations	**D+**	**D+**	**D+**	**C**	LGs have sufficient time to prepare their budget after second budget call circular
Public access to key fiscal information	**C**	**B**	**B**	**B**	No change
Orderliness and participation in the annual budget process	**B**	**C+**	**C+**	**A**	Impact of PMFA 2015
Multi-year perspective in fiscal planning, expenditure policy and budgeting	**B+**	**C+**	**C+**	**B**	Medium Term Fiscal Forecast (MTFF) improved and used

[10] PEFA started in 2001 as a donor initiative for harmonising country-level assessment of public financial management (PFM) across 150 countries. It is supported by seven agencies, including the European Commission, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and the governments of France, Norway, Switzerland, and the UK (https://pefa.org/content/history).

the above figures reveal can be seen as marking an important breakpoint within the overall trajectory of MFPED's performance. That the level of supplementary budgets is then reined back in after 2011, and with PEFA scores improving between 2012 and 2017, suggests evidence of a further turning point from around 2012-13. When combined with the qualitative accounts that we gathered on MFPED's performance over time, which we discuss in-depth below, this suggests that it makes sense to distinguish between three distinct performance periods:

- a period of *reform and strong performance* from 1992 until the early-2000s;
- a period of *decline and capture* from around the early to mid-2000s until 2012; and
- a period from 2013 to date that we tentatively characterise as involving *partial reform amidst continued decline.*

Table 2 below sets out MFPED's performance in relation to these three periods, and also provides additional information in a final column to support the distinctive nature of these periods. Section 4 places this performance data into conversation with the qualitative insights that we gathered from MFPED insiders and closely connected observers for each of these periods.

Table 2: MFPED performance over time

Time period / performance level	**Performance indicator 1: rates of economic growth and inflation (average for period)**	**Performance indicator 2: public expenditure patterns**	**Performance indicator 3: international evaluations of budgetary process**	**Other factors**
1992-2002 *Improved performance* (reform period)	Growth: **6.8 percent pa** (compared to an average of **3.5 percent** pa over the previous decade). (Inflation reduced from average of 114.2 percent over previous decade to 10.2 percent in this period).[11]	Public expenditure largely brought under control via the introduction of a cash budget in 1992. Little deviation level of planned annual expenditure with the exception of 2001 (an election year).	Not available for this period.	Growth helped by favourable economic climate (commodity prices), post-conflict bounce. This does not explain improved performance on public expenditure discipline. No major corruption scandals reported.
2003-2012 *Declining performance: towards capture*	Growth: **7.2 percent pa** (Inflation: spike in 2011-12 of **23.5 percent**; performance excluding 2011 = **7.3 percent** pa)	Steep rise in the number and size of supplementary budgets in relation to the electoral cycle (average 10.22 percent pa as a percentage of approved budget).	PEFA scores record a general decline from 2008 to 2012 (e.g. extent of unreported government operations).	Exogenous pressures c.2010-11 (financial crisis, South Sudan), but EU report identifies politically driven mismanagement as key cause of economic instability (Eberhard-Ruiz 2016). Major corruption scandals directly involving MFPED (CHOGM 2008, OPM

[11] Uganda's track record on macroeconomic management will be discussed in more depth in a forthcoming ESID working paper on the Bank of Uganda by Hickey and Matsiko.

				2012).
2013-date *Partial recovery amidst continued decline*	Growth rate average: **4.4 percent pa** (Inflation: brought under control by aggressive Bank of Uganda (BoU) policy on interest rates **4.9 percent**)	Supplementary budgets decline after 2013, offset by higher allocations to State House (see Figure 4). Presidential pledges disrupt budget process.	Recovery in most PEFA scores by 2017.	Public Finance Act 2015 introduced, but then weakened prior to 2016 election. Concerns over corruption continue.

Sources: GDP growth: https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD/UGA?year=2018; Inflation: https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PCPIEPCH@WEO/OEMDC/UGA (accessed 21 May 2019); see Figures 2 and 3 on public expenditure and Table 1 on PEFA.

4. Tracking the performance of the Finance Ministry over time: A game of three halves

This section explores the three performance periods identified above in more detail, with a particular focus on the insider accounts that we have gathered from those working within and/or with the Ministry of Finance in Uganda (some since the late 1980s). Whilst most attest to MFPED's strong performance from the 1990s up until the early or perhaps mid-2000s, most identify a downward trajectory thereafter. Some also proposed their own explanations for this trajectory, including the president's declining commitment to rules-based governance, changes in ministerial leadership and issues of organisational culture. We discuss these and other explanations in Section 5.

4.1 The halcyon days of reform: Early 1990s-2002

> 'At that time everyone was reform-minded… we enjoyed the positive political clout, the political commitment from the president, and the positive technical guidance from our bosses.'[12]

> 'We have had a strong relationship with the president right from the start when he came in. He is careful when choosing people to come into finance, he told us about this…"I do not want anyone involved in politics to be involved in this place".'[13]

The period of reform unleashed in the early 1990s is spoken of with great fondness and pride by those who worked in the Ministry at the time. Insiders recognised that they were at the bureaucratic vanguard of a wider moment of state-led reform, one within which they had been allocated an important role:

> 'At this point M7 enjoyed getting external advice and inputs (from bureaucrats) as to what might work. Once he was convinced he would go around the whole country and talk about the importance of macro stability, district by district – why fiscal discipline is non-negotiable – that was his word, and explained it clearly, hence restructuring of ministries from 60 to 22, and why civil servants had to be reduced. By the time reforms were initiated, people understood why reforms mattered – he knew how to use his political commitment to persuade Cabinet and ordinary people. If we had pressure regarding supplementary budgeting requests (some from him, some from other ministries), we would go to his office twice a week and explain to him that we could not afford these things, have to re-allocate.' [14]

[12] Exsenior officer within Budget Department, 9 November 2017.
[13] Leading Finance Ministry oficial, 10 November 2017.
[14] Ex-senior officer within Budget Department, 9 November 2017..

Emmanuel Mutebile, who become the first permanent secretary (PS) of the combined Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in 1992 and then governor of the Bank of Uganda from 2001, was granted the political space and protection to enforce strict fiscal discipline and cut line ministry expenditure by whatever it took to bring inflation under control. That this form of 'embedded autonomy' (Evans 1995) was widely recognised within government further enhanced the Ministry's capacity to undertake and impose difficult reforms, given that 'most observers outside the Ministry believe that what Finance says always has President Museveni's backing'.[15] Moreover, the Ministry had not been tainted by the corruption scandals that had tainted most other parts of the public service by this stage (Tangri and Mwenda 2013), and was perceived by civil servants as one of the best places to work.

By the mid-1990s, the project was not merely one of promoting economic stability, but also poverty reduction, as Uganda became arguably the first country to develop a poverty reduction strategy paper in the form of its own Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) (Canagarajah and Van Diesen 2006, Hickey 2005, Mugambe 2010). MFPED lead the PEAP process, a move that further imbued the Ministry with a sense of mission. It introduced innovative measures to ensure that poverty-related expenditures were increased and protected (e.g. the Poverty Action Fund) and closely monitored the strategic plans and budgetary proposals of each sector working group to ensure compliance with a pro-poor focus. According to one key informant:

> 'we enjoyed the political commitment from the president … his commitment to poverty reduction within a stable macro-economic environment. He had just returned from the bush, the vision was well-aligned with the PEAP, which he demanded.'[16]

Insiders and observers alike draw attention to the significant influence that the Ministry's leadership at the time had, in terms of both wider political management and building a strong organisational culture around meritocracy and performance. One reformist official at the time noted that:

> 'we also had a well-seasoned minister who was very competent, knew the president very well, this was Ssendaula, the president respected him. Mutebile (the PS) was also highly respected, a hardliner, he would tell president "over my dead body". So we technical people were very motivated to work, because we knew if we worked hard and did our work it would be accepted.'[17]

[15] MFPED advisor 16 January 2018.
[16] Former senior MFPED official 9 November 2017.
[17] Ex-senior officer within the Budget Department, 9 November 2017.

Respondents also pointed to the fact that the Ministry invested heavily in developing its human resource capacity during this period,[18] with the specific aim of ensuring the production and promotion of a professional cadre of economists and statisticians. A bespoke Masters programme in economic management and development policy was established at Makerere University, with financial and technical assistance from donors and UK-based academics, although many officials also trained abroad. Training was linked to progression, with Masters-level training a prerequisite for becoming a commissioner. Staff note that they were offered 'clear job specifications and career progression' and that it was '…always clear that promotions were on merit';[19]

> '… one of the things we did in early days, we promoted less senior people who were delivering … not a question of you just working for two years and going up, you need to deliver, that promoted a performance orientation.'[20]

Insiders also identify the hiring of technical advisors, such as Alan Whitworth and Marcus Manuel, as significant, whilst stressing that this was only effective because it was aligned with the momentum and commitment amongst national staff. Finally, the decision to merge Finance and Planning was also cited as a significant factor in helping to improve performance (this took two rounds, with the first merger in 1992 ending in 1996 and the second merger established in 1998). This helped to deliver a much more strategic and analytical approach to policy-making during the later years of this period. One member of staff, who went on to work in other African countries, sees this as a specific advantage: 'I didn't see this in other countries, in West Africa, they are using accountants to run the budget, not a planning function … no professional cadre. All ministries need planning and budget units'. [21]

4.2 The period of decline: 2003-2012

Our account of MFPED during this period so far resonates strongly with those offered in Kuteesa et al. (2010), and covers a good deal of the same ground. However, we now diverge from that insider account in terms of how to characterise the period from the early 2000s onwards. Most respondents stated clearly that MFPED's reformist period did not survive the first decade of the new century. However, the point at which they identify the onset of the Ministry's decline varies in line with the length and period of their working experience within it. For most of those involved in the early reform period, the 2001 elections marked the turning point, whereas those who arrived later in the Ministry point to shifts later in the 2000s. Within the former category is one erstwhile senior bureaucrat within MFPED who notes that:

[18] MFPED advisor, 16 January 2018.
[19] Ex-senior officer within the Budget Department, 9 November 2017.
[20] MFPED director, 6 November 2017.
[21] Ex-senior officer within the Budget Department, 9 November 2017.

> '… it started changing in 2001 … I remember going for a meeting and he [the president] was creating a credit scheme, and our minister [Ssendaula] asked him about this, and said you know that these credit schemes never deliver … why should we be getting into this? The president said: "these are my voters and they don't have access to reliable income. I want money to be able to give out to my citizens". That is when we knew things had changed. It was always the case in election year. When he was withdrawing from taking care of the economy, he asked us "why can't you let inflation go above 5 percent ?" '[22]

An external advisor working with Finance at the time identifies the same period:

> 'There had been a major expansion of the budget regarding Universal Primary Education, the PEAP, etc., should have led to political support and Museveni realised it hadn't, given the challenge made by Besigye [at the 2001 elections]. Economic policy made in a technocratic and impersonal manner would not work, he realised he had to use patronage and be seen to be associated with it'.[23]

This change in presidential orientation was directly reflected within the appointments made to the leadership of the Ministry. In 2001, Mutebile was moved to the central bank as governor and replaced with a permanent secretary perceived as being less obstructive:

> '…when Mutebile proved to be very difficult, he sent him to the Central Bank! That was the reason, because he [the president] was told "over my dead body". And the whole mechanism softened … Museveni bought in his ministers, who would dance to his tune.' [24]

Others agree that this transition period was critical to the Ministry's loss of reformist zeal and direction. The highly regarded minister, Ssendaula, retired in 2005, and at least two other senior bureaucrats who had played a central role in the reform period also left at this time. Ssendaula is seen by most as the last of the technically strong and politically respected leaders to hold this position. With hindsight, it seems that 'MoF has not survived [the] inadequate finance ministers'that followed him,[25] none of which possessed his combination of technocratic expertise and political heft, and who were appointed either to perform a specific political role or because they would not constitute serious obstacles to political demands. For example, his direct replacement as minister of finance was also the author of the NRM's first party political manifesto at the 2006 elections, following the return of multi-party elections

[22] Ex-senior officer within the Budget Department, 9 November 2017.
[23] Senior government advisor and ex-MoF advisor, 6 November 2017, parentheses added.
[24] Ex-senior officer within Budget Department, 9 November 2017.
[25] Senior government advisor and exMoF advisor, 6 November 2017.

(we analyse the pattern of ministerial and technical appointments to MFPED over time in more depth in Section 5).[26]

The mid-2000s also marked a watershed for Uganda's political economy in ways that would significantly alter the role of the donors that had been critical to supporting Finance during its heyday. In 2006, Uganda graduated from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, signed the Sino-Africa pact and discovered commercial quantities of oil (Hickey 2013). Discussing this period, an erstwhile advisor to the Minister of Finance noted that the mid-2000s was:

> 'Also the moment that we started to push donors away, we had discovered oil and pushed donors to back seat, and that took away a little bit of the sanity and by default the probity of these officials; they now had that greater autonomy.'[27]

At this point, the president returned to his earlier developmentalist ambition of modernising Uganda, particularly through major investments in large infrastructure projects. The president increasingly viewed the Ministry of Finance as an obstacle to his ambitions, with its close relationship to donors and its commitment to the spending ceilings established by the medium-term expenditure framework. In 2007, the president shifted responsibility for national development planning away from Finance to the newly established National Planning Authority, and also started to emphasise parallel processes of economic planning and governance through the Presidential Advisory Committee. Although MFPED strongly resisted this move at the time, they ultimately lost this battle and with it a degree of dominance over Uganda's wider development strategy and government policy processes (Hickey 2013).

Other, more ad hoc transnational events also played a role here. For example, Uganda's hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2008, an event that swiftly became a byword for major corruption scandals in the country, has been identified as a moment where the integrity of MFPED staff became compromised:

> 'The indiscipline really started happening from CHOGM, that was the real shift. That is the time when people came with budgets that were not justified: we are going to plant flowers along Entebbe road, no proper costing of this, we need 4bn. Then another. The budgetary process got distorted. President said "'it (CHOGM) has to happen". From that point

[26] This pattern of politicised appointments during the 2000s was also apparent at the more junior level of state ministers. For example, the president's brother-in-law, Sam Kutesa, was investment minister between 2001 and 2005, and his brother, Salim Saleh, minister for microfinance from 2006 to 2008. Both have been regularly involved in corruption scandals and possessed the political clout to override either the lead minister or permanent secretary in MFPED.

[27] Ex-advisor to Minister of Finance, 29 July 2016.

> onwards, we started to get into a disorderly system … a parallel world not pegged to the MTEF'.[28]

For some, CHOGM constitutes the point at which the Ministry officials started to swim in Uganda's wider sea of patronage: 'MFPED staff learned that they could make deals where money would come back to them. Networks developed across government',[29] networks that would lead to one of the largest corruption scandals witnessed in Uganda under the NRM in 2012 (see next sub-section). Of course, this and other major corruption scandals (as with the Global Health Fund in 2004, the 2012 scandal centred on the OPM detailed below and perennial problems with procurement) also placed further pressure on budgetary discipline.

The upheavals recounted here seem to have directly altered the organisational culture within the Ministry. Recounting a conversation with a long-term and senior MFPED official, one source noted that:

> '… when we started out, we didn't care about money, would take a bus to Arusha, sleep somewhere ordinary; now junior officials won't travel unless the per diems have been wired in advance; won't join entities unless there are hefty deals to be made.'[30]

A current commissioner, who was with the Ministry during the reform process, claims that the previously meritocratic process of appointments and promotions also came under strain during this period, whereby MFPED:

> '… used to control appointments without interference, but now I'm not too sure. Can't put my finger on when, which year, but came to a point where you could see we had the best brains, but then we saw people being pushed out to other institutions and people coming in, and not sure they are coming in on merit … you see the promotions, not sure that they are the best people … director and even commissioner level.' [31]

The cumulative effect of these pressures has had a direct impact on working practices within the Ministry, including within Budgets. For one ex-official, 'The challenge function in Budget is gone, we used to review and approve all submissions, but now they don't'.[32] This in turn has a knock-on effect on performance

[28] Ex-advisor to Minister of Finance, 29 July 2016.
[29] Ex-advisor to minister of finance, 29 July 2016.
[30] Investigative journalist, 6 November 2017
[31] MFPED commissioner, 6 November 2017.
[32] Ex-senior pfficer within Budget Department, 9 November 2017. Rest of quote: 'The Budget department juniors don't know what to do. When I was DB I had to invest in building capacity, teach them how to do things, write a good piece of analytical work, using a spreadsheet, we did a lot of mentoring, but now they don't … don't appraise just.'

in other ministries. One donor official working closely with Agriculture, for example, argues that:

> 'We are looking at challenges to implementation with regards bottle-necks in agriculture, but many of them can be traced back to the Ministry of Finance, tracing back the policy support. Delays in cash transfers; the MTEF is no longer supporting them, has gone to the dogs, there is no public investment planning in place – MoF should be making sure that resources are flowing efficiently to other sectors. Making sure that MTEF is guiding the strategic plans; all these things that would help with efficiency.'[33]

However, it was MFPED's ability to protect the budget process from political interference that was tested most severely during this period. If the 2001 and 2006 elections saw the introduction of a political business cycle within Uganda, the massive spikes in public expenditure and rule-breaking around supplementary budgeting that characterised the 2011 elections (see Figures 2 and 3) arguably reflected the wholesale capture of this erstwhile pocket of effectiveness. A previous minister admitted diplomatically to a 'hiccup in 2011 … I think we stumbled there regarding the political pressure, which was too much, which led to huge supplementary expenditures which sent inflation out of control'.[34]

The Ministry of Finance has for many years been under pressure to allocate resources to aid funding political activities of the ruling party (Abrahamsen and Bareebe 2016). The main avenue was through the budgets of State House and the Office of the President, and other institutions that the president has strong control over and/or which have classified budget lines, including the Ministry of Defence. These ministries are notorious for overspending their allocations through the device of supplementary budgets. Importantly, they also constitute critical mechanisms through which the NRM's militarised and monetised strategies of regime survival are funded both in between, but especially during, election periods (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey 2016; also see Figure 4).[35] Many commentators point to these as the major source of funds used to fund party activities and to buy political loyalty (ACFIM 2016; Helle and Rakner 2013; Kiiza 2011; Vokes and Wilkins 2016). By law, permissible supplementary expenditures are under 3 percent of the total budget, yet this was broken in every financial year between 2003 and 2012, during which period an average supplementary of 10.22 percent pa as a percentage of approved budget was passed (IMF, 2017). Supplementary expenditures also inflict reputational damage on the credibility of Uganda's budget process, as indicated in declining PEFA scores

[33] Donor official, 7 November 2017.
[34] Ex-MFPED minister, 7 November 2017.
[35] The president's decision in 2002-2003 to break with the long-standing defence spending limit agreed with donors and to cut discretionary spending across the whole budget by a quarter in order to finance an increase in defence spending is notable in this regard (personal communication, ex-advisor to MFPED, 4 April 2019).

during this period, and the IMF's withdrawal of its Policy Support Instrument after the 2011 elections.

This rise in supplementary budget expenditures over the 2000s undermined the sense that MFPED could withstand political pressure, but could at least be attributed to political forces beyond their control. However, the OPM crisis that broke in 2012 was closer to home, directly implicating leading figures within the Ministry and underlining the sense that the MFPED was no longer immune from the corruption that characterises the public sector in Uganda more broadly. In 2012 UGX 20 billion meant for the Peace Recovery and Development Programme (PDRP) activities was defrauded by government officials based in the OPM. Investigations revealed that there was connivance between OPM officials and others in the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Uganda. This scandal prompted five donor countries, who co-funded PDRP activities together with government, to suspend aid to Uganda, promising to only reinstate once they received guarantees that such lapses would never reoccur. Ireland and the UK also sent their own forensic audit teams to Uganda to investigate this particular corruption. Earlier in 2011, police investigations had uncovered another scam in which the Ministry of Public Service, between 2009 and 2010, had paid out some UGX 169 billion to 1,000 ghost pensioners through Cairo International Bank. These corruption scandals put the Ministry of Finance in the spotlight. It had to respond swiftly, with drastic reforms aimed at restoring donor confidence in the government's financial systems. According to a senior official in Finance, 'the crises gave us the chance to reform the whole system, no-one could argue, we were in a dominant position'[36].

4.3 Partial reform amidst continued decline? From 2013 to date

> 'I think there is some complacency that set in around last decade, sure, up to about 2012. With 2012 we were hit by scandals, so we woke up, saw that people were hiding, so leadership responded.'[37]

The impetus behind the new wave of reforms undertaken by MFPED from 2013 was directly informed by a change in bureaucratic leadership, following the retirement of the long-standing permanent secretary in the same year. According to one long-term advisor, the reformist zeal 'returned around 2012: big change that happened was the change at the top [with the new PS]; he is very good, wants things done, meetings are all to the point, agreement on who does what'.[38] Other observers take the same view, noting that the new PS '…has brought a lot more vigour – he can wade into the murky political waters with some degree of confidence', given his close relationship with the president.[39] This seems to be borne out by the fact that three major reforms were undertaken during this period, namely the Integrated Payroll and Personnel

[36] Senior MoFPED official 10 November 2017.
[37] Leading MFPED official, 10 November 2017.
[38] Long-term external advisor to MFPED, 10 November 2017.
[39] Leading journalist in Uganda, 10 November 2017.

System, the Treasury Single Account and the new Public Financial Management Act, each of which was intended to address different aspects of the crises discussed above. However, this view is also challenged by some insiders, who note that these reforms were largely donor driven, and that the current permanent secretary has proved less willing than his predecessor to stand up to the president on critical issues such as debt management. We briefly examine the latter two of these reforms, before returning to the broader question of MFPED's trajectory as a PoE in Uganda.

Treasury Single Account

The OPM and pension scandals revealed that the multiple bank accounts held by ministries, departments, agencies and local governments 'presented a breeding ground for misappropriation of public funds due to inadequate supervision' (BMAU 2017:2). Indeed, the OPM scandal essentially involved channelling donor resources on a dormant account (World Bank 2017). A financial tool that unifies all government accounts in a single pool for effective cash management, the Treasury Single Account (TSA), is proposed as the solution to this problem (World Bank 2017). Implementation started in the financial year 2013-14, managed by the Accountant General's office and with support from IMF East Africa Regional Technical Assistance Centre (Flynn et al. 2014). The TSA covers the entire central government and, by December 2016, 110 government entities were operating under TSA (PEFA 2017).[40]

In terms of outcomes, TSA eliminates the business of government institutions keeping monies to generate interest. Preliminary evidence from independent assessments (e.g. Munyambonera and Lwanga 2015) and perceptions of staff in the Finance Ministry, indicate that the TSA reforms have helped to improve the absorption capacity of government, improve cash management through optimal use of available funds and reduced government borrowing: previously, 'we would go to parliament asking for supplementary for institutions with shortfalls while others had excess cash'.[41] With multiple accounts, it is alleged, public funds would sometimes remain idle on undetected accounts to generate interest for unscrupulous officials, while the MFPED borrowed to finance other activities.

Before the TSA reform, estimates were that the Uganda treasury operated over 2000 accounts, many of which were dormant (World Bank 2017: 9). By July 2013, the Finance Ministry, in collaboration with Bank of Uganda, closed over 380 accounts, including 165 dormant bank accounts that had UGX 14.9 billion (CSBAG 2016). According to the PEFA report of 2017, the Finance Ministry has effectively eliminated suspense accounts because of implementing TSA reforms: 'in the past GoU did have suspense accounts … these were reconciled and closed several years ago… The

[40] This was also combined with a move to require payments to bank accounts. This meant that all contractors had to have bank accounts, thus reducing the use of cash and ensuring that funds are traceable, with less scope for misuse.
[41] Interview with staff in Internal Audit, February 2018.

operation of a Treasury Single Account (TSA) has prevented of creation of new suspense accounts' (PEFA 2017:67). The TSA has ensured that government banking arrangements are unified and transfers traceable (BMAU, 2017).[42] While it is now possible for the government to know its cash balances at the end of each business day through the daily bank reconciliations, the claim that TSA reduced government borrowing is challenged in the face of increased borrowing from both foreign and domestic sources and the corresponding rise in Uganda's debt burden.

Moreover, the implementation of TSA reforms is yet to win back the trust of all donors in the government's financial systems. Government expectation in implementing TSA reforms was that it would roll out the system to cover all government ministries, departments and agencies and also include donor-funded projects (Flynn et al.- 2014). So far, no traditional donor has accepted the arrangement (Tripathi and Gardner 2017). Donors are sceptical of the efficacy of the systems in place. In particular, the major stumbling block in this direction is said to be that donors lack assurances that 'the project funding would not be diverted for other purposes' (Tripathi and Gardner 2017:18). Since TSA and other PFM reforms that came in the aftermath of the OPM and pension scandals were essentially efforts of Government of Uganda to rebuild donor confidence in government systems to 'get budget support back' (Pinnington 2017: 22), the reluctance of donors to accept TSA is an indication that reform efforts have so far had limited success.

The 2015 Public Financial Management Act

The most explicit effort by the Ministry to secure greater autonomy from political pressure came in the form of the 2015 Public Finance Management (PFM) Act. Section 25 of the Act directly addresses the abuse of supplementary expenditures and senior officials affirm that this was the main purpose of the Act.[43] To replace supplementaries, the law would create a provision for a contingency fund, access to which would be granted by parliament only if requests could be proven to be 'unavoidable, unforeseeable, and un-absorbable (can't be accommodated in the ongoing budget)'.[44] The contingency fund was foreseen to have two purposes: to earmark money for unplanned expenditure; and for emergencies. The PFM Act was passed in early 2015 after at least two years of discussions and was greeted as an example of 'best-practice' legislation in the field of public financial management by the World Bank and IMF.

However, the new rules were soon directly undermined in several ways. First, and as the February 2016 elections approached, the Executive intervened directly to insist

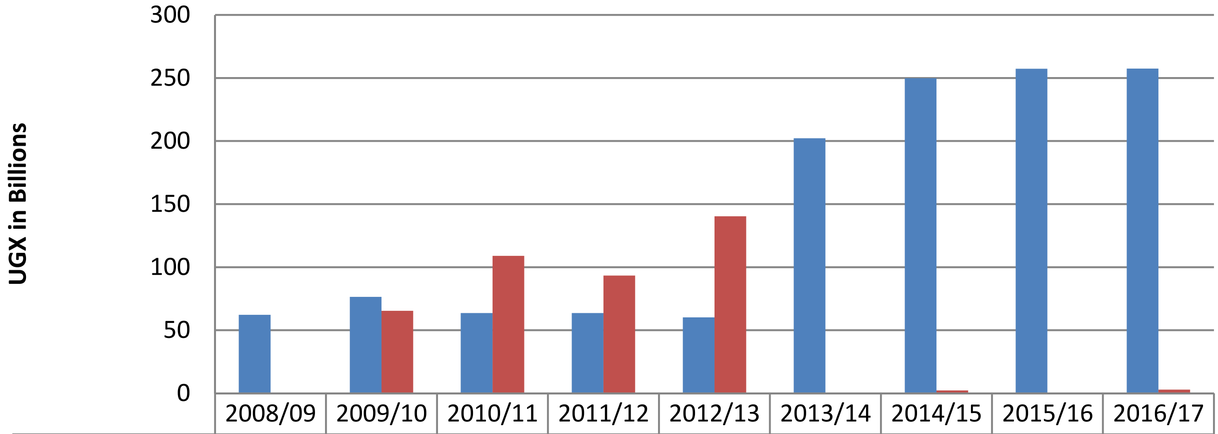
[42] Although the scandal over MFPED's acceptance of a loan from the Trade and Finance Bank, which led the Parliamentary Accounts Committee to call for the permanent secretary of MFPED to be sacked in late 2017, suggests that some malleability remains.
[43] Interviews with leading officials in Kampala in November 2017, also 19 October 2018.
[44] Senior MFPED official, 31 January 2018.

that the Act be amended to enable a greater degree of flexibility.[45] Loyal MPs were encouraged to table amendments that would loosen the restrictions placed on the proportion of the annual budget that could be diverted to supplementary budgets, effectively returning matters to the status quo, whereby up to 3 percent of the overall budget could be as per the 2001 Budget Act. This effort to dilute the Act was fiercely opposed by opposition MPs on the relevant parliamentary committees (Finance and Budget).[46] However, the objections of the two main critics on the committee were swiftly shelved after a personal meeting with the state minister of finance for planning. The passage of the amendments was further eased by the timing: the February 2016 elections were looming and MPs were keen to return to their constituencies to campaign, rather than spend time in committee hearings and writing new reports. Aware of this, the Speaker decided against returning the amendments to the Finance Committee for a full discussion and put them straight to the Floor instead. This ensured that they were discussed and passed when the House was virtually empty. On 11 November 2015, Parliament passed the Public Finance Management Amendment Bill, 2015, a mere six months after the original Act. Whilst some within MFPED defended the government's right to maintain greater flexibility within the budgetary process, others admitted that, 'We lost that one, the one of supplementaries'.[47] For one close observer of the process, 'Parliament had chosen expedience in passing laws at the expense of much needed scrutiny and due diligence'.[48] The loss of control over supplementaries became apparent after the 2016 election, when both State House and Office of the President received sizeable supplementary allocations.

In any case, a less formal move had already taken place that had effectively institutionalised the kinds of supplementary expenditures incurred at the 2011 election, whereby the Ministry significantly increased the annual budgetary allocation for State House. As shown in Figure 5, the deal between Finance and the president seems to have worked to check supplementary requests from State House, but at the expense of hugely increased ex-ante official budget allocations for State House. While supplementary requests before the deal were often more than State House's official budget allocations, in financial year 2013-14 its budget was more than tripled, since when it has made zero or negligible requests for supplementary funding.

[45] Interview with senior MFPED official, 18 October 2018.
[46] Interview with journalist, 31 August 2018.
[47] Interview with senior MFPED official, 29 July 2016.
[48] Wamajji 2015: http://parliamentwatch.ug/five-things-we-learnt-from-the-passing-of-the-public-finance-management-amendment-bill-2015/.

Figure 5: State House budget and supplementary budgets



	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Budget	62.25	76.43	63.67	63.64	60.23	202.23	249.84	257.28	257.45
Supplementary		65.4	108.94	93.38	140.3	0	2.25	0	2.9

Source: ACFIM (2016); IMF (2017).

The budget process also remains subject to political pressures in other respects, including the redirection of resources to ministries where spending is officially secret (e.g. Defence; see ACFIM reports, also Tangri and Mwenda 2013). Another major problem is the growing number and level of ad hoc presidential pledges and donations that MFPED and other ministries have to cater for. Indeed, some, such as Education, Works and Transport, and Health, have even created budget lines dedicated to fulfilling presidential donations (Bukenya 2017). In the Ministry of Education, around UGX 4.5 billion is annually reserved for this expenditure item. Even then, however, it turns out that the president has been pledging over and beyond even this amount:

> 'On average, the Ministry budget provides UGX 4.5 billion for presidential pledges. However there are so many pledges now. Cumulatively the figure has reached UGX 86 billion. It is difficult to plan for them; for us we call it "a moving target". He is uncontrollable.'[49]

Moreover, since some pledges come with political pressure for them to be fulfilled immediately, this affects the priorities of ministries, as planned activities have to be shelved to accommodate the pledges.

> 'What has been happening is that since they [pledges] can't be catered for using the allocated budget, we have been absorbing some within the sub-sector plans and programmes. This means that at times the pledges don't fit within our priorities, but have to be accommodated nonetheless. Therefore there is a trade-off. Instead of constructing a classroom, you buy a bus.'[50]

[49] Senior government official, 6 July 2017.
[50] Senior Ministry of Education official, 12 July 2017.

As seen in Table 3, over a ten-year period, between 2008 and 2018, outstanding presidential pledges in the Ministry of Education alone stood at USD 18,762,126.

It is more difficult to characterise MFPED's performance in the period since 2013 than in earlier periods, partly because it remains a work in progress and partly because of the mixed signals. There are some grounds to support the claims by the observers cited at the start of this section that the current period since 2013 represents a return to the reformist zeal that characterised the early days of MFPED. This is particularly the case with regards to the PFM Act, which can be seen as a direct attempt by MFPED to claim back some autonomy and also reputational capital for the Ministry in the face of elite capture. However, the deal cut around the hugely increased budget line of State House, the dilution of the Public Financial Management Act, and the continued diversion of budgetary resources to non-transparent budget lines points to an alternative reading of this period as one of continued capture. The decline that had already set in during the 2000s has become too deeply ingrained, and is continuing to take new forms. This includes:

> 'greater political involvement in the budget process – previously, the budget process was to a great extent technically driven – of late what you have is political players having a greater influence. Probably 2012 this started and it is now an institution; the Presidential Advisory Committee – it is a major player in the budget process'.[51]

Table 3: List of outstanding presidential pledges for Ministry of Education (2008/09-2017/18)

Facilities	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Primary	88,000	799,306	548,386	318,301	191,843
Secondary	742,250	707,328	899,979	1,253,424	816,932
BTVET	955,750	477,126	749,030	470,919	265,856
Tertiary	1,313,889	527,778	555,556	337,129	330,743
Others	0	83,333	0	0	25,556
Grand total	***3,099,889***	***2,594,871***	***2,752,950***	***2,379,773***	***1,630,930***
Facilities	**2013/14**	**2014/15**	**2015/16**	**2016/17**	**2017/18**
Primary	259,967	191,025	479,196	538,402	427,778
Secondary	325,218	573,260	433,433	453,150	263,520
BTVET	227,216	218,680	348,113	269,190	263,889
Tertiary	448,342	277,778	0	0	250,000
Others	0	0	0	0	55,556
Grand total	***1,260,743***	***1,260,743***	***1,260,743***	***1,260,743***	***1,260,743***

Source: Bukenya (2017).

[51] Senior advisor within MFPED, 7 November 2017.

For sceptics, this current relationship 'may be working well for the President but not for the economy'.[52] Whereas PEFA scores suggest that this has been a positive period of reform for MFPED, the evidence and analysis presented here offers an alternative perspective, and raises the possibility that such scoring exercises are either calibrated to indicators that are somewhat misleading and/or that they are subject to manipulation. This warrants further investigation, including in light of wider concerns that have been raised around the ways in which international agencies seek to measure issues of public financial management (Andrews 2018).

Other reforms, notably the TSA, were arguably undertaken by MFPED as much to reclaim its pre-eminent role within government as to maintain probity in government operations. The Ministry's status had been undermined since the mid-2000s, with the shift of responsibility for development planning to NPA and the increased role of State House in the budgetary process. In addition, donors had invested heavily in the Office of the Prime Minister towards the end of the 2000s, particularly with regards its role as coordinator of government, a role that MFPED had assumed for itself since the early 1990s. The appointment of a leading NRM figure and apparently competent leader as prime minister in 2011, Amama Mbabazi, further persuaded donors to invest in what seemed to be (prior to the 2012 scandal) an increasingly credible ministry. The TSA has offered MFPED the ultimate oversight and control over government monies and expenditure, and helped reassert its dominant position.

Finally, the extent to which the current fortunes of the Ministry are held to hinge on the character and capacities of the current permanent secretary is striking, and reflects an important wider truth regarding where power lies within MFPED's leadership and how political rule in Uganda operates more broadly, something we return to in Section 5 below. To the extent to which this power rests on a close working relationship with the president, there are concerns that, in the current political context, within which the capricious nature of patronage (Grindle 2012) has become writ large, there can be no return to the earlier phase of embedded autonomy.

5. Analysing the politics of MFPED's performance over time

The evidence presented here suggests that, since undertaking reforms in the early 1990s, Uganda's Ministry of Finance was able to achieve high levels of performance in terms of delivering against its mandate, before entering a period of lengthy, if uneven, decline that persists to date. A number of factors can help explain the pattern of performance identified here, many of which have already been flagged within the resurgent literature on PoEs in Africa and beyond (Roll 2014, Whitfield et al. 2015) and which were identified by our key informants. These include the nature of the organisation involved, in terms of mandate, role and task; organisational-level factors, including leadership, organisational capacity and organisational culture;

[52] Senior government advisor and ex-MoF advisor, 6 November 2017.

transnational support; and wider political economy factors. We start here with factors associated that have been roughly consistent over time, before turning to the largely political and political economy factors that explain why performance has varied over time. A broader concern is that MFPED, in partnership with the IFIs, has promoted a particular model of neoliberal economic governance since the early 1990s that has directly shaped and set certain limits on the type of development that the country has been able to achieve and work towards. We return to this issue below, having first examined the Ministry's performance in relation to the narrower terms of its mandate on the governance of financial resources through the budgetary process.

5.1 Organisational mandate: The legal and regulatory framework

Uganda's Ministry of Finance is governed by a sound legal and regulatory framework for economic governance. Its Public Financial Management (PFM) laws are rated highly by international standards, and together with the Budget Act (2001), Public Financial Accountability Act and Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDA) Act, have been highlighted as prudent pieces of legislation that satisfy 70 percent of the requirements for 'good international practice' (Andrews 2018: 162). MFPED officials strive to adhere to this legal regime, in part because there is 'strong domestic ownership over the contents of laws', given the strong role that they played in developing them (Simson and Wabwire, 2016), and in part because government would cease to function effectively if they ignored their duties. According to one respondent:

> '…the budget act has timelines and milestones that we cannot ignore. The Act specifies when the budget strategic framework papers must be ready, when the ministerial policy statements should be produced, and when the budget must be read. So we have these timelines that everybody is aware of and we endeavour to keep them.'[53]

Similarly, another senior MFPED official reported that: 'most of our activities are time bound. Recall, for example, the budget has a cycle and the deadlines are stipulated in the Public Finance Management Act, so any delay would affect activities planned…'.[54] This reflects the importance of 'function' to PoEs (Roll 2014), whereby PoEs are more likely to emerge in areas of government associated with mandates that are highly specific in nature, and which also involve logistical rather than more transactional challenges. The budget process is a good example of this, given the extent to which this is a centre-of-government activity that can be run by a relatively small team of highly trained technocrats and which does not require the involvement of an extensive chain of governance. Although the process clearly requires MFPED to coordinate across and negotiate with all spending ministries, they are in a relatively strong position to do this effectively, given both their empowered status

[53] Senior officer in Administration 15 January 2018.
[54] Senior officer in the Budget Directorate 31 January 2018.

within Uganda's governance framework and the strong incentives of spending ministries to abide by the rules through which they receive resources. This coordinating role also exerts further pressures on MFPED to perform, as finance officials try to avoid being blamed for causing underperformance in other government units. According to a one MFPED official, 'our ministry is basically a coordination ministry, (the) failure to accomplish certain tasks affects the activities of other ministries. So we try as much as possible to see that we are not the problem'[55].

5.2 Organisational capacity

The central importance of MFPED to economic governance within Uganda, and to its credibility amongst IFIs within a wider neoliberal economic order, has guaranteed huge external investments in capacity-strengthening. The privileged nature of MFPED vis-à-vis other ministries in Uganda can be illustrated through a comparison of staff-related costs with similar sized counterparts. As shown in Table 4, the allocations for training, the hiring of contract staff, and overseas travel are generous

Table 4: Comparison of staff-related costs between Finance and Water & Environment Ministries (2016/17)

Staff-related expenses	Ministry of Finance (millions)			Water & Environment (millions)		
	GoU	Ext fin	Total	GoU	Ext fin	Total
General staff salaries	4,356.6		**4,356.6**	5,356.0		**5,356.0**
Contract staff salaries	19,326.3		**19,326.3**	4,425.6	3,908.2	**8,333.8**
Allowances	4,342.3	1,501.7	**5,844.0**	2,138.1	1,366.9	**3,505.0**
Staff training	6,366.8	3,045.5	**9,412.3**	839.5	1,195.5	**2,035.0**
Travel inland	4,504.1	508.7	**5,012.8**	4,740.9	1,741.9	**6,482.8**
Travel abroad	3,235.7	93.2	**3,328.9**	405.5	854.0	**1,259.5**
Welfare and entertainment	1,102.0	0.0	**1,102.0**	218.0	131.0	**349.0**
Medical expenses (to employees)	366.7		**366.7**	25.3		**25.3**

Source: Ministerial policy statements.

when compared to ministries with comparable staffing levels. Respondents at Finance argued that the emphasis on training human resources is what has made

[55] Senior officer in the Budget Directorate 31 January 2018.

the difference between the Ministry of Finance and other ministries and departments of government.

While there has been an assumption that the Ministry identifies talented officials at recruitment (Simson and Wabwire 2016), several respondents underplayed this, indicating that: 'Actually we don't usually have very highly qualified officers at recruitment [because] at entry level the recruitment is done centrally by Public Service, similarly as is for other public agencies'.[56] What is critical for all new staff, however, is the induction and guidance they receive upon joining the Ministry:

> 'To me what is important is after recruiting [staff] how do you start them on their journey? It is only what happens after, the process that we take them through is rigorous. There is a lot of preparation we give them at induction and throughout'.[57]

Within two to three years, an officer recruited in the Ministry of Finance will be offered an opportunity for training, usually in the form of a Master's degree or professional development course. At UGX 9.4 billion, the Ministry's training budget is double the staff wage bill of UGX 4.4 billion. MFPED staff have significantly more opportunity to undertake overseas travel compared to other ministries. This has many benefits, including professional development and the opportunity to further enhance earning opportunities through the associated per diems and expenses. Moreover, the Ministry is able to recruit high levels of contract staff under donor projects such as Financial Management and Accountability Programme (FINMAP), through which they also benefit from external consultants. For these, the human resource department outsources recruitment services to private companies, which, besides being swift, usually identify candidates with first class degrees.

Distinct efforts are made to ensure that MFPED officials are supplied with the equipment required to facilitate their work. Respondents reported that:

> 'In this Ministry you budget for your assets and you get them. So you will not find broken chairs or computers that are not working well. We are well equipped. Even transport, the late Permanent Secretary/Secretary to Treasury Kassami said "let all officers have transport" because we do not have like a government transport system, so every officer gets a car at a very minimal cost. So our staff, even at lower levels, were helped to acquire cars so that they can move'[58].

Another explained that:

[56] Senior officer in Treasury services and asset management, 18 January 2018.
[57] Senior officer in Treasury services and asset management, 18 January 2018.
[58] Senior officer in Administration, 15 January 2018.

> '…we have tools and also the necessary facilities, e.g. video conferencing facilities, wifi for connectivity, even the physical appearance of the offices is appealing. When people from outside come here, they say we have spent a lot of money on ourselves, but it is deliberate, it is to make workers comfortable. If the chairs in the workplace are torn, it demoralises people.'[59]

Other aspects that make the Ministry an attractive work destination are medical services for staff (including a fully equipped sickbay at the Ministry that is accessible to staff and their relatives during working hours); a subsidised staff canteen; and a staff saving and credit association that is one of the oldest and most extensive schemes in the country.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this high level of resourcing and support has meant that staff turnover in MFPED is at a low level, despite most staff receiving the same salary as the rest of the traditional civil service. One former IFI advisor in the Ministry observed that: '[Finance] is always good at retaining good people – a lot better than other ministries, I would say'.[60] There are some indications that this investment in strengthening the Ministry's organisational capacity has increased in recent years. In 2013, the vacancy rate with regards to positions in MFPED stood at 20 percent in senior management, 25 percent in the budget directorate, and 40 percent in the accountant generals' office as well as support departments (Simson and Wabwire, 2016:17-18), which reflects a general pattern within government agencies in Uganda. However, a senior human resource officer reported in early 2018 that: 'the Ministry structure is fully filled' and that 'whenever we get a vacancy we advertise it'.[61]

5.3 Organisational culture

Some of the resourcing and staffing practices noted suggest a deliberate attempt to inculcate an organisational culture of performance within MFPED. This echoes the broader finding within the PoE literature (Grindle 1997, Roll 2014) that a strong organisational culture and high levels of staff motivation are more likely when bureaucrats are given the sense that they are an elite, separate from and/or superior to the rest of the bureaucracy. In addition to receiving extra resources and opportunities, the Ministry provides a progression path for professional staff to grow, which motivates them to work hard.

For one staffer, 'our officers have hope, there is hope because of the clear career progression. You know you are an economist at entry level, in six months you are confirmed, in the next two years you are to be promoted'[62]. Similarly, another key informant indicated that: 'the lines for promotion are very clear. People know the career path they want to toe'. In addition, within Finance 'promotion is not in secret, it

[59] MFPED advisor 16 January 2018.
[60] Former Ministry advisor 10 November 2017.
[61] Officer HR 16 January 2018.
[62] Senior officer in Administration 15 January 2018.

is a very transparent process…. By the time they advertise a job for a senior position, staff know whether they qualify or not' [63]. The fact that the Ministry has a somewhat top-heavy structure means that lower-ranking staff have plenty of senior positions to aspire to (Simson and Wabwire, 2016), which, when aligned to a habit of promoting from within, creates further incentives for staff to remain and work hard.[64]

Performance is also rewarded through less formal mechanisms, including an annual awards ceremony through which the best-performing officials are identified by a vetting committee and awarded gifts and certificates by the Minister at an end-of-year party. Another unwritten rule helps inculcate a strong work ethos, or at least of 'present-eeism':

> '…here they don't tell you to come at 7am, but we come as early as 6am. In other ministries workers don't report on time. Eventually people get into that culture. In fact, when we redeploy officers from here they find problems fitting into other agencies. There office work usually starts at 9am.'[65]

One of the authors of this paper camped at the Ministry headquarters for over a week, and can confirm that most offices opened by 7am, with many interviews undertaken between 7am and 8am. In one such interview, the respondent said, 'You now go to other ministries they have not yet opened. Here besides opening early, even on the weekend we work'.[66]

5.4 Ministerial leadership: Of technopols and embedded autonomy

> 'It is a tricky environment in there: a lot of the decisions are not made by ministers, the technical people do this, and do them directly with the president – by the time the president has something ready for signing, it is just to ratify. The technocrats are the strongest in that house.'[67]

The promotion of performance-based organisational cultures requires a particular type of leadership, not only in terms of focus, but also continuity over time. Here we examine how MFPED has been led since the early 1990s, with a particular focus on the most senior political and technical staff, namely the minister and the permanent secretary, who doubles as secretary to the Treasury. The story is complicated

[63] Senior officer in Treasury services and asset management 18 January 2018.
[64] According to one KI: 'in this ministry, you have to come from down and rise through the ranks; it is very rare and very difficult to come from out(side) at a higher level' (BMAU official 6 November 2017).
[65] Senior officer in Treasury services and asset management, 18 January 2018.
[66] Officer in the Budget Directorate, 31 January 2018. A further feature of note is a degree of mingling between senior and junior staff, including a practice whereby the PS/ST and his senior colleagues have meals together with other Ministry staff in the staff canteen. For the five days during which one of us visited the staff canteen during lunch, the PS/ST was seen on at least four occasions.
[67] Ex-advisor to Minister of Finance, 29 July 2017.

somewhat by the back-and-forth that took place over the 1990s, whereby (as flagged earlier) the initially separate ministries for Finance and Planning were integrated (1992), separated again (1996) and finally re-integrated (1998).

In Table 4 we assess the pattern of leadership within MFPED over time. When read together with Appendix 1, which sets out a brief biographical resume for each minister and permanent secretary for the period examined here, three trends emerge with regards to comparable longevity of political and technocratic appointments, the stature of appointees and the emphasis on technocratic leadership. From the mid-1980s until the mid-2000s, Finance had relatively stable political leadership, with ministers allowed terms of six to seven years, whereas since 2005 ministerial terms have lasted for an average of just over three years. Although hardly a ministerial merry-go-round, this halving of the longevity of ministerial terms suggests a greater degree of political interference and executive impatience from the mid-2000s than had hitherto been apparent. This stands in contrast to the remarkable continuity in technical leadership within the finance ministry during President Museveni's reign, whereby only three people have served in the positions of permanent secretary over the past three decades (also Simson and Wabwire 2016: 20-21). Whereas permanent secretaries at other ministries such as education and health are moved more frequently and often appointed from outside, the longevity of technical leadership and the fact that appointments come from within has offered MFPED a high degree of stability and continuity. Interviews with senior staff confirmed the significance of this:

> 'They are officers groomed by the institution, so they have a sense of belonging and they are knowledgeable, very well educated. They are celebrated economists, who knew the institution very well. When you look backwards among the past PS/ST, all of them are very strong, like their successors: Mutebile, Kassami, Muhakanizi were all strong leaders [who did not] tolerate laziness. All staff have KPIs which put pressure to make us work'[68].

The further contrast arises with regards to the character of the individuals appointed to positions of leadership within the Ministry. A notable feature with regards to ministers is that since Ssendaula's term as minister from 1998 to 2005, none of the ministers appointed have combined both political clout *and* technical capacity. Staff employed within Finance during the 1990s and early 2000s talk of their ministers during this period as reform-minded leaders who worked well with the technocrats and together managed the president's expectations, especially with regards to expenditure. The widely respected Ssendaula was succeeded by two ministers who were highly qualified technocrats, but who lacked seats in parliament (Suruma, Kiwanuka), a sitting parliamentarian with lower-level and less current expertise in the

[68] Senior officer in Administration, 15 January 2018.

sector than her predecessors (Bbumba) and a political loyalist with no significant experience or expertise in economics or finance (Kasaija).

This is significant. The combination of political and technical expertise has been identified as a core feature of successful governance in difficult contexts, as captured by the term 'technopol', which refers to actors that transcend the categories of 'technocrats' or 'politicians', by virtue of possessing both the technical and political resources required to drive forward certain policy and organisational agendas (Domínguez 1997, Joignant 2011). This term includes politicians with technocratic savvy (e.g. former economists turned leaders), but also technocrats with unusually strong capacities to perform politically (e.g. persuading other actors of the logic of their ideas, navigating difficult political terrain in pursuit of policy objectives). Indeed, the two permanent secretaries identified with the most active periods of reform within MFPED – 1992-2002 and since 2013 – can be seen as technopols who have proved able (for periods at least) to navigate difficult political as well as technical terrain.[69] A member of the Ministry's top management indicated that these technocrats have proved bold enough to challenge, or propose difficult options to the president[70] – something most government officials in other ministries try to avoid.

What seems apparent here is that ministers of finance have increasingly been perceived by the president to be disposable and less worthy of responsibility, longevity and respect than the permanent secretary, who most observers view to be the real leader of the Ministry. As one commissioner-level official noted, 'I don't worry about ministers, they don't do much. They don't have enough muscle, the technocrats in this ministry are too powerful for them (laughs)! The PS has a lot of power, no one else has it'.[71] When appointed in 2013, the current permanent secretary prepared a manifesto for the Ministry, for which he established four main strategic objectives, a move more generally associated with political leaders of government ministries. This reflects a degree of confidence in having both the longevity to implement a long-term plan and the presidential support required to do so.

This establishment of a close working relationship between the president and hand-picked senior technocrats reflects a familiar pattern of governance within the country, one that is closely associated with the wider PoE phenomenon in Uganda and which we explore elsewhere in relation to the Bank of Uganda and the Uganda Revenue Authority.[72] What is worth noting here is the extent to which the autonomy of not just

[69] For more on Mutebile and Kassami's tenures, respectively, see Simson and Wabire (2016: 12 and 20-21).
[70] Member of MFPED senior management, 10 November 2017.
[71] MFPED commissioner, 26 November 2017.
[72] Other examples of public sector organisations that the president has sought to govern through hand-picked technocrats include the Uganda National Roads Authority, Kampala City Council Authority and arguably the current National Oil Company. The move in late 2018 to merge some semi-autonomous agencies back into ministries, and the resignation of the

ministers, but also technocrats, came to be undermined from the early 2000s onwards (arguably starting with the moving of MFPED's permanent secretary to the central bank in 2001), and the link this has had to its uneven performance since then, with technocrats as well as their increasingly pliant political bosses becoming less capable of maintaining control of the budgetary process in particular. Explaining this means looking beyond the Ministry itself to the wider and changing political and political economy context within which MFPED's leadership has been operating.

Table 4: MFPED Leadership teams (1992-2018)

Time period	Lead minister/s	Permanent secretary/ies
1986-1992	C Kiyonga (Finance) J. Mayanja Nkangi (Planning)	Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile (Planning)
1992-1998	J. Mayanja Nkangi (Finance) Richard Kaijuka (Planning, 1996-1998)	Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile (PS Planning and secretary to Treasury) Chris Kassami (PS Finance, deputy ST)
1998-2005 Finance and Planning combined from 1998.	Gerald Ssendaula	Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile (PS; ST) until 2001 Chris Kassami (2001-)
2005-2009	Ezra Suruma	Chris Kassami
2009-2011	Syda Bbumba	Chris Kassami
2011-2015	Maria Kiwanuka	Chris Kassami (until 2012) Keith Muhakanizi (from 2013)
2015-date	Matia Kasaija	Keith Muhakanizi

leader of Kampala City Council Authority, suggest that this mode of governance may have run its course. These trends will be explored in more depth in a synthesis paper that brings together our case-study reports of MFPED, BoU, URA and also the National Water and Sewerage Company.

5.5 Uganda's shifting, transnationalised political settlement

The increasingly uneven performance of Uganda's Ministry of Finance during the first two decades of the 21st century has been directly shaped by the shifting nature of incentives and ideas within the country's political settlement over this period. A key feature has been the declining dominance of the ruling coalition since the early 2000s, whereby it has been increasingly challenged by rival elite factions and come under increasing demands from actors at multiple levels within the ruling coalition. This has significantly reduced its capacity to undertake difficult reforms, undermined the long-term vision required to commit to this, and incentivised a highly personalised approach to governance. The relative autonomy that MFPED enjoyed after the reform period of the early 1990s started to fade around the time of the 2001 elections and continued to erode after the return of multi-party elections in 2005, with Uganda's economic governance increasingly defined by the political business cycle (Block 2002). The huge expenditures required by State House to ensure presidential election victories in 2011, and again in 2016, involved the 'capture' of the Ministry and, in 2011, the central bank (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey 2016; also Hickey and Matsiko forthcoming). The dilution of the Public Financial Management Act in the run-up to the 2016 elections and the compromise reached around expenditures for State House suggest that the political imperatives of regime survival continue to outweigh the technical imperatives of sound economic governance.[73]

This change reflects shifting ideas as well as incentives within Uganda's transnationalised political settlement. The initial deal between the president, senior bureaucrats and donors in the early 1990s, which offered economic governance institutions the 'embedded autonomy' associated with developmentalist states (Evans 1995), was strongly ideological in nature. It was built both on a broader commitment to transforming Uganda after decades of turmoil and on the eventual acceptance of neoliberal principles, a new creed that came to be preached fervently by the dominant bureaucrats of the day. This helped provide an ideological project around which a senior bureaucratic cadre within Uganda's economic technocracy could cohere in partnership with transnational actors. Although hardly a neoliberal by instinct, Museveni was persuaded of the case for macroeconomic stability as a means of avoiding instability and underpinning his developmental project, as well as by the hard economic constraints that made resisting IMF and World Bank reforms difficult. The Ministry's decline from the mid-2000s coincided with an ideological and institutional challenge to its authority, including its neoliberal agenda. Inspired by the discovery of oil and Chinese investment, the president authorised the National

[73] We would note, however, that there are real doubts as to whether or not the NRM has ever been fully committed to a state-building process. There is little evidence that such a project was pursued in a systematic way, even during the decade or so of 'dominant developmentalism' from the early 1990s until the early 2000s. The Uganda country synthesis paper for this project, and the comparative overview paper that looks also at Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Zambia, will suggest the need to revise political settlements theory to take into account the social foundations of power, and how this shapes elite incentives, along the lines suggested by Kelsall (2018).

Planning Authority to take on national planning responsibilities, thus removing a significant element of MFPED's responsibility and power (Hickey 2013). The National Planning Authority sought to escape what they saw as the constraints of neoliberal governance, and proposed a more ambitious and productivist agenda in line with the president's renewed rhetoric around transformation. This resulted in a direct challenge to some of the key institutions of neoliberalism in Uganda, such as the medium-term expenditure framework, and resulted in ideological splits emerging both within MFPED and between elements of MFPED and other elements of the economic technocracy, particularly the central bank and IMF.

Reasonable people will disagree on the substantive implications of this for Uganda's development trajectory, with some decrying the loss of focus and discipline, whilst others argue that a challenge to neoliberalism in Uganda is long overdue. It is certainly the case that the transnational project of promoting neoliberal principles of economic governance since the late 1980s has directly shaped the nature of the state, in Uganda as elsewhere in Africa (Harrison 2010). There have been far higher levels of investment in certain institutions of economic governance (finance, central bank) than others that might have been able to promote a more heterodox development strategy (e.g. trade, industry), as in the experience of East Asian developmental states.[74] These broader issues will be discussed at greater length in the forthcoming synthesis paper for this project (Hickey, 2020 forthcoming). The main point to make here is to show that the waxing and waning of ministries of finance as pockets of effectiveness in Uganda and beyond is closely shaped by ideological and institutional imperatives embedded within the global political economy.

6. Conclusion

MFPED's performance over time, with specific regards to its mandate to regulate the effective management of financial resources through a budgetary process, can be explained in terms of a range of interrelated factors that sit within a nested hierarchy. Uganda's domestic political dynamics, and the global political economy within which it is located, sit at the apex of this hierarchy, followed by ministerial leadership and then issues of organisational mandate, capacity and culture (see Table 5). Whilst these latter factors have remained largely constant since the early 1990s, shifts within the country's politics and political economy have directly shaped the Ministry's capacity to achieve its mandate, in both a positive and negative direction. The downward trend in performance, particularly in terms of its control of the budget, is best explained by reference to Uganda's shifting political settlement over this period, which has moved from being dominant-developmental in nature towards a more personalised and vulnerable form. As such, and in terms of the existing literature on PoEs, our findings support the sense that, whilst factors such as leadership,

[74] Such investments in state capacity-building can have long-lasting implications for the direction of economic policy, as some have noted with regards to the longstanding influence of the Treasury over economic policy in the UK and the bias this has enabled towards financial capital (Jessop 2013).

organisational culture and the performance of specific tasks are important, these are outweighed by the significance of politics (Roll 2014). However, we would go further in insisting that politics in Uganda is both heavily transnational in character and located within a changing global political economy that has also directly shaped MFPED's capacity to deliver.

The most immediate concern identified here is that the politics of regime survival in Uganda has increasingly undermined the capacity of MFPED to deliver on its mandate, in ways that have arguably weakened the country's prospects for both economic growth and coherent government. Whether this opens space for the type of alternative development project that some argue Uganda needs remains to be seen, and will need to be set against the costs to sound macroeconomic governance that developmental statism as well as neoliberal governance has historically required (Gore 2000). Of more immediate concern is the degree to which senior actors within MFPED are able to both restore the Ministry's sense of integrity and purpose, and protect the budgetary process from the political pressures that will inevitably intensify as the 2021 elections draw closer.

Table 5: Explaining MFPED performance over time

Time period	**Political settlement type and dynamics**	**Ministerial leadership**	**Organisational capacity and culture**	**Transnational factors**
1992-2002 *Improved performance* (reform period)	*Concentration of power within developmental leadership* Limited demands from excluded elites or lower-level factions Presidential commitment to macroeconomic stability through neoliberal principles	High-capacity ministers and technocrats gain political protection and autonomy (technopol as PS) Longevity of appointments: political and technocratic	High levels of training and career development opportunities Meritocratic approach to recruitment and appointments Supportive environment	Government–donor relations largely harmonious, including around shared ideology Donors highly influential High levels of external support
2003-2012 *Declining performance: towards*	*Growing vulnerability of ruling coalition* to electoral	Influential PS leaves for central bank	Some pressure on training and travel budgets as economy	GoU relations with traditional donors strained

capture	competition and demands from below Populist approach; parallel structures, State House takes role in economic policy; inflationary patronage President adopts a 'productivist' approach that requires high levels of investment in infrastructure	Shorter ministerial terms after 2005, when last 'technopol' Minister departs. Subsequent ministers have some technical capacity, but little political capital or authority	tightens Declining integrity within MFPED (CHOGM 2007, OPM 2012 corruption cases)	around political governance and ideological differences Declining influence of 'traditional' donors (oil, China) High levels of external support remain
2013-date *Partial reform amidst continued decline*	*As previous period*	Politically loyal minister appointed in 2015 New PS (2013): technocrat with strong political connections.	Dynamic PS re-injects a sense of mission via reforms and restructuring Reports of malpractice amongst senior bureaucrats	Donors withdraw GBS; IMF withhold PSI

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Appendix 1: Brief biographical details for ministerial leaders

Hon. Matia Kasaija (2015 to date)
Holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree (1967) from the University College of East Africa, Kenya. First elected to the Ugandan parliament in 1980, he has represented Buyanja County, Kibaale District in parliament since 2006. From 1980 until 1981, he served as the State Minister for Labour. From 1981 until 1986, he was a member of the external wing of the National Resistance Army, parliament of Uganda and as the executive director of the Departed Asian Custodian Board between 1987 and 1990.[75] From 1998 until 2005 he was deputy director for mass mobilisation at the National Resistance Movement Secretariat. He was appointed as Minister of State for Internal Affairs in (2006-2011) and then Minister of State for Planning (2011-2015).
Maria Kiwanuka (2011 to 2015)
Mrs Maria Kiwanuka holds a Bachelor of Commerce from Makerere University (1977) and Masters of Business Administration from London Business School (1981). She first worked at the World Bank for more 10 years as an economist and financial analyst, responsible for East Asian and Southern African regions, covering projects in Burma, Malawi, Swaziland and Uganda. Kiwanuka returned to Uganda to join the private sector, working in the broadcasting, publishing, real estate and economic consulting industries. Her family founded and she personally served as managing director of two popular FM stations in Kampala – Radio One and Radio Two. Before her appointment as Minister of Finance in 2011, Hon. Kiwanuka was a member of the Presidential Economic Commission and Presidential Investors Roundtable. She also served as a director at Stanbic Bank Uganda Limited from 29 July 2008 to 31 May 2011, and as non-executive director on several regulatory (e.g. Uganda Communications Commission) and education (e.g. Makerere University Business School) institutions.
Hon. Syda Bbumba (2009 to 2011)
Member of Parliament for Nakaseke County North, Nakaseke District since 1996. Holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce (B. Com) in Accounting and a Master of Business Administration (MBA), plus several diplomas and certificates in banking finance and management. Before her appointment as Finance Minister, Hon. Bbumba worked as an accountant and teasury manager at Uganda Development Bank from 1974 to 1995. She was appointed a commissioner of the Uganda Electoral Commission in 1995-1996, Minister of State for Economic Monitoring (1996-1999) then Minister of Energy and Mineral Development (1999-2006). From 2006 until 2008, she served as the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Affairs. In February 2009, she became the first woman to serve as the Minister of Finance in post-independence Uganda.

[75] https://www.parliament.go.ug/mp_database/profile.php?mid=360

Dr Ezra Suruma (2005 to 2009)
Dr Suruma is an economist and banker. Holds the degree of Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Finance from Fordham University in New York (1969), a Masters of Arts in Economics from the same university (1972) and a PhD in Economics obtained in 1976, from the University of Connecticut. He also holds Masters degrees in Computer Science and International Banking. Dr. Suruma previously worked as a professor of economics and management at Makerere University and at Florida A&M University (1973-1981). In 1981 he joined Coppin State University in the USA as Professor and Head of the Department of Management Science. His civil service career started in 1987, when he joined the Bank of Uganda as the director of research, serving in that capacity until 1990. From 1990 until 1993, he served as the deputy governor of the Bank of Uganda. In 1993 he joined Uganda Commercial Bank (UCB) as the chairman and managing director until 1996. Before becoming minister, Dr Suruma was one of the shareholders and a director of National Bank of Commerce Uganda (NBCU). He was author of the NRM's first party-political manifesto, for the 2006 presidential elections.
Hon Gerald Ssendaula (1998 to 2005)
Hon Ssendaula is a seasoned politician and a banker. He studied in Nairobi University for his ACCA. He started his career at the then Uganda Railways Corporation, later joining Barclays Bank (U) as its general manager. He joined politics representing the Democratic Party, where he was the Member of Parliament for Bukoto constituency from 1980 to 1985, which was split into Bukoto Central, Bukoto South, Bukoto Mid-West, later remaining as the Member of Parliament for Bukoto South. He became a cabinet minister as the Deputy Minister of Commerce and Cooperatives, which was later named Ministry of Trade and Industries from 1991 to 1996. He rose to a full minister as the Minister of Natural Resources from 1996 to 1998, and later transferred to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as its head between 1998 and 2005, when he retired from active politics.
Hon Mayanja Nkangi (1992 to 1998)
He graduated from Makerere University in 1953 with a BA in Economics Mathematics and History. In 1954 he got a government scholarship to Oxford University to study for an MA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, specialising in the latter. He entered Lincoln's Inn and was called to the Bar in 1959. When he returned to Uganda he practised as a barrister. His political activity dates back to 1953. In 1960 he led the United Party. When the United Party decided to merge with Uganda National Congress, he abandoned it to form and subsequently chair the United National Party. He then joined Kabaka Yekka and was elected KY MP for Masaka in May 1962. He was first elected parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Economic Affairs. In October 1962 he was appointed minister without portfolio under the same ministry and later became Minister of Commerce and Industry. He also became the Katikkiro of Buganda. In the 1980 elections Jehoash Mayanja Nkangi, was a CP presidential candidate. He also served as the Minister of Justice and constitutional affairs under the NRM government.

Dr Crispus Kiyonga (1986 to 1992)
Dr Kiyonga is a physician and politician. He was a Member of Parliament for Bukonjo County West, Kasese District (1996-2016). He obtained his first degree, Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB) in 1978. He obtained a Master of Health Science degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in 2004. In 1980 Kiyonga stood as a candidate of the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) party and won in his constituency, making him the only winning UPM candidate in those elections. He joined the National Resistance Movement (NRM) during their struggle against the second Milton Obote regime, from 1981 until 1986. Before his appointment as Minister of Finance, Hon Kiyonga served as Minister for Cooperatives and Marketing (1986-1986).
Prof Ponsiano Mulema (RIP) 1986
Prof. Mulema was a professor of economics. He was the first Finance Minister under NRM from January 1986 to September 1986, when he died. He was succeeded by Dr Crispus Kiyonga. Prof Mulema is remembered for being a vibrant member of the Democratic Party, right from the 1960s. He was the only member of the 12 cabinet ministers and 22 members of the National Resistance Council inaugurated in January 1986 who was not part of Museveni's guerrilla organisation.

Permanent secretaries in the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (1986 to 2018)

Keith Muhakanizi (2013 to date)
Mr Muhakanizi holds a Master of Science in Development Economics from The University of Manchester, UK; a Diploma in National Economic Planning and Statistics and a Bachelor of Science in Economics of Makerere University. He joined the Ministry of Finance in 1982 and has risen through the ranks to become its permanent secretary. Before becoming the PS, Mr Muhakanizi served as the deputy secretary to the Treasury from 2005 to 2013. Before that he served as the acting deputy secretary to the Treasury from January 2005 to December 2005. Between 1999 and 2004, he was the director, economic affairs in charge of macroeconomic policy, planning and external debt. From September 1998 to September 1999, he served as the Commissioner for Economic Development Policy and Research Department. From April 1995 to August 1998, he served as the commissioner/economic advisor to the Hon. Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. From January 1993 to April 1995, he served as the acting commissioner/ economic advisor to the Hon Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. From November 1991 to December 1992, he served as the acting commissioner for macroeconomic planning division in Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. Between 1988 and 1991, he worked as the senior economist in the macroeconomic section and secretary to the President Economic Council (PEC). From 1982 to 1988, he served as an economist, macroeconomic planning division, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development.

Chris Kassami (2001 to 2013)
He studied economics at Dar-es-Salaam University in Tanzania (1972). He joined the Finance Ministry in 1972, as an economist. He later became a senior economist, principal economist, chief economist, chief government planning economist, head of the macro-planning department in 1988. He first served as permanent secretary in education, Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication before returning to finance.
Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile (1992 to 2000)
Mr Tumusiime-Mutebile holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Politics from Durham University (1974). He has additional postgraduate training in economics from Balliol College, Oxford. His career as a civil servant in Uganda started in 1979, when he was appointed deputy principal private secretary to the president, then acting under secretary, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development in 1981. In 1982 he became the chief planning economist, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. In 1985 Tumusiime-Mutebile was appointed permanent secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, in charge of economic affairs. From May 1986 to March 1992 he worked as permanent secretary, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, and then in the integrated Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development until 2001, since when he has been governor of the Bank of Uganda.

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