

POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPER
FOR
ZAMBIA

A DOCUMENT OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY
FOR POVERTY REDUCTION
(CSPR)

Foreword

The papers that are presented in this volume are a clear indication of the serious concern and strong commitment of civil society in Zambia to the reduction of poverty in the country. That more than 80% of our sisters and brothers live today in unacceptable human conditions, below the basic poverty line, is for us not simply a social fact but a moral scandal.

The Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) project has been undertaken with the clear objective of making certain that the voices of Zambians are heard and responded to in the preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This is because we see the PRSP not simply as a process for soliciting funds to immediately meet the challenge of poverty reduction, but rather as a more fundamental process for long-term development planning.

Such a long-term process requires that the preparation of the PRSP incorporates empirically verifiable measurements of success or failure so that we can see whether we are indeed headed in the right direction. Furthermore, the agencies charged with implementing this development plan must be clearly identified and the cost and timing of their interventions sharply specified. Only in this way can the exercise have any hope of realistic completion.

The CSPR undertook the task of active participation in the government-sponsored Working Groups designing the PRSP because of our hope that the input arising from the “meaningful participation” of civil society was honestly being sought by the Government of Zambia and would sincerely be respected by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the managers of the PRSP process.

The CSPR has prepared the papers in this volume because of our firm belief that the wider consultation manifested by these papers would significantly enrich the understanding of poverty in Zambia, sharply highlight priority areas for response, and substantially improve the overall document.

Ours is in no way to be viewed as a “parallel PRSP”, but rather as a direct contribution to a final document that wants to rightly claim *domestic ownership*. We, therefore, expect serious consideration of our analysis and recommendations.

We are keenly aware that all the endeavours to formulate strategies for poverty reduction will be in vain if there is inadequate *political will* to recognise the reduction of poverty as the number one priority of Zambia today. This will, of course, require a clear statement by the highest government authorities that the PRSP is the obligatory guide for future allocation of resources and direction of activities.

The papers presented here provide a long-term vision that must guide the short-term steps to be taken for the reduction of poverty. This long-term vision poses as a fundamental question: *what would Zambia look like in the next decade if we really do move toward poverty reduction?*

This is not simply an *economic* question. At its most profound level it is an *ethical* question, for the answer reveals the moral tone of a nation that should see human development in terms that are *wider* than more Manda Hill shopping malls and *deeper* than mere abstract economic growth figures. Poverty reduction is about the life and death realities of over 80% of our sisters and brothers.

It is our earnest hope that the combination of domestic ownership and authorship of the final PRSP, coupled with pressures applied by our co-operating partners, and heightened by the expectations of a nation devastated by the ravages of poverty and deprivation, will indeed coalesce into the catalytic stimulus required for government, the business community, civil society and the population at large to internalise, implement and support an effective poverty reduction strategy that benefits the entire nation.

Future generations will judge us on the realisation of that hope.

Peter J. Henriot

Director, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection

(Co-ordinating Institution for Civil Society for Poverty Reduction)

