PARPA/PRSP AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN MOZAMBIQUE:

Challenges to national and international agents-

PAPER PRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE ON POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY IN AFRICA – A NEW IMPOSED CONDITIONALITY OR A CHANCE FOR A MEANINGFUL DEVELOPMENT POLICY?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PARPA/PRSP in Mozambique was approved by the government and accepted by the Bretton Woods institutions in the first trimester of 2001 giving way for Mozambique meeting decision points in the HIPC initiative for debt relief.

It proposes reduction in rates of absolute poverty in Mozambique in 5 and 10 years time frame and the draft approved details actions, indicators and budget by sector in the period 2001-2005. It includes a monitoring and evaluation and dissemination of information along with a consultation strategy and mechanisms.

The process of drafting PARPA up to full PRSP is analyzed in this paper to consider how much partners other than the government had a say and have had the opportunity to make contributions. A deficit in consultations is identified and different points of view are presented that converges on HIPC deadlines as the major factor responsible for a less comprehensive consultation process.

The potential for a rolling plan is then scrutinized using the provisions made in the PARPA draft and later documents for monitoring and evaluation and for the dissemination of information strategy. Criticisms are raised that do not allow for larger participation of other partners/stakeholders and point out to concentration at central level.

Considering poverty is multidimensional and tackling it implies having the beneficiaries concerns at its core the paper calls for allowance for a more diverse and local experiences and methodologies acting in conjunction with the government as the major actor.

'Campanha Terra' developed around Land Tenure Act dissemination that has taken root and specific dynamics at every administrative level within civil society organizations networks that today are assembled in a 'Forum Terra' is cited in the paper as an example.

A partnership with local institutions focusing on poverty reduction may be warranted as poverty and secure land tenure have close ties and co-exist in most of the rural world. In so doing endogenous elements arisen in the process get incorporated in the development of the actions.

PARPA is then evaluated in its content and issues on conditionalities in its drafting are discussed. The implications are that though services may be delivered to the poor within an enabling environment the alleviation in factors contributing to the poverty status does not necessarily lead to poverty reduction.

The need for processes that generate dynamics upon which production and productivity increases in the rural world is identified that should bear relation to agriculture and agro-industry to include the majority of the population and of the poor.

The monitoring and evaluation and PARPA as a rolling plan are considered as elements of a process through which the different partners acting as stakeholders may revisit PARPA transforming it in an instrument whereby enabling environment actions combines with processes generating more income and multiplying effects.

Introduction

Mozambique has completed the national PRSP (PARPA) in 2001, and its approved version by the Council of Ministers in April that year was presented to IMF/World Bank as a final PRSP draft.

A previous draft was developed by the government sectors on the basis of a national poverty assessment. It included a national household survey of living conditions (1996/7) and case studies in three provinces on social security systems at the community level.

The IMF/World Bank has accepted this draft as an Interim PRSP. Consultations with the private sector, NGO's and other members of the civil society have enabled the government sectors co-ordinated by the Ministry of Planning and Finance to produce the final draft.

The PRS initiative from the Bretton Woods institutions meant poverty reduction to be country driven and owned and hence assumed broad participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of PRSP as a rolling instrument.

A partnership with all stakeholders involved with a medium to long-term horizon would contribute to a more comprehensive approach to poverty reduction and well-defined pro-poor policies and expected outcomes.

This paper aims at discussing the way in which PARPA as a PRSP reflects the commitment from the government and other partners in development to reduce poverty in Mozambique.

We take an historical flight over PARPA drafting process to consider the likelihood of its qualifying as a nationally owned plan to reduce poverty. The presentation of PARPA as a rolling plan is then critically evaluated using the provisions for monitoring and evaluation and the dissemination of information strategy.

The limitations found are considered in light of recent government pronunciations and reflections arisen in the society from discussions on poverty reduction during the process and monitoring and evaluation is identified as an opportunity to revisit PARPA in order to acknowledge progress that needs to be put in the context of an illuminated strategy combining enabling and dynamic factors and processes.

Poverty in Mozambique

Background and poverty assessment

Poverty alleviation has been in the agenda of the government since late 1980's. The Social Dimension of Adjustment project (SDA) and the Office for the Support to Vulnerable Population Groups (GAPVU) gave way to Poverty Alleviation Strategy and a Strategy for Poverty Reduction in Mozambique was drafted in 1995 and its objectives were incorporated into the Five-Year Program of the Government (1995-1999).

In 1997 a national poverty assessment has estimated that the average consumption *per capita* was at USD 170,00 per year placing Mozambique among the poorest countries in the world. The head count poverty index indicated that 69.4% or 10.9 million people lived at the time in absolute poverty (below the poverty line). Other indexes confirmed high levels of poverty.

Poverty in Mozambique was considered to be structural to a large extent. Low levels of human capital, including low educational levels; poor health status of most of the population; low productivity in agricultural sector (largest contingent of workforce); weak physical infrastructure and poor access to basic services (safe drinking water, health facilities, transport, communications and markets); high rates of fertility and corresponding high dependency ratios were documented (Poverty Assessment 1998:91).

Regional differences were large. All poverty indexes indicated that central provinces were poorer than northern and southern ones. Maputo was the richest one.

Differences between poor and non-poor for many variables were quite small. Gender and rural/urban divide were more informative in consumption analysis. Basic services such as health and education, and markets illustrate the point. So, targeting rural populations and women for poverty reduction specify activities better than poor.

Overall, six areas were singled out in the poverty assessment to inform the poverty reducing strategy for Mozambique: increased investment in education; sustained economic growth; a sector pattern of growth favouring faster growth in industrial and services sectors; measures to raise agricultural productivity; improved rural infrastructure; reducing fertility and dependency load within households (Poverty Assessment, 1998:182).

PARPA as a PRSP for Mozambique

Building the instrument

PARPA is a priority plan for the government of Mozambique (GoM) meant to manage medium term macro and sector policies relating to poverty reduction and development (GoM, Consultative Group 2001:iv).

It underwent several stages in its development. At the outset consultations were at national and sector level. It contemplated strategy, priorities, resources, constraints, and effectiveness of interventions. An inter-sector technical group (Annex V, Gov. of Mozambique: 3) brought together the contributions in a draft that was accepted as Interim PRSP.

Subsequently consultations extended to province authorities, international partners and civil society. The main purpose was to get contributions and discuss methodology for the development of integrated provincial plans of action incorporating existing policy instruments like Food Security and Nutrition Strategy and HIV/AIDS Strategy Plan.

The issue of monitoring and evaluation was raised with these partners to incorporate into PARPA adjustment to change and its function as a rolling instrument.

At a later stage the consultations aimed at gaining consistency in PARPA overall vision, priorities and targets and institutional co-ordination. Consultation mechanisms by sector and administrative level, social and economic policy implications, flow of information, issues in governance and legal framework were main issues (Annex V, Gov. of Mozambique:4-5).

So, PARPA has evolved as an instrument centred on the Ministry of Planning and Finance on behalf of GoM and has to a certain extent opened to GoM partners and interested parties in civil society.

The concept of PARPA as a rolling instrument was adopted with a strategy for monitoring and evaluation discriminated in a separated chapter of the final draft and open to wider participation of actors in the society.

Ministry of Planning and Finance has given priority to co-ordinating the various policy and management instruments for medium term and its articulation with yearly ones that is being refined in 2002 (GoM, Consultative Group 2001:23-4). Hence, degree of preparedness at the centre appears to be made in a sound way.

How PARPA reflects focus on poverty reduction?

Methodological issues

PARPA design and choice of strategies reflect the analysis structure in poverty assessment. Hence, PARPA defines poverty as the *inability of individuals to ensure for themselves and their dependents a set of minimum basic conditions for their subsistence* (GoM, 2001).

Income poverty estimated through consumption per capita dominated the definition of poverty. Correlation analyses with non-consumables encapsulated in indicators of well-being do in a way account for the other dimensions.

However, contention on grounds of methodology has been common. It pointed to flaws in inference from poverty assessment results into actions needed to address structural imbalances and deliver poverty reduction results to the poorer segments of the population.

The link of poverty reduction to accelerated economic growth has been confronted with later years good performance of macroeconomic indicators contrasting to less clear effect on population purchasing power. Some NGO's had evidence of increased hardship in rural areas in the same period.

Resource allocation assuming a central concern on equity was fraught with discussion on relative weights to the main items and hence to the effect in ranking regions in terms of poverty. In practical terms, it implies that indexes may admit paradoxically that marginal costs for same degree of improvement may be higher in areas with better ranking.

In a recent paper Negrão (2002) take PARPA experience into the wider context of the global economy. Analysing the budget structure of PARPA and linking it to features of the Mozambique's economic recent past he places PARPA design as a PRSP under the controversial conditionalities of the dominant economic school of thought.

The budget for the 2001-5 period was found to emphasise construction works (36%) and recurrent expenditures (55%). Sector wise education gets 34%, infrastructure 32%, health 25%, and agriculture a mere 8%. We shall return to this paper for the discussions of proposed strategies to follow at a later stage.

Other issues

Furthermore, the backbone of PARPA was drafted at the national and sector level even before the province poverty profiles had been made available. It

impinged distinctively on different sectors as their deepening in the territory (and population) varies.

Health and Education operate at very peripheral level in a consistent way thus having the potential to gather relevant knowledge on needs, means and resources to their improved performance. Agriculture sector much in need of relevant actions is less so prepared.

The availability of province poverty profiles at the consultation phase with province, civil society and NGO's and donors may have compensated for any real distortion to the extent that consultation taken place had features of a more joint-decision making.

The main constraint to better refinement, more thorough reflection and identification of relevant actions acknowledged by both officers and other participants in the consultation process was time dictated by deadlines to meet the HIPC decision points so important to all as external debt relief was at stake.

In spite of these limitations, PARPA may become a guiding instrument as interaction between actors in development improve, the plan is disseminated, so that participants can see themselves as stakeholders and monitoring and evaluation enables its transformation into a rolling plan that incorporate concrete contributions and hence a national owned plan come into being.

Contemplating the above mentioned issues implies that the government as a custodian of PARPA show willingness to encompass all efforts in society in poverty reduction and a strong commitment to its implementation. The operation runs through the state channels and successful unfolding of the process up to the deliverance of expected results requires that prevailing corruption in the state apparatus needs to be tackled (Falck and Landfald, 2000).

However, both these authors and McCarthy that I shall mention within a more civil society perspective have concluded that PARPA in spite of its limitations and flaws could be accepted as an instrument for poverty reduction provided that conditions for wider participation and inclusion in the plans of specific issues from civil society be made (McCarthy Eugene, 2001).

How PARPA embodies the concept of national owned and a rolling plan?

The issues in question are the consultation strategy and plans and the exercise of monitoring and evaluation with its information dissemination and incorporation into the planning process.

The issue of consultation

As mentioned above the consultation process around the preparation of the final draft of PARPA though new as a procedure in the auscultation of the wider public opinion was considered satisfactory but it was deemed as having still scope to increase the legitimacy of the document as some actors had not been either included or present (Annex 2, Gov.of Moçambique: xxx).

Private sector contribution prevailed over civil society said to be due to their better organization and preparedness in scheduling meetings with the Ministry of Planning and Finance. Civil society participation was further undermined as late meeting' contributions (view the HIPC deadlines) could not be included. It precluded absorption of issues put across by academics involved in gender and land tenure matters.

Discussion with some partners were found difficult by the Ministry officers either because their information basis on internal and external factors constraining the state in fulfilling its role was considered not sufficient or because often their interventions reflected a partial, focused on specific interest (corporation) rather than a more global and systematic view.

It was further compounded by the call for the institutionalization of the consultation process. Others voiced negotiation rather consultation and joint decision making in allocation of resources. Furthermore, judicial reform, concrete plan for fighting corruption, better access to credit to rising entrepreneurs and micro credit in rural areas were issues in discussion.

A matrix plotting demands by subject and institutional actor was elaborated on the basis of the information gathered. This matrix was referred by official sources as fulfilling a subsidiary role for planners by exposing an array of structural and circumstantial issues identified by non-government partners to be addressed by the State within public policy and daily management of the economy and social life to improve interaction with other economic agents and social agents (Anexo 2, Gov. de Moçambique:5).

Issues in methodology to render meetings more effective were recorded to be included in future procedures and have contributed with other knowledge on partners and the issues in question to the design of a strategy for consultation within the PARPA framework.

There was not much consultation after completion of the final draft in early 2001. Different readings cropped up in the understanding of limited consultation taking place in the process of re-drafting the interim PRSP into its final form.

Time constraints due to HIPC deadlines were already alluded to but sources close to the government also mentioned 'planning fatigue' in lower levels and

concerns with raising expectations not met and dissatisfaction on the part of the population (Falck and Landfald, 2000).

This view contrasts with civil society perspective (McCarthy Eugene, 2001) where concerns are focused on constraints due to dispersion of the population settlements, difficult communications due to weak road infrastructure, and documents presented in the official language — Portuguese —that most rural population cannot understand. Civil society organizations are considered weak with loose networking. Apprehension of government in areas with political dominance of the opposition party could have deterred further consultations.

So, a deficit in consultation intended to the appropriation of PARPA mostly attributed to debt relief deadlines is yet to be addressed within the model of consultations. A policy paper and mechanisms for cooperation with civil society organizations was developed to add to existing sector mechanisms and an expansion of the participatory integrated district planning experience in Nampula (GoM, 2001: 33).

The issue of monitoring and evaluation

The strategy and institutional framework

Monitoring strategy described in PARPA comprises of input monitoring, process and outcomes monitoring and impact monitoring.

Input and process monitoring refer to budgeting and resource allocation and the degree of implementation of actions. Bottlenecks in the process and efficiency would be assessed through intermediate and outcome indicators using institutional channels, assuming all actions to fall under government sectors (permanent co-ordination).

Changes in population's welfare and poverty status concern impact monitoring. A quantitative methodology format (QUIBB – Welfare quality indicators) will be implemented on annual basis by INE (National Institute of Statistics – former statistics unit in National Planning Commission and not long ago the sole legal national data collector).

Studies using qualitative methodology are to be conducted in partnership between study and research groups in the government, academic institutions and other organizations in civil society. Co-ordination of these institutions would be periodical during scheduled activities.

Evaluation is proposed at mid and the endpoint concerning public policies, the efficacy of the government engagement with other institutions in poverty reduction and the relevancy of adopted strategies.

The roles in evaluation are assigned with INE in data collection and analysis; University Eduardo Mondlane (public) in the analysis and report writing; study and research groups at the Ministry of Planning and Finance in editing and dissemination; government sectors to deepen the discussions and revise priorities; and civil society organizations to facilitate the debate, criticisms, and dissemination of results through their networks.

A matrix details process, product, responsible institutions and authority to submission for each activity. Common authorities for submission are the Observatory of Poverty and PARPA for consultation and Economic Council, Council of Ministers and the Parliament for decision-making.

The Observatory has representatives from civil society and donor community. Details on its operation and the Economic Council have still to be worked out. They both are at central level.

The strategy for dissemination of information is defined as decentralized in production, semi-decentralized in distribution, building up in a network of professionals linked to it with efficient use of information technology; and contracting out services and use of media.

In 2002 the agenda includes a state-owned and managed web page; appointment of a Mozambican observatory for public policies for a social and economic development for technical co-ordination; and printed information packages for teachers, health workers, agriculture extensionists, parliamentarians and general public, and materials for media programs.

A critique of the institutional framework

Participation of the private sector and civil society in monitoring and evaluation is greatly limited by the sector-wide approach of PARPA. The framework may easily lead to interpret their role as mere implementers.

Monitoring focus on efficiency of the process (internal) would allow evaluation to look into the efficacy (external) of the strategy in producing anticipated changes. The role of participants in monitoring and evaluation would be thus clarified.

The concentration on INE overburden with government demand for information narrows the scope for participation of academic institutions and organizations in civil society. Non-reliance on academic institutions in provincial capitals is more

controversial. It reinforces central planning strategy and aggregated data analyses and interpretation.

This position runs counter to the vision within government of pro-poor services delivery that acknowledging the importance of steps in decentralization and community organization suggest the need of data for management at the point of delivery and evaluation of systems provision that the lack of flexibility of PARPA strategy do not cater for (Country Paper, AGF V, 2002).

The spelling of the methodology for incorporation of information from consultations can be of paramount importance in the engagement of civil society organizations and a complement to the government efforts in public sector reform in rendering local administration dutifully responsive and effective as reiterated at a recent UN sponsor meeting in Maputo (Country Paper, AGF V, 2002).

The civil society organizations called for the debate and dissemination of results in consultations could then contribute more fully in the design of interventions and participate in their implementation and hence build up social organization for development.

Furthermore, PARPA monitoring and evaluation strategy do not allow properly for regional differences. Poverty as a complex issue would be better served by a diversified web of relationships between researchers, activists and organizations of civil society with their local specification acting in conjunction with the government as a major actor.

Diverse methodologies sensitive to local specificities can be as much important as common ones in delivering interventions uplifting population living conditions, in promoting development and reducing poverty and regional asymmetries that was officially stated as a goal of the government in the above mentioned meeting (Country Paper, AGF V, 2002).

The dissemination strategy does neglect in consonance with the information production the conditions in the periphery. No specifications included consider local language, the low literacy rate and social marginalization associated with poverty.

The experience of 'Campanha Terra' seems here appropriate to mention for its success in mobilizing and organizing civil society, and for dealing with land tenure issues in a country where 70% of the population is rural and 80% depends on agriculture. It has turned into a Forum Terra organization valuing highly local ownership and respect for diversity.

A partnership to extend coverage of actions could be mutually beneficial. The deepening of state administration that is anticipated would be strengthened while

enabling participants to fulfil their role as acting citizens and promoting civic organization.

How is PARPA delivering?

The overall goal set by PARPA is of reducing absolute poverty from estimated 70% in 1997 to less than 60% by 2005 and less than 50% by 2010. It has specific targets by sector and relevant action. All are defined as minimal national (aggregate) rate of coverage or figure.

As plan of priority for the government with emphasis on education, health and infrastructure building it has been implemented basically over the existing state apparatus aiming at extended coverage.

There are indications that this sector wide approach is being producing some results. These are related to vaccinations and pre-natal consultations whose rates have increased (Foster Mick, 2001).

Since this increased coverage rate involves rural population and poverty assessment had shown that such actions largely benefited the poor so their well-being can be said to have received a contribution.

The strategy in PARPA over the sectors, macroeconomic stabilisation and good governance may thus produce results. Evidence from recent years shows improved population living conditions including those of the rural citizen with economic growth (Negrão, 2002). However, the same author sustains that poverty in that time period has not lessened.

It derives from the multidimensionality of poverty so linear actions though conceived to be implementing in co-ordination does not yield expected results if the context is not taken into account and other social and political dimensions, deprivation and exclusion not acted upon (UNCDF, 2002). Alleviation of elements impinging on poverty status does not necessarily imply reduction of poverty.

Going back to our recent UN meeting where experiences from African countries in dealing with poverty reduction in the context of their efforts in local governance were exchanged we had the opportunity to follow the Mozambican government stance that help sustain this position.

It acknowledged the importance of the extension of administration and or local power in the territory with clear mandates and duly capacity building, to provide the legal framework to larger population participation, commitment to the reform of the public sector and adoption of methodologies for the exercise of "administration of proximity" so that local governance improves and meet the challenges of poverty reduction (Country Paper, AGF V, 2002).

These issues as discussed in the meeting were considered critical to ensure delivery of services in a local organisation setting that is legitimate, adequate, and capable evolving in phases towards a sustainable mode of functioning. The further we get local level organisation addressed the more encompassing and hopefully more adequate become the delivery of pro-poor policies.

Is PARPA an imposed conditionality or an opportunity for development?

We have argued along the paper that deadlines for HIPC initiative for external debt relief /cancellation have prevented eventual more comprehensive consultation to partners and a better revised and refined final draft of PARPA.

Hence we were left with a deficit in the consultation process and strategy and limited participation of non-governmental partners in the process of monitoring and evaluation. Paradoxically, these are the points of entry along with information dissemination with a crucial role in involvement and participation of all partners as stakeholders and the beneficiaries in their development process.

Negrão argues in his paper that conditionalities associated with dominant neoliberal thinking are implicit in PARPA design, selection of areas and of actions deemed relevant to reduce poverty status of individuals and communities. The government facilitates and hope the market will function. In focusing on generation of income and multiplying effects he goes on saying that a clear strategy for poverty reduction is not traceable in the draft but mere tactics in dealing with the problems identified.

As we have said above implementing PARPA as it is drafted and simply allocating actions per administrative division may bring to the poor lot (as they are numerous and ubiquitous) actions that may alleviate their suffering, mitigate their deprivation but not necessarily save them from social exclusion.

In this sense, PARPA does not seem to contain much potential for real step forward in development and may be much a result of conditionality for debt relief. This conditionality may prove too heavy as its implementation is budgeted at USD 1.8 billion for the 5-year period.

However, PARPA was subject to consultations in a novel way of involving the citizens in their organization in the planning for important goals in the society. That openness was praised by the private sector and civil society and its institutionalisation in decision-making process is warranted. PARPA is conceived and was announced to be a rolling plan paying much attention to monitoring and evaluation and information dissemination strategy.

Most officers from different government sectors acknowledge that with the benefit of the hindsight were PARPA to be drafted today they would have contributed in a different way and the result would be altogether different.

The involvement of high rank government officers (Minister of State Administration) in the delivery of a paper at the UN Conference whereby concern over good governance and public sector reform with a commitment to get planning down to the district and developing a framework for institutionalisation of the consultations down to local level reflect a degree of openness that one might want to take as a window of opportunity for making use of monitoring and evaluation and the consultation device to revise PARPA.

Private sector and civil society have clearly put forward during the consultations their willingness to take an active role and made several proposals. 'Grupo Moçambicano da Dívida' a loose network of civil society groups centred on external debt relief/cancellation has been very active and even called a meeting that produced a long list of proposals most of them not contemplated in PARPA. It is geared towards the generation of income and multiplying effects that Negrão emphasises in his paper.

McCarthy in its evaluation of Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique experience of debt relief suggests that IFIs and donor community should support working groups bringing together civil society and business community in every sector at central and province level along 'Grupo Moçambicano da Dívida' lines (McCarthy Eugene, 2001).

Again, Negrão drawing on the research and experience of fieldwork that *Cruzeiro do Sul* developed in the province of Nampula now being expanded to other provinces in central and northern Mozambique proposes an approach that brings back the focus of poverty reduction efforts to agriculture and agro-industry that help push out of the vicious cycle of poverty.

Partnership between family and national entrepreneur is advocated, *cheap money* availability to national entrepreneur, and reconstitution of institutional fabric for institutionalisation of negotiation between stakeholders, gender balance and incorporation of endogenous institutions in governance dynamics.

Human capital development with emphasis on education, drinkable water and sanitation not necessarily through formal means and reduced relative distances to services, markets and resources are taken as basic conditions.

Concluding remarks

The issues addressed by different actors in development are similar though with different approaches. There has hardly been time in the process of

PARPA/PRSP for an intertwined and cogent national strategy encompassing these actors in a consistent national plan. Reducing poverty is multidimensional. It is necessarily local and driven by the beneficiary concerns.

Vertical line of command may increase the efficiency in delivery of services with high technology content, but promotion of opportunity, income generation, empowerment, and the enhancing of security of the poor take place at local level and horizontal interactions and integration are vital.

Monitoring and evaluation is an opportunity to revisit PARPA not with the narrow perspective of progress in the indicators but in analysing how any change produced for the better is made sustainable.

These instruments must retain sufficient flexibility and the spirit of institutionalising consultation heralded that needs to be established. Reducing poverty is a long-term goal and requires commitment. There should be no expert but participant and joint decision- making shall be the way to proceed. The donor community and IFI's have a important role to play in nurturing these partnerships and promoting the voice of those they are ready to help out of poverty.

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