

**CIVIL SOCIETY FOR POVERTY
REDUCTION**

**REVIEW OF THE
DRAFT POVERTY REDUCTION
STRATEGY PAPER**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The civil society, in their continued participation in the PRSP process, convened a National Forum, which provided a platform for it to review of the first draft of the Government PRSP for Zambia. The forum drew participants from a cross section of the community country-wide. In attendance too, were international development agencies such as UNDP, GTZ, OXFAM-GB, World Bank and Government officials involved in the PRSP process. The discussion was guided by the broad agreement and appreciation of the overwhelming nature of the PRSP process and the limitations insofar as the resources envelope was concerned with regards to effectively addressing the various poverty concerns in the nation and thus the need to prioritise issues in order to attack poverty on a sustainable basis. It was noticed that certain specific interventions, proposed in the draft, were non-financial and basically required minor institutional changes and policy adjustments. The civil society were alive to the fact that there are other intervention programmes and processes that government has/and was implementing which therefore required to be integrated within the specific suggested processes in the PRSP framework.

The process of arriving at priority issues was guided and traded off by two broad objectives which are viz:

- To identify those specific priorities that would lead to sustainable poverty reduction, and have immediate impact on the various categories of the vulnerable in society.
- To identify specific priorities that would stimulate immediate economic growth and have corresponding immediate impact on poverty levels.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The forum was prefaced with a presentation of the overview of the draft PRSP document including the implementation and monitoring measures being proposed. This was subsequently, complemented with a presentation on the Civil Society's input paper (PRSP – Civil Society's Perspective, June 2001). Summaries of the various thematic / sectoral chapters as outlined in the draft PRSP, were presented to lay the foundation for further discussions. Focus group discussions were convened for purposes of in-depth analysis of the draft document and some points of consideration were:

1. To compare and contrast policy measures and programmes contained in the draft PRSP with those contained in the Civil Society PRSP input document and to identify specific gaps. Gaps were to be identified for the specific purpose of guiding input and discussion based on the two broad objectives alluded to earlier.
2. To identify any critical issues that may have been left out of the draft PRSP that needed to be included based on the broad objectives alluded to earlier.

3. Based upon 1 and 2 above, to suggest in the order of priority at least five critical policy and / or programme interventions that should be contained under the sector/theme in Zambia's final PRSP.
4. To gauge the extent to which policy/programme recommendations contained in the civil society document have been incorporated in the draft PRSP.
5. To make any other suggestions.

2.1 Limitations

The National forum confined itself in the review of the draft PRSP to chapters, which formed part of its thematic working groups. The review did not therefore extend to topics such as Transport, Water and Energy, although due credit was given to government for including these important issues. Civil society in its paper dealt with industry under Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods, which made comparison difficult. However, the forum did consider the general aspects of industry in its review.

3.0 ACTUAL FINDINGS

The findings presented in this paper are summary discussions that contain, both government, and civil society's inputs into the draft PRSP. The positive findings that were common in the focus working groups are that the draft PRSP contains a good number of the proposed interventions by civil society. However, the forum noted weaknesses on the non -specificity on the priorities in the majority of cases. Secondly, while appreciating that the document is the product of different working groups, it lacks continuity as a result of varying presentation formats. Thirdly, in line with the preceding, the logical frameworks in some instances contains new information and interventions, which are not reflected in the narratives.

Specifically, some interventions/priorities proposed in this paper, are meant to reinforce the generally accepted priority interventions in the draft PRSP as well as point to other important measures that may have been left out.

3.1 TOURISM AND POVERTY REDUCTION

The general content of the chapter of tourism, meets the favour of civil society, although, the forum would like to add to the list of interventions, a few other priority interventions that would equally have immediate impact on poverty reduction.

1. Government and other stakeholders should develop **Community Tourism Schemes** that will have the dual benefits of increasing the level of domestic tourism, as well as ensuring that there is equitable sharing of benefits from tourism activities with the local communities.
2. The ADMADE model should be strengthened and replicated in other Game Management Areas and, thus broaden community participation in wildlife management.
3. The proposed support schemes for local farmers who supply food stuffs to tour operators are welcome but these, it is proposed, should be expanded to encompasses other direct participants in the tourism industry such as artists, sculptors and crafts-persons supplying curios or other forms of artefacts for tourist consumption.
4. Government in collaboration with other stakeholders in the tourism industry should review the quality and types of jobs created and the conditions of services offered. A deliberate policy should be instituted that will monitor and evaluate both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of jobs offered to Zambians in the Industry.

3.2 EDUCATION

Civil society generally bought into the proposed six PRSP interventions under education. Suggestions are however, made regarding the strategies outlined in the draft and the following are additional strategies to be employed in implementing the six interventions:

1. An increase in the resource allocation to the education sector and in this vein, government implored to progressively increase Gross Domestic Product (GDP) allocation to the sector by 1% each year until 2015; and between 30-40% of resources under HIPC should be allocated to education.
2. A policy of recruitment and retention of teachers particularly in the rural areas should be put in place.
3. Necessary recognition and support should be given to community schools though, it should be considered as a 'stop gap' measure in the provision of education services to the vulnerable and poor. Government should establish a grant-in-aid facility for community schools.
4. Develop co-ordination mechanisms at district level for Ministries and departments responsible for education, youth and children and thus allow for integrated management of education.

3.3 HEALTH / HIV/AIDS

The following are some observations and suggestions, which need to be included in order to effectively, provide the necessary health care to all including the poor:

1. HIV/AIDS and the resultant effects must be considered as an emergency. While the draft has highlighted some measures contained in the National AIDS Plan, insufficient details are given in the main strategies and interventions and these do not seem to be congruent with the budget of US\$150 million.
2. Under the cost sharing and fees, civil society would like to propose an expansion of categories falling under the exemption scheme to include other vulnerable groups like street kids, orphans and child-headed households.
3. The situational analysis eloquently identifies problems that need immediate attention, but these have not been captured in the priorities. For instance, there is recognition of outdated and obsolete legislation that does not respond to the needs of the citizens. It is our proposal that the process of legal reform in the health sector be embarked upon in the first PRSP cycle.

3.4 GOVERNANCE

The PRSP Draft does recognize the broad canvas of issues that hamper good governance in Zambia and there is acknowledgement in the draft of the need to promote good governance in the management of private and public affairs as a mechanism for poverty industry. There are notable gaps however in the thrust of the programmes and these are outlined as follows:

Objective 1 – Ensure decision-making through wider uses of the consultative process

1. The measures are more focused on improving institutional capacity and linkages at local government level. However, there is an apparent need to strengthen the consultative process even at the legislature. The on-going Parliamentary reforms should therefore be broadened to include wider participation of the citizens in the life and work of Parliament.
2. The proposed strengthening of the local government system should be holistic and the measures outlined in the draft are merely subsets of major measures that are supposed to be undertaken. Civil Society, therefore proposes that broad based Local Government Reforms be instituted with a focus on Organizational Development of local authorities among other issues. The Decentralization Policy should be implemented immediately as part of the Reform Programme.

3. The rights of individuals should be broadened and protected, and an appropriate measure suggested is to widen and strengthen the scope of the Bill of Rights to include economic, social and cultural rights.
4. A broad based consultative process should continue as a '*hallmark*' of the PRSP process a Poverty Reduction Council is proposed to provide a platform for all stakeholders in the implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP.

Objection 2 – Ensure efficient, equitable and transparent Management of public resources

1. The offices of the Auditor General and Accountant General should include decentralized to ensure a countrywide presence.
2. The measures proposed on corruption are rather mild and do not reflect the seriousness of corruption and how corruption has become 'institutionalized'. There is need therefore to decentralize the Anti-Corruption Commission, and further, the office of the Director of Public Prosecution should be made autonomous and a Directorate of Public Prosecution established independent of the Police Service. Additionally, the DPP's power to refuse consent to prosecute should be subject to petition by interested parties.
3. The draft PRSP does not address the issue of procurement and it is civil society's contention that the composition of the National Tender Board should be changed and include a cross section of people from society, while the Board should also be provided with adequate funding to enhance its capacity.

Objective 3 – Guaranteed Justice for all

1. In order to fully develop a rights culture in the country, it is proposed that the Human Rights Commission be granted the powers to prosecute offences and to award compensation to aggrieved parties.
2. The creation and operationalizing of a Police Complaints Authority is welcome and long overdue. However, there are other important pre-requisites and one of these is that of the appointment of the Inspector General of Police – who, civil society are proposing should be appointed by the Public Service Commission, subject to ratification by the National Assembly.

3.5 ENVIRONMENT

The following are the suggested strategies under the environment and these are premised on the fact that environment is cross-cutting:

1. An increase in the funding level for purposes of research and development by different research organizations including the universities in order to maximize on the potential benefits from the use of natural resources.
2. Develop strong linkages between Government and other non-state actors and improve on environmental protection as well as provide opportunities for poverty reduction.
3. Strengthen the provisions of Environmental laws and provide for strict enforcement in order to protect the environment from degradation.
4. Develop a National Sustainable Development Strategy, which will equally be implemented in the PRSP process
5. Pilot Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) projects should be reviewed and replicated in other areas, as a vehicle to ensure equitable sharing of benefits by the communities.
6. Institute strategies to protect and preserve Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)
7. Ensure gender mainstreaming in environmental management, so as to provide both access and control to both women and men in the communities.

3.6 GENDER

Several of the interventions made by civil society have been taken on board in the draft PRSP. However, the proposed budget for gender is not adequate particularly that gender is considered to be a cross-cutting issue. Further suggestions of immediate strategies have also be made as follows:

1. Appropriate legal reforms are necessary in order to effectively deal with bad cultural practices and customs that disadvantage women.
2. Gender focal persons should be appointed at district level to enhance the process of gender mainstreaming.
3. A specific line ministry should be identified to exclusively implement the National Gender Policy as well as the resultant Action Plan.

3.7 AGRICULTURE

There was general consensus on the importance of agriculture as a growth area for the Zambian economy. Both papers addressed common concerns with regards to the role of agriculture in economic growth and poverty reduction. However, issues pertaining to gender biases in access to land and credit were specifically addressed by the civil society.

Six specific priority interventions were identified:

1. Land Development and support Services which basically accommodates a broad participation in issues related to water and land management seeking to make maximum utilisation of water and land.
2. Infrastructure Development to include specific issues such as dam rehabilitation and construction specifically to mitigate drought periods, which have in the past exacerbated poverty.
3. Agri-business Promotion and Training - this was observed as critical. Training and retraining in new farming techniques such as "conservation tillage" with skills enhancement about markets and their performance was also discussed. The role of government in regulating agri- business activities was observed as essential in the effort of economic growth and poverty reduction.
4. Finance and Investment to address specific gaps in the access to finance were discussed. Deliberate policies to address this need required government to establish a finance house to lend at competitive rates that addressed the serious poverty levels in the hinterland
5. Technology Development and Dissemination this was discussed and generally agreed, however, in the absence of a Government position on Genetically Modified Crops/Organisms, there were mixed feelings on this issue. Areas related to small-scale irrigation schemes, especially in outgrower schemes for export crops was appreciated. Further, aspects related to crop storage among the small scale farmers were discussed as a critical component for poverty reduction.
6. Food Security and Diversification – the discussion attracted debate on the need to improve livestock disease monitoring and eradication in disease prone areas. This was basically debated as one of the key contributors of poverty in Zambia. Contributions were also made to specific issues such as crop diversification, seed multiplication and the need to establish seed/grain banks.

3.8 MACROECONOMICS

The Macroeconomics discussion took into consideration all the cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, and HIV/AIDS. It was recognised that in view of the severe poverty levels in Zambia, specific interventions, with immediate impact on the socio-economic welfare of Zambians should be implemented; such as:

1. Government should clear its public/domestic debt related to suppliers. It was generally agreed that this would immediately place money into the hands of these business-persons who would in turn revamp their business activities.
2. Government should meet its obligation to pay outstanding pensions, severance and retrenchment packages to former parastatal and government workers. The effect of this move, is that it would have the immediate impact of reducing the poverty levels of these former workers and their families.
3. The forum considered the need to restructure government institutions by streamlining certain government operations to avoid duplicity.
4. Government should seriously address the national debt issue. Civil society specifically demanded that government should adopt the debt mechanism as proposed by Jubilee Zambia. Additionally, it was proposed that all new debt procurement should involve the broader participation of all stakeholders in terms of understanding – what the money was being borrowed for? At what interest rate and how is it to be utilised?
5. The forum applauded Government's intentions to re-introduce a Planning Unit within the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, however, it was agreed that the planning process should be inclusive and bring on board other stakeholders' concerns. This was discussed recognising the need for medium and long term planning within government.
6. Civil society, were in agreement with government that export-led growth was necessary particularly in view of the regional integration efforts that are currently in place. It was also underscored that capacity building of the local business persons was critical in improving the supply capacity and fully exploit market access as presented by African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as well as the EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement.

3.9 INDUSTRY

The forum agreed with the proposals that are contained in the draft PRSP. However, a point of emphasis was that there was need to institute development programmes on a pilot basis in existing areas such the Mkushi farming block in order to enhance rural-based agro-processing.

Secondly, the forum proposes that there should be a deliberate policy developed by Government that will ensure that women are equally involved in trade policy development

3.10 MINING

Debate ensued on whether Government could re-visit the Development Agreement signed for the privatisation of the mines, which gave huge tax holidays to the new mine investors. The forum prevailed that to re-visit the development agreements would create uncertainty among potential investors. Other suggestions to be considered by government are the following:

1. Small-scale and artisanal miners must be supported in the event of the need to transfer or mortgage mineral rights to other parties that possess the resources to manage mining.
2. The right to mine for those people living in mineral rich areas should be recognised in the same way land is recognised as an asset.
3. Government must encourage mining operators to establish business development units to assist local communities. This concept is accepted internationally under the Partnership Forum Initiative.

4.0 CONCLUSION

From the two day workshop, civil society were generally satisfied on the commitment of government to consult as widely as possible and equally to take board the interventions proposed by other stakeholders. It was however, agreed that the draft PRSP should still be worked on in order to sharpen the priorities that seem in some instances to be too general.