

TANZANIA COALITION ON DEBT AND DEVELOPMENT-TCDD

PRSR PROCESSES IN TANZANIA

**PERSPECTIVES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY:
*VOICES FROM AROUND THE WORLD***

BY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 THE TANZANIAN POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

Tanzania has developed a range of strategy papers and policy initiatives to guide its poverty reduction efforts. This process started well before the country became eligible for debt relief under the enhanced HIPC Initiative, which led to the drafting of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

The major landmarks are the National Poverty Eradication Strategy (NPES), the Vision 2025 document for Mainland Tanzania and Vision 2020 for Zanzibar, the Tanzania Assistance Strategy (TAS), the m

Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and the Public Expenditure Review (PER).

Vision 2020 and 2025 describe in general terms the overall level of development the country wants to achieve over the course of the next few decades. The NPES sets a wide range of more specific poverty reduction targets. Its overall aim is to reduce abject poverty by 50 per cent by 2010 and eliminate abject poverty altogether in Tanzania by the year 2025. Among the priority sectors targeted in the NPES are education, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, agriculture, employment creation and income generation. The focus is on the translation of long-term aspirations into concrete, short-term and medium-term targets. The understanding of poverty in the NPES is a multi-dimensional one. The strategy describes poverty as a state of deprivation, prohibitive of decent human life. This covers a very wide range of indicators indeed. The vision documents and the NPES have made it very clear that Tanzania needs to find ways to produce adequate, timely and reliable data and information for the wide range of poverty dimensions dealt with in these documents.

In the year 2000 Tanzania made much more progress in addressing poverty by completing the formulation of the PRSP hinged on the already existing poverty policy frameworks mentioned earlier. The PRSRP was more focused, identifying six key priority sectors which

was thought could curb poverty if well implemented. These were, Education, Agriculture, Health, Water, Rural Roads, Judiciary, and HIV/AIDS as crosscutting issue.

2.0 MEASURES AND MECHANISMS FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

Variety of measures and mechanisms to reduce poverty have been developed and experimented by different countries/governments; to a large extent with assistance /conditionality from the IMF and World Bank. The outcome have always been more impoverishments of the poor people. Nevertheless, a few have proven effective and to a large extent, necessary.

2.1 Sustaining Macroeconomic Stability.

Following the adoption of the PRS, Tanzania had been able to restore macroeconomic stability hence resulting in accelerated growth from 2.0 percent (1998) to 6.7 percent of GDP (2004). Inflation have fallen to 4 percent while government savings has gone up to six months.

2.2 Rural Sector Development

Agricultural transformation through provision of substitute for agricultural inputs have proven important in boosting outputs for most traditional exports.

Private crop buyers or traders were encouraged to purchase crops and import fertilizers and insecticides.

Rural road rehabilitation and construction have taken place and farmers crops can be transported to markets easily.

Provision of credits to small and medium scale farmers and entrepreneurs is being done to increase output for export growth of both traditional and non-traditional agricultural exports, especially food crops.

Abolition of nuisance taxes on agriculture products and inputs was seen as a way towards boosting agriculture.

Land Act Review to allow farmers to use their land as collateral for acquisition of loans or to enter in joint venture with would be investors.

2.3 Private Sector Development

The Private Sector should be seen as the engine for growth. Measure to privatize public enterprises have proved fruitful. Investment procedures and regulations have been easier to attract more foreign investments.

2.4 Human Capability Development.

Poverty reduction measure can never be successful in a society where the majority of the population are illiterate, poor survival rates, and their overall well-being is unfairly clear. Thus investing in education and health are prerequisites for poverty reduction. Tanzania has been able to increase both gross and net enrollment in primary schools thus reducing illiteracy and increasing transition rate to secondary school from 15% (1999) to 21% (2004). Gains for Survival rate are marginal due to the increase in HIV/AIDS incidences in the country.

3.0 OBSTACLES TO INFORM THE POOR ABOUT POLICIES ON POVERTY REDUCTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Tanzania unlike many people could think of have been in the forefront to engage non state actors in various policy processes. Since the early 1990s policy processes have been more participatory and engaging. However, the level and magnitude of engagement could differ depending on the policy/issue at stake.

In terms of the poor being involved, during the formulation of the PRSP the government made sure that they got involved and informed through the zonal workshops which were organized throughout the country. Second was the move by the CSOs to translate these policies into plain languages of English and Kiswahili. The policy documents are then disseminated throughout the country using different means and strategies.

Currently communities are involved in monitoring poverty at their local areas using different avenue, hitherto local government reforms, and participatory poverty assessment. CSOs are also involving the poor in poverty monitoring.

Nevertheless, there are notable obstacles which still hinder the poor from being active participants in these policy processes: *One* is the traditional practices among government departments at all levels where each and every piece of information is considered confidential or top secret; *second* is poor lines of communication whereby dissemination of information is limited to semi-urban and urban areas. Most parts of the country side have no electricity hence no access to internet services nor radio communications. *Thirdly* is language barrier in both presentation of the policy documents and at the consultative meetings. Presentations are rich in technical jargons which are difficult to be demystified by the poor who are normally semi illiterate. Policy documents are made to impress donors not to be used as working documents for the poor who are said to be the targets for implementation. *Fourth*, is the all question of either being consulted or participating. In most cases the poor are consulted to give their views which at the end of the exercise are never if not least included in the final document which will be implemented by the poor. As such the level of involvement of the poor in policy implementation becomes questionable and at times ineffective.

4.0 EXPERIENCE IN ENGAGING IN POLICIES ON POVERTY REDUCTION

The involvement of various actors in policy processes brings about multi-sectoral approach, which enhances legitimacy and builds consensus on key issues, goals and objectives. Furthermore is taps a wide range of expertise and if possible financing.

During the course of my (speaking from the CSOs point of view) participation in a number of challenges and opportunities were recorded. *First*, lack of information on the key issues highlighted in the policy documents coupled with limited access to certain key complimenting information. *Second*, trust between the government and non-state actors is still questionable. There is limited understanding that non-state actors are complimenting government efforts to reduce poverty. *Thirdly*, *lack* of enough technical skills and knowledge on poverty monitoring, budget tracking and data

THANK YOU ALL.

Poverty reduction policies, strategies, measures and mechanisms need to be broad-based, inclusive and multisectoral. There is no clear-cut to poverty reduction. Governments need to capture the capability of the non-state actors, develop confidence and trust while recognizing the critical role that can be played by the poor themselves in collaboration with the private sector towards an equitable development. Policies are made for the people, they must be for the people.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Principally it is agreed that Development practitioners and Human right advocates are the mouthpieces of the poor and marginalized people in all societies. They make the voices of the voiceless heard. *First*, the role played enhances transparency in the way different governments discharge their duties to their citizens in terms of financial accountability and the war against corruption. *Second* they provide decision-makers and policy-makers with evidence based information which (decision/policy-makers) can use to make informed decisions and policies. *Thirdly*, they develop the capacity of the poor to hold their leaders accountable and transparent through engagement in policy dialogue. *Fourth*, they act as a bridge between the people and their governments as information generated at their areas of concerns are forwarded to higher leadership level.

5.0 THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS AND HUMAN RIGHT ADVOCATES.

analysis. Inadequate understanding of policy issues that limits effective participation in policy dialogue. *Fourth*, up streaming feedback remains a set back for community level leadership to inform top level leadership. The community is rich in information concerning their environment and circumstances which if used could inform good decisions, but this information is hardly shared.