

CHAPTER FOUR

GOVERNANCE IN POVERTY REDUCTION

Introduction

The state and its arms primarily exist to promote and protect citizens' welfare. Weak governance of public institutions therefore reduces the state's effectiveness to fulfil this mission. As a consequence, citizens themselves have to meet this extra cost, if they can, which drives the poor into deeper poverty. In Zambia, although the Constitution and its provisions aim at the promotion and protection of citizens' welfare wide spread poverty exists and has increased. Poor governance has contributed to the poverty in the following ways. Firstly there has been inadequate genuine participation of citizens in the choice of leadership, programs and utilisation of resources in accordance with their poverty reduction needs. Secondly, resources are not used judiciously for poverty reduction effectiveness. Lastly, the rights enjoyed by citizens are minimal and their protection is weak. These weaknesses are present at all levels of governance.

Given this scenario, poverty reduction in the area of governance must be guided by a vision of a Zambian society in which all citizens have equal opportunities to fulfil their potential and co-exist in dignity and harmony. The goal is to transform all private and public institutions into instruments for good governance. It is stressed that without good governance norms and practices at all levels and at all institutions, poverty reduction will remain illusive even with the most ideal endowment of resources. Public finances will remain porous and citizens' participation in poverty reduction efforts, particularly the poor, will be unattainable.

Zambia's National Capacity-Building Programme for Good Governance (NCBPGG) outlines at great detail the required steps for improving governance. Given the limited resources it will be sometime before the country acquires the capacity to implement most programs contained in that document. In the meantime, Zambia has decided to focus on three key objectives of governance, which will be implemented as part of the overall strategy for poverty reduction. The first objective addresses the need to have regular and wider consultations between Government and citizenry. The second objective addresses the need to ensure efficient, equitable and transparent management of public resources. Guaranteed justice for all is the third and last objective to be pursued.

Governance and Poverty

From the governance perspective, poverty is not only little or lack of access to income through employment, entitlement or other means that determine consumption but also exclusion from participation in institutions and processes that govern one's life leading to voicelessness and powerlessness in these processes and institutions. It manifests itself in low educational opportunities, inadequate access to resources and lack of freedom to exercise choice and participate fully in national development.

Governance, on the other hand, refers to processes by which society manages its economic, social and political resources and institutions - not only for development- but also for cohesion, integration and well being of its people. Essential components for good governance transcend matters such as elections, corruption, independence of the

judiciary and upholding of the rule of law, the public service, institutional linkages, capacity building and involvement of civil society in the decision-making process. Transparency and accountability are also identified as key tenets of good governance.

Bad governance imposes particular burden on the poor and throws them into deeper poverty. Equally, poverty constrains the poor to participate in national development leading to weak or poor governance of institutions. Good governance, on the other hand, is associated with larger growth rates and incomes for the poor harnessed by Government through greater involvement of Civil Society and private business sector into development. It follows that any strategy for economic growth and sustainable human development must encompass good governance in both its technical and representational forms of which the latter involves participation, transparency and accountability.

Situational Analysis

One important contributor to poverty, from the governance perspective, is the inconsistent linkage between policies and implementation of programmes. The Constitution, the international treaties and conventions provide for the policy framework for this. In addition Zambia has produced the National Capacity-Building Programme for Good Governance.

Regarding the later, there are practical shortcomings for implementing programs for good governance. Some of these shortcomings are as follows:

- ❑ There is lack of political will to implement the National Capacity-Building Programme for Good Governance.
- ❑ There is little regular and wide consultation between Government and it's citizens to promote and protect the rule of law. This is due to the absence of a decentralisation policy to guide programs, processes and institutions on citizens' participation in decision-making, choice of programs and resources available to them. Consequently, Local Government is weak with citizens having no control over appointment of District Administrators. In addition Mayors and Council Chairpersons, various school and health boards as well as selected committees have no control on various funds such as Constituency and Youth Development Funds.
- ❑ Political interference, lack of transparency and accountability and weak institutional linkages between local authorities and local-level structures, such as Resident Committees, have prevented these structures from executing their duties effectively.
- ❑ There has been little engagement into dialogue between Government and civil society. Their relationship has been at arm's length and sometimes acrimonious. This is so for example over the use of public media, which does not carry dissenting views or is used to stifle dissent. There is lack of political commitment to inter-party talks and unfair implementation of the Public Order Act.
- ❑ Public funds are not used judiciously and the state's ability to provide a secure and enabling environment is curtailed resulting in the lower degree of self-reliance, sustainable livelihoods and inadequate means of employment. Some of the reasons accounting for lack of judicious use of public resources include:
 1. A budgeting process, which does not allow for broader participation giving citizens no choice in the budgeting issues

2. The absence of good co-ordination amongst government policies programmes and budget with the attendant problem of lack of prioritisation
3. The absence of strong financial management and a system to check abuses as well as lack of political will and public debate against corruption all lead to misallocation of public resources.

Although fundamental rights are guaranteed in the Republican Constitutions, there are nevertheless some instance of non-realisation, infringement and abuse of these rights. Firstly, the non-domestication of international instruments and conventions Zambia has ratified, has entailed that the range and quality of rights enjoyed by the citizens has been at best minimal. Secondly, there have been delays in operationalising the Police Complaints Authority to deal with infringements of citizens' rights by the Police. In this regard, the discriminatory application of the Public Order Act against the opposition has been a big concern. Thirdly, the accessibility to courts is limited by the inadequacy of the number of courtrooms, and judges as well as prosecutors. Fourthly, the use of public media by the state to suppress dissenting views has been disconcerting. Fifthly and lastly, the inadequate capacity of legal support to institutions such as the Law Development Commission has implied that laws are not revised in time to keep up with the aspirations of the citizens.

Governance Programmes For Poverty Reduction

Given the identified problems relating to poverty, the new vision for Governance will focus to create a society in Zambia in which all citizens have opportunities to realize their full potential and co-exist in dignity and harmony. The goal for Governance will be to promote good governance in the management of private and public affairs as a mechanism for poverty reduction. To this end, three objectives, with their attendant poverty reduction programmes, will be pursued:

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

To enhance the legitimacy of government leadership, decisions, programs and resource utilisation for effectiveness of poverty reduction programmes, regular and wide consultation between Government and citizenry will be undertaken. To this end, a decentralisation policy shall be developed and implemented to ensure that citizens, particularly women and other disadvantaged groups, participate in their own affairs and control this process and institutions. The office of the District Administrator shall be abolished and its function taken to local authorities to reduce undermining of local authorities and channel resources to needy areas.

The mayors and their equivalents, the various education and health boards as well as committees controlling various funds at district and sub-district-level shall be directly elected by the people to increase citizens' control of leadership, programs and resources. Institutional linkages between the local authority on one hand, the community and all sub-district as well as all district level structures, on the other hand, shall be established and their capacities shall be enhanced to operate on non-partisan, professional, accountable and transparent lines.

Supra-district structures, Provincial Development Co-ordinating Committees as well as government departments, shall be transformed to assume a supportive role to the local authorities. At national level, the cooperation between Government and Civil Society shall be strengthened and various citizen fora shall be established to encourage civil society's involvement into national development.

Objective 2: Ensure efficient, equitable and transparent management of Public resources.

To achieve this objective, the budgeting process will need to be decentralised in order for it to maximise people's creativity and utilisation of public resources. Secondly, the current Public Expenditure Review will be complemented by a well-prioritised and co-ordinated budget and programs coupled with strict financial discipline and simplified expenditure tracking procedures to enhance targeting of poverty reduction programmes and beneficiaries.

The offices of Auditor General and Accountant General will have their capacity enhanced for timely and accurate reports to monitor programme utilisation of resources.

To reduce corruption and financial abuses, the Republican President and all political leaders shall denounce publicly all corrupt practice and financial abuses. The capacity of the Anti-Corruption Commission shall be improved. To improve the efficiency of the Public Service, all Civil Servants, including Permanent Secretaries, shall be appointed by the Public Service Commission, which shall provide them with good conditions of service.

Objective 3: Guaranteed justice for all.

Guaranteed justice for all aims at empowering citizens through firmly protecting and enhancing their rights stipulated under the Constitution. This will involve, the domestication of international conventions Zambia has ratified, particularly the social and economic ones; the efficiency of the legal system will be improved through increased number of court rooms, judges, magistrates and prosecutors; retraining of these personnel; and simplified legal procedures for speedy justice. It will also require use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, including a small claims court, to decongest the courts.

All Constitutional and legal reforms will need the fair and consistent application of the law, failure of which redress must be met. Therefore the Police Complaints Authority and the SADC protocol on corruption will need to be operationalised urgently. The requisite elements for attaining the three objectives are summarised in the log frame of this report (appendix I),

Priority Programs

Owing to scarcity of resources, programmes need to be prioritised. For the PRSP to succeed, the programmes in the Governance Sector will need to be given first priority because of its pivotal role in poverty reduction. Within the Governance sector itself, paramount will be fight against corruption and prioritising of budgets and programmes,

then the involvement of the beneficiaries, and finally the enhancement and protection of citizens' rights.