

MTN is again Uganda's top taxpayer

MTN Uganda maintained its position as Uganda's number one taxpayer for the third time in a row.

The telecommunication giant paid out a colossal UGShs173.9 billion to the treasury during the financial year 2006/7 according to statistics from the Uganda Revenue Authority released on September 10.

The company's contribution grew by Shs54 billion from UGshs120 billion in 2005/6. The company provides mobile and fixed phone telecommunication, VoIP, internet and call centre services. MTN Uganda which is a subsidiary of the South African conglomerate the MTN Group was closely followed by fuel distributor Shell Uganda at UGshs140 billion and beer manufacture Uganda Breweries at UGshs101 billion.

The statistics prove that Ugandans are spending more on mobile phone airtime, fuel, beer and phones. The trend of consumption is likely to remain the same in the next three years.

MTN's sector competitors Uganda Telecom and Celtel Uganda contributed UGshs32.2 billion and Ug21.5 billion taking the 16 and 20 positions, respectively.

The top 10 of the best 1000 taxpayers paid out about Ugshs753 billion which was 28.6 per cent of the total revenue. The 10 include, MTN, Shell, Uganda Breweries, Nile Breweries, Total Uganda, Tororo cement, Century Bottling Company (Coke), and energy producers Aggreko International.

Seventeen manufacturing companies pulled off huge profits to fit in the top 50 of the best 1000 tax payers, despite the current insufficient power that is also characterized by frequent load-shedding. Uganda's power demand is currently 350mW but only 230mW is available for consumption.

In the banking sector, Bank of Uganda, the central Bank of Uganda (BoU) contributed Ugshs35.4 billion to take the lead position of the bankers. BoU was followed by Stanbic Bank and Standard Chartered Bank paid at UGshs32 billion and UGshs.21 billion respectively. Barclays, Centenary rural development, Crane, Citibank and DFCU bank followed the top three banks.

The New Vision Printing and Publishing Company topped the media industry remitting UGshs8.4 billion and was closely followed by pay-TV service provider Multichoice Uganda at UGshs5 billion. The New Vision's competitor Monitor Publications came third in the sector paying UGshs4.2 billion shillings. Graphic Systems was the only advertising firm that made it to the top 100 of the best taxpayers. The company designs, and prints advertising billboards.

The top tax payers contributed UG2.2 trillion up from UGshs1.9 trillion in the financial year 2005/6 and received a refund of

UGshs17.7 billion from the treasury. Shell Uganda got the biggest share of the tax refund valued at over UGsh3 billion.

While presenting the 2006/7 budget, Finance Minister Dr Ezra Suruma projected total tax revenue collections at about Shs2,525 billion plus UGshs42 billion in non-URA revenue. The treasury is now looking at raising Shs2,555 billion from tax revenue.

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