

GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE

**POLICY ON
OPERATIONS ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANISATIONS IN HUMANITARIAN AND
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
IN ZIMBABWE**

Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

July 2003

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The current humanitarian situation has resulted in the increased participation of NGOs and Trusts in food and developmental assistance. While some NGOs have been operating in Zimbabwe for quite some time, others came into Zimbabwe in response to the current humanitarian situation. In addition, several other NGOs who were not in the business of food assistance have also diversified their portfolios into food assistance.
- 1.2 Currently NGOs involved in food relief are giving free handout to all beneficiaries, regardless of age, mental or physical capacity. While NGOs give free food handouts to all their beneficiaries, it is Government policy that all households with able-bodied adults who receive food assistance must participate in the community public works projects.
- 1.3 In this regard there is need for harmonised policy interventions that will ensure maximum benefit flows to the communities without disrupting the harmony of community structures. This operational policy mainly draws from the lessons learnt during the 2002-2003 humanitarian and developmental assistance operations.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this operational and monitoring policy for NGOs in humanitarian and development assistance is to ensure effective harmonisation of existing Governmental structures and NGO operations at all levels in line with Governmental policy. This will ensure that NGO play a significant role in complementing Government and local authority efforts as well as empower communities to manage the distribution of humanitarian assistance.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 The specific objectives are to:
 - i. define the registration process for NGOs involved in humanitarian assistance;
 - ii. define how NGOs should interact with local Governmental structures and the communities they serve with humanitarian assistance;
 - iii. outline the public works approach that should be adopted by NGOs involved in food assistance; and
 - iv. outline the reporting structures to be used by the NGOs to facilitate the monitoring of their activities by central, provincial and local Government.

4. Guiding Principles

- 4.1 In order to create a harmonious working relationship with central, provincial and local Government, the operations of NGOs dealing with humanitarian and developmental assistance will be guided by the following principles.

- i. **Registration:** Every NGO that would like to operate at any level in the provision of humanitarian and developmental assistance in the country should be duly registered with the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare.
- ii. **Adherence to mandate as per registration:** Such NGOs will adhere to the conditions and scope of operation as agreed upon on registration.
- iii. **Complementarity to Government efforts:** The participation of NGOs in humanitarian assistance should be regarded as complementary to Government efforts, hence the need to follow the approaches and strategies adopted by government in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- iv. **Utilisation of existing Government and traditional structures for service delivery:** This principle requires that the entry point as well as the conduit for delivery of humanitarian Government structures. These include central Government ministries and agencies, provincial district, ward and village/neighbourhood development committees, ward and villages assemblies or any other structures that have been established by any of the above. NGOs shall not set-up new community structures for the purposes of delivering their services. Where new structures are needed the NGO shall seek a resolution of Council and/or the concurrence of the registering authority.
- v. **Emergency assistance:** This principle requires that all NGOs involved in humanitarian assistance observe the emergency nature of their operations. No organisation or individual should take advantage of this emergency to advance their own interests. NGOs should seek to save lives by distributing emergency assistance without conditionalities for beneficiaries.

5. Prerequisites for Registration and Commencement of Humanitarian Assistance Operations

5.1 Registration

5.1.1 An NGO can operate at any level – national, provincial or district. In order for it to register and begin operations at any of these levels the following need to be in place. This policy subsumes that issues of formation of the Board, NGO Constitution, etc. are provided for in the PVO Act.

- i. **For operations to be implemented at national level:** The NGO intending to provide humanitarian and developmental assistance should seek the support of the Government agency that has the mandate to oversee activities in the intended field of operation. The Government ministry/agency should submit a Memorandum of Understanding, duly signed by its Accounting Officer, which has to be attached to the letter of application to the Registrar of NGOs in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare.
- ii. **For operations at provincial level:** The support of the Provincial Development Committee (PDC) should be sought. A letter of support duly signed by the Provincial Administrator, confirming the PDC resolution and

approval by the Provincial Governor should be attached to the letter of application for registration.

- iii. **For operations at local authority level:** The applicant NGO should secure a resolution of Council that supports the need for its intended operations in the district/municipal area. The Council Resolution should be attached to the letter of application to the Registrar.

5.2 Commencement of operations

5.2.1 In order to commence operations at any level, an NGO should sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the respective Government ministry/agency. The Memorandum of Understanding will clearly outline the following:

- **Scope of operations:** This explains width and coverage of the NGO's operations. For example, an NGO could be in any one, some or all of these operations – food assistance, agricultural input distribution, child supplementary feeding, etc. in a given number of provinces, districts, wards or villages.
- **Target beneficiaries:** The target beneficiaries, method of selection and the size of benefit need to be outlined.
- **Agreed measurable targets overtime:** The activities of the NGO will be monitored by the respective Government authority, hence the need to agree on monitoring targets. The Agreement should also state the regularity of reporting.
- **Period of operation:** The timeframe of operation should be stipulated, where appropriate.

6. Distribution of Food Handouts: The Public Works Programme Approach

6.1 All the NGOs that distribute food assistance are required to adopt the public works approach, thus, households headed by able-bodied persons should participate in public works in order for them to receive assistance. The aged, chronically ill, disabled and child-headed households will be given free food assistance. All NGOs have to ensure that their operatives are conversant with the Operational Manual of the Public Works Programme as outlined in the **“National Strategy for Income Transfer to Vulnerable Groups through Rural and Urban Public Works”**.

- i. **Identification of the public works:** The public works are identified by the communities, assistance by their local authorities and Governmental structures.

- ii. **Identification of beneficiaries:** The beneficiaries of the NGO's food distribution programme will be selected from the ward/village assembly and neighbourhood committee registers of people who require food assistance. The NGO can verify the conformity to their selection criteria through sampling of beneficiaries as stated in the Memorandum of Understanding.
- iii. **Supervision of public works:** All the public works for food assistance will be supervised by the existing community supervisory structures i.e. ward and village development committees, assisted by the local Government structures. Therefore, capacity for the supervision of the public works already exists in these structures.
- iv. **Distribution of food handouts:** At the distribution point where the food is delivered by the NGO, the ward and village food distribution committees, with the assistance of local Government structures, will be responsible for the physical distribution of food while NGOs assumes a greater monitoring role to ensure that the distribution is done in a fair and transparent manner.

7. Distribution of Agricultural Inputs and other Non-Food Handouts

- 7.1 Government and NGOs will continue to give agricultural inputs. Just as with food assistance, such agricultural inputs will be distributed by the ward/village development committees to beneficiaries selected through these community structures.

8. NGO Communication with Lower Level Structures of Government

- 8.1 Registered NGOs shall not communicate directly with lower level structures except through the higher level Government authority. This means that no meeting shall be organised at:
 - Ward or village level without the knowledge of the District Administrator or local authority. At these levels all meetings will be called by the Councillor with the concurrence of the District Administrator or local authority;
 - District level by a provincial or national NGO without the knowledge of the Provincial Administrator; and
 - Provincial level by a national level NGO without the knowledge of the NGO's central Government partner ministry or agency.
- 8.2 Overall, this implies that no Government structure at any level will accept instructions from, or entertain an NGO without the notification or instruction by the NGO Government partner agency at its respective level of operation.

9. Monitoring of NGO Performance

- 9.1 In order for Government at all levels to keep track of NGO activities, the NGOs will be required to submit quarterly reports to their Government partner agencies.

- All NGOs will submit audited financial statements and work plans to the Registrar of NGOs.
- A national level NGO shall submit quarterly progress reports to the responsible central Government sector agency.
- A provincial level NGO shall submit quarterly progress reports to the Office of the Provincial Administrator.
- A district/municipality level NGO shall submit quarterly reports to the District Administrator/local authority.

10. Dispute Settlement

- 10.1 In the event of disputes between parties at village/ward level, the parties should take the dispute to the District Administrator, who should attend to it within (14) days of notification.
- 10.2 If the District Administrator cannot resolve the dispute, he/she should refer it to the Registrar for determination.

11. This policy will be read in conjunction with the PVO Act.