



CIVIL SOCIETY FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

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PRESS RELEASE

To The News Editor

CSPR USHERS IN NEW NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE

The Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) voted into office a Steering Committee of nine organisations from the general membership of sixty signed up organisations from both the national and provincial members during the Annual General Meeting last Friday, 3rd December, 2004.

The new NSC is comprised of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), Programme Against Malnutrition (PAM), Operation Young Vote (OYV), Southern Africa Centre for Conflict Resolution and Disputes (SACCORD), Forum for African Women Educationalists in Zambia (FAWEZA), Water Aid, Commonwealth Forestry Association (CFA), Catholic Agriculture Rural Youth Movement (CARYM) – Luapula Province and Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP) – North Western Province.

In accordance with the CSPR constitution, the NSC comprises of two representatives from the provinces, three from the Specialist Management Teams (Monitoring and Evaluation; Information Dissemination and Advocacy; and Capacity Building and Institutional Development) and three from the programme themes.

The NSC is the executive arm of the Network and is responsible for the overall management of the implementation of the CSPR Programs and incidental matters. It is also responsible for interpreting CSPR policy. The NSC will stand for one term of two years and has the mandate to identify and recommend to the Council two institutions from full members whom they consider to have capacity to add value to the management of the network.

The Annual General Meeting also agreed that CSPR should not only look at poverty primarily as statistics and numbers but as a deprivation of the fundamental human rights and dignity. It is more an issue of morals and ethics than economics.

Among major activities planned for next year, CSPR will review the performance of the current Poverty Reduction Paper (PRSP) which comes to an end in 2005 and based on that, engage in the formulation of the next one. As a prelude to the afore-mentioned activity, we will conduct the annual Poverty Monitoring Exercise in the five provinces – Luapula, North-Western, Western, Eastern and Southern provinces – as has been done the last three years since implementation of the PRSP began. Eleven Thematic Groups (Agriculture and Food Security; Industry and Mining; Water, Sanitation and Low Cost Housing; Education, Child and Youth; Health and Nutrition; HIV/AIDS; Macroeconomics; Governance; Gender; Environment, Energy and Tourism; Employment, Sustainable Livelihoods and Social Protection) will also give sectoral analysis to the different sectors of the PRSP and also the Government Sectoral Advice Groups (SAGs) reports. Apart from that, CSPR members continue to participate in the SAGs.

The Network has also re-affirmed its commitment to go flat out on the '*Rank Poverty Eradication 1st for Zambia*' Campaign. This campaign advocates that spending towards poverty reduction must be prioritised on the national agenda. This requires among other things, that poverty reduction policy documents such as the PRSP must be translated into tangible programmes through adequate commitment and disbursement of resources and this must be seen in each national annual budget. The campaign includes collection at least 100,000 signatures for petitions to be presented to parliament in the next sitting.

CSPR is a civil society network that came together in October 2000 with the main objective of ensuring that civil society from different backgrounds and in diverse locations effectively participated in the formulation of Zambia's PRSP.

CSPR members felt that the depth of unity shown by civil society during the PRSP formulation should be extended to monitoring the PRSP and other policies, programmes and activities aimed at poverty eradication. The diverse membership of CSPR has continued to grow into a strong civil society poverty network, with teams in different parts of the country.

The main thrust of our activities is advocacy around poverty reduction issues. The advocacy is supported by poverty monitoring currently centred around PRSP, research, information dissemination and capacity building. All these activities are aimed at strengthening civil society's voice in poverty eradication. CSPR also carries out sensitisation programmes for different stakeholders and popularisation of poverty documents.

Ivy Mutwale (Miss),
Information Officer.