

Annex 6a – Summary of the MPRS Process

The preparation of the MPRS basically involved three stages. These were **mobilisation, preparation and validation** processes. The three stages were aimed at: building broad Malawian ownership of the MPRS; building consensus on MPRS in order to enhance likelihood to policy adoption, implementation and sustainability; to ensure donor “buy in” to MPRS and to meet donor requirements.

First, the **mobilisation** exercise started in earnest in January 2001, with the official launch of the MPRS preparation by the Right Honourable Mr. Justin Malewezi, Vice President of the Republic of Malawi at Capital Hotel on 11th January 2001. The main objective of the official launch was to mobilise all stakeholders outside and within government to participate in the MPRS process; and to stimulate discussion and come to an initial understanding of overall prioritisation. At this meeting, some general consensus began to emerge on the outline of the strategy. It came out clearly that for poverty to be reduced in Malawi, there is need for creating conditions whereby the poor can generate their own income and therefore contribute to wealth generation.

Second, was the **preparation** stage. The main objective of this stage to obtain input to overall prioritisation process, to brainstorm and develop new strategies. This preparation stage involved the initial gathering of information by the Thematic Working Groups (TWG) and drafting of the thematic contributions. The participation in the TWGs was diverse. Apart from government officials, other stakeholders included donors, non Governmental Organisations, Civil Society and religious bodies. The preparation also involved the overall sessions in district workshops. All the 27 districts were consulted. The consultations were carried out by members of the MPRS Technical Committee together with some members of the MPRS Thematic Working Groups. The stakeholders at district consultation level included Traditional Authorities, Sub Traditional Authorities, Group Village Headmen, Village Headmen, Members of Parliament, Ward Councillors, political leaders of various parties, District Commissioners and their staff members, local non-governmental organisations on some ordinary citizens representing the voices of the poor. The workshops were held to explain the MPRS process, discuss Government’s proposed strategy and to discuss

the prioritisation of issues for poverty reduction in the districts. A number of common issues emerged from these discussions, implying that they were national priorities. In addition many district specific issues were also raised. A summary of the key issues can be found below.

In the course of the preparation process, the “Findings to Date” document was prepared. The document highlighted the key areas where consensus had been reached during the MPRS process. The document was based on the discussions following the official launch, the deliberations of the Thematic Working Groups and the Findings of the District Consultations. The document was not intended to be a comprehensive statement of Government Policy on poverty reduction, but an input from the ongoing MPRS process into the 2001/02 Budget.

Subsequent to the Salima Workshop, a Poverty and Macroeconomic Taskforce was formed to define the poverty and macroeconomic framework for the MPRS. Members of the Taskforce were drawn from Government, civil society and donors, and was assisted by a consultant.

The second drafts of the Thematic Working Groups were submitted in August 2001, after a meeting was held to resolve difficulties encountered in the drafting process. In addition, as a result of the meeting a consultant was engaged to assist the TWGs in costing their strategies.

The preparation of the first draft MPRS was done between 23rd September and 5th October, 2001 at the Mzuzu Hotel. The drafting team was drawn from the Technical Committee, civil society and the private sector. The resulting draft was then presented at two stakeholders’ meetings held on the 15th and 16th October, 2001 at the Le Meridien Capital Hotel in Lilongwe. The draft was subsequently comprehensively revised to reflect the comments made at these meetings.

The third stage was the **validation** of the strategy through the National Symposium. The main objectives of this stage were to ensure consistency of proposed strategy, ensure effectiveness of participation, obtain validation of the proposed strategy and define and explain way forward.

Table A1.1 – Chronology of MPRS Preparation

ACTIVITY	DATE	NOTES
Planning of process	October-November,2000	Preparation by the Technical Committee of the outline of the process and mobilisation
Preparation of “ MPRS Issues Paper”	November, 2000	By the Technical Committee on the basis of existing documents. The Issues Paper presented a “menu of options” from which priorities were to be selected.
Official Launch at Capital Hotel	January 11 th , 2001	By the Rt.Hon. Vice President at the Capital Hotel. Followed by presentations on the process and the issues paper.
Initial overall prioritisation	January 11 th – 12 th , 2001	Following the Official Launch, discussions of overall prioritisation based on the Issues Paper
Launching of TWGs at Malawi Institute of Management (MIM)	January 18 th – 19 th , 2001	Presentations on the role of the TWGs, their TORs etc, followed by the first meetings.
District Consultations	February 5 th – 16 th , 2001	Workshop in each district facilitated by the Technical Committee and some TWG members.
Preparation of “MPRS: Findings to Date” document	April, 2001	By the Technical Committee on the basis of previous consultations.
Way forward meeting at Lilongwe Hotel	4 th May, 2001	For all TWGs, to define the revised timetable and give overall comments on the 1 st drafts.
Commenting Workshops in Salima	7 th – 15 th May, 2001	For each TWG in turn, detailed comments on the 1 st drafts from a panel consisting of the Technical Committee, relevant experts, civil society and other TWGs.
“MPRS: Findings to Date” Stakeholders meeting	29 th May, 2001	Discussion of the draft document, following which an editing team taken from the Technical Committee and civil society finalised the document
Sharing Experiences in Costing of Poverty Reduction Strategies at Capital Hotel	26 th July 2001	TWGs shared experiences in costing highlighting major problems being faced in costing of activities.
Status Report and Way	15 th August, 2001	For all TWGs to discuss the made, to

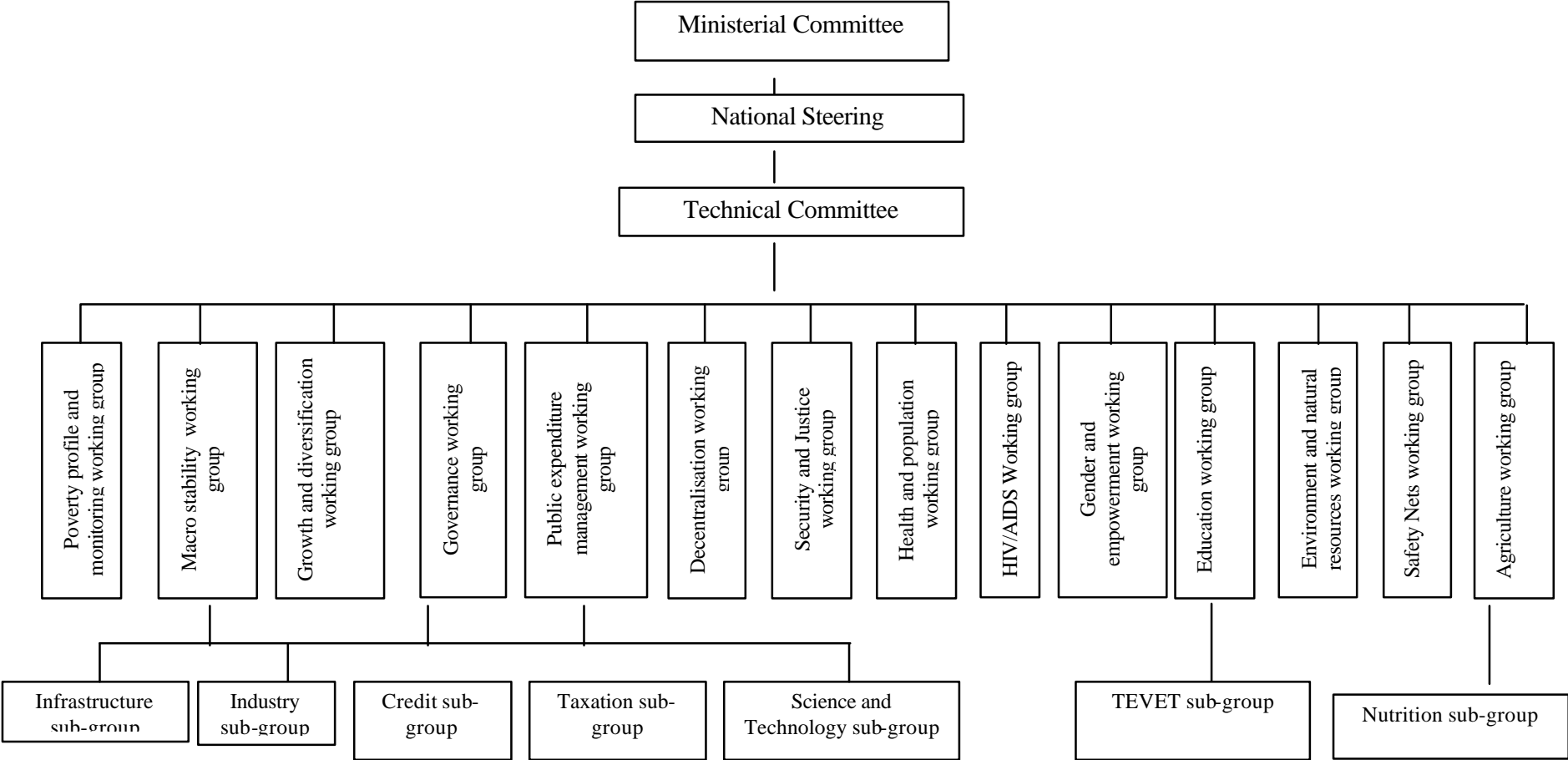
Forward by Thematic working Groups at Lilongwe Hotel		access difficulties faced and to develop realistic and workable mechanism for resolving problems.
Media Campaign	16 th – 23 rd September, 2001	Media briefing, recording of radio programmes, press conference.
Drafting of the MPRS at Mzuzu Hotel	23 rd Sept- 6 th October, 2001	By the Technical Committee including members from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society.
Commenting Workshop by all Stakeholders on the first MPRS Draft at Capital Hotel	15 th and 17 th October, 2001	Private sector, traditional authorities, Councillors, donors, NGOs, civil society, church groups, trade unions.
Principal Secretaries Commenting of the Draft	20 th – 21 st October, 2001	All Principal Secretaries, Chaired by SPC
Comments on the Draft MPRS by Members of Parliament at Capital Hotel	31 st October, 2001	All Members of Parliament
Incorporation of comments from stakeholders and refinement of action plan	31 st October – 9 th November, 2001	By drafting team
Consultations on action plans and prioritisation with TWGs	12 th – 22 nd November, 2001	
Briefing of and comments by Cabinet	December-January, 2001-2	
Comments by donor partners	January, 2002	
Media Campaign	January, 2002	TV programmes, leaflets, press conference.
National Symposium at Comesa Hall in Blantyre	January-February, 2002	

Management Framework for the MPRS

The overall process was managed by four layers of committees at different levels. Firstly, a total of 21 Thematic Working Groups (including subgroups) were instituted to draft thematic contributions. These groups reviewed the impact of sector on poverty, outlined the strategies with priorities and an action plan. Secondly, the Technical Committee consisting of officials from the National Economic Council, Ministry of Finance and the Reserve Bank of Malawi. This committee was responsible for managing the process and coordinating and providing support to the Thematic Working Groups. Thirdly, the National Steering Committee of Principal

Secretaries, chaired by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning was responsible to give advice and guidance to the Technical Committee. Finally the Ministerial Committee, chaired by the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Coordinated the overall process. Below is a diagram showing the layers of the institutional framework.

MPRS Preparation Organisational Structure



Annex 6b - Issues highlighted in District Consultations (in order of priority)

1. **Credit:** Lack of access to credit was felt to have contributed to the worsening of poverty. There is widespread misconception of the nature of credit, particularly the risks and responsibilities involved.
2. **Rural feeder roads:** Physical access to markets is prevented by poor quality and insufficient rural feeder roads linking farmers and entrepreneurs to towns, main roads and other markets.
3. **Education quality/relevance:** Government should take measures to improve the quality of primary education by training more teachers, increasing allocations to teaching and learning materials, and improving teachers' remuneration
4. **Security:** security deters people to invest in productive assets. In particular, livestock thefts are rife such that there is no incentive to keep livestock
5. **Access to safe water:** Access to safe drinking water is central to poverty reduction because it promotes good health and nutrition
6. **High agricultural production:** Agriculture development is faced with challenge of lack of produce markets and people fail to sell the produce in order to realise cash income
7. **Decentralisation:** Poverty varies from district to district. Therefore, decentralisation would go along way in addressing district specific poverty issues
8. **Macroeconomic stability:** The poor feel the impact of macroeconomic instability through inflation which erodes the purchasing power of the already meagre incomes
9. **Off-farm rural development:** despite the importance of agriculture, it is clear that the future for Malawi lies in diversifying away from primary production into activities that have higher value-added component.
10. **Market information for farmers/small business:** marketing arrangements for agricultural produce are generally agreed to be inadequate at present. Lack of access to markets is due to lack of information and capacity
11. **Health quality/Access:** There is need to increase the quality and access to health centre

12. **Corruption:** corruption has resulted in mistrust between the poor and all levels of Government, hence, corruption must be stopped
13. **Irrigation:** this is important to increase the production of crops to ensure food sufficiency in the country