



Country Consultation Report

LESOTHO



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Consultation for Africa: National Consultation (Lesotho)

1. Context

The Lesotho Council of NGO's (LCN) held its 5th NGO Week from 29th November to 3rd December 2004. This is an event where civil society organizations in Lesotho come together to discuss issues pertaining to development. It was during this time when the Consultation for Africa, Lesotho's national consultation took place. The HRSP was invited to provide the Commission's background and objectives. Due to the circumstances beyond our control, the background was not given at the same time as the consultation but later on the day by Richard Hamphris.

Commission for Africa is an independent international commission set up by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair to take a fresh look at how the international community can do more to support Africa's development. It is an opportunity for all those committed to development in Africa - governments, civil society and business in Africa and internationally to come together to address the challenge of accelerating development, including meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa.

The Commission's objectives are to:

- To generate new ideas and action for a strong and prosperous Africa, using the 2005 British presidencies of the G8 and the European Union as a platform;
- To support the best of existing work on Africa, in particular the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the African Union, and help ensure this work achieves its goals;
- To help deliver implementation of existing international commitments towards Africa;
- To offer a fresh and positive perspective for Africa and its diverse culture in the 21st century, which challenges unfair perceptions and helps deliver changes; and
- To understand and help fulfil African aspirations for the future by listening to Africans.

The purpose of consultation was to generate ideas and strong prosperous Africa based on the country level consultation that would input in the regional and continental level.

In Lesotho various sectors of civil society organisations were invited in this consultation. Issues discussed during the consultation include the following:

- Natural Resources
- Growth and Opportunity
- Governance
- Culture and Inclusions
- Human Development

The rationale behind this selection was based on the nature of the participants that attended the meeting. Under each area, there were issues that were raised as the specific issues to be considered if Africa is to be developed.

2. Opening

The LCN Executive Director, Mr. Seabata Motsamai welcomed the participants and stated that they have been invited to contribute to the Africa's development through the Commission for Africa. It was further stated that this is a process where Africans are being consulted on issues of development in which the continent has to respond to. Therefore Lesotho being part of the continent is being asked to contribute positively to these developments.

Mr. Motsamai indicated that the organisers for this meeting are Lesotho Council of NGO's and Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN). However, he stated that Mr. Richard Hamphris would be present to this meeting due to travelling problem, he will be present to tonight event where he will provide broader background of the consultation for the Commission for Africa.

Dr. Sehoai Santho who is SARPN board member mentioned that the Commission for Africa in intended to provide Africans with platform to engage the world, particularly the G 8 and EU. He stated that Prime Minister Blair is going to chair these bodies; therefore this is an opportunity for Africa to explore opportunities that are presented by these two bodies during Blair's presidency. It was concluded that participants should look into issues that would have local level, regional and continental bearing.

Dr. Santho indicated that this consultation would input into the Southern African consultative process that would form part of the African position after all regions have completed their consultations. He stated that the Southern African consultation would be held on the 13-14 December, 2004 in Lusaka, Zambia.

2.1 Plenary Discussions

The participants asked how different is this initiatives from other initiatives that came before it. It was also asked what guarantee is available that this time Africa would go out of poverty. In response the chief facilitator, Mr. Motsamai indicated that we may not have all answers at the moment but here the opportunity presents itself to the Africans and the Commission for Africa is said to be looking for new ideas and actions for a strong and prosperous Africa. The Commission states that it would listen to Africans; therefore African in Lesotho should talk to the Commission through this meeting.

The chief facilitator introduced the thematic areas to be tackled in this consultation looking at the nature of the organisations and people attending the meeting.

- **Natural Resources**
- **Growth and Opportunity**
- **Governance**
- **Culture and Inclusions**
- **Human Development**

The thematic areas facilitators were introduced as follows; Dr. Sehoai Santho to take care of Growth and Opportunity, Mr. Caleb Sello to facilitate Culture and Inclusion, Mr. Sofonea Shale to lead Human Development, Mr. Tsebo Mats'asa to facilitate Governance while Mr. Justin Sargent would facilitate Natural Resource. After the introduction of these facilitators, the participants broke into groups to discuss these issues. The feedback was provided after the group discussions.

3. Natural Resources

The underlining question on this matter was whether Africa is getting a fair deal with regard to its natural resources. The group felt that there is no fair deal that Africa is getting from her natural resources. It was noted the value added to raw materials taken from the continent are benefiting the developed countries as a result Africa remains poor though she has a lot of natural resources at her disposal.

Africa is full of displaced people due to conflict that are based on natural resources and this is a worrying factor for development workers. It should be seriously addressed if development is to be achieved. The group noted that because the world market is so disordered-prices are set by the buyer instead of producers in the context of African producers, it recommended that fair trade should be promoted through engagement of consumers, producers and shareholder in order to promote ownership.

The group felt that Africa should promote productive education in which there will be creation for better environment and natural resources. It was stated that rich countries should do away with greedy and help Africa in protecting its environment and natural resources. The rich countries should change their consumption patterns and should provide financial support to Africa in order for her benefit out of her natural resources.

3.1 Growth and Opportunity

The group identified the corruption as a major inhibit for growth in Africa. It further stated that issues related to trade barriers, poor infrastructure and poor capacity of private sector in Africa.

The group felt for growth to be attained, human development, equitable distribution of income should be promoted in Africa. Governments should formulate policies that pro-growth. This should be done through broader participation of civil society and private sector. This should be implemented effectively in consultation with other stakeholders. The group observed that that African business lacks self-esteem and leadership in leading growth in the continent.

The group felt that G 8 and EU should provide financial support for African government, private sector and civil society that is intends to build capacity of these sectors. By so doing this, the growth will be achieved. It was mentioned that the opportunity thus exist in this continent to pursue growth, this includes existence of such structures and willingness to work hard. The group felt that diversification of economic options is crucial for Africa and these may include economic focus on tourism, agriculture just to mention a few.

The rich countries should also support with financial resources the development of appropriate infrastructure that would assist in accessing internal and external markets for African products. It was mentioned that experts are already there in Africa.

3.2 Governance

The group identified issues related to causes of bribery and corruption in Africa and how the African Peer Review Mechanism can assist in combating the corruption in Africa.

The group felt that greed and lack of accountability are major causes for bribery and corruption in most African countries. It was further stated that suppression of media and absence of freedom of expression are just the means of supporting the corruptive practices because independent media would voice out corruption where it occurs.

The group indicated that corruption be minimised only if the civic education and notion of checks and balances is prominent in such communities. It therefore recommends that resources be available for the promotion of civic education for all citizens in Africa. The group further recommended that anti-corruption agencies with adequate resources and independency be established in order to fight corruption.

The empowerment of judiciary and parliament with necessary resources to play a meaningful role in the development of African countries is vital if the governance is to be promoted in the continent. Parliaments play an oversight role and it should be given necessary skills that would prevent executive to overrule

them as it is the case in Africa. The independent media should be promoted together with civil society organisations so as to play watch dog role in monitoring and reporting corruption. The contribution of G 8 and EU in this regard would facilitate the development of Africa to attain the integrity the world is looking for.

3.3 Culture and Inclusions

The exclusion is seen by the group based on gender, youth, disability, herd boys, poor and vulnerable and civil society organisations in Africa. The group felt again that people living openly with Aids, the aged and retrenched miners are some of the groups that suffer exclusion.

The group noted that there are many causes for any exclusion and some are based on the culture while other are based on the status such HIV/AIDS, youth, aged etc. People are being marginalized due to their illness or because they no longer the source of the income to the family and community at large.

The major contribution that is being expected from the G8 and EU is that African governments should be helped to their capacities to respond to any form of exclusion and this should done in partnership with all sectors of the society including the youth, gender activists, disabled, poor and vulnerable people. The group felt that African governments should development policies that would encourage participation and inclusion of all people to related issues to their lives.

3.4 Human Development

The challenges facing education systems in Africa are great at all levels. The group felt that the current interventions that aimed at developing Africa through human development programmes seem not adequate. There is poor health service in governments and some private centres. The group noted that there is a need to mainstream health services into local governments' structures to take more responsibility to the development of the people. The rich countries are encouraged to contribute relevant resources into this programme.

The high teenage pregnancy due to ignorance, poverty and lack of sports and recreational facilities is high among young people. The health systems are over burden as a result of HIV/AIDS. The group noted that there is drop-out from schools due to many issues. Therefore, it was recommended that appropriate policies should be in place in order to urgently respond to the current situation.

The group felt that there is a need for health improvement generally not only limited to HIV/AIDS and funds should be directed to this end. The G8 and EU should consider the funding of village health workers training as these are critical groups of people that work hard in terms of providing primary health care.

4. Conclusion

It was concluded that the team will go to Lusaka should come and give feed back to the workshop participants as to keep the momentum and close eye to the process until next year. The participants were then invited to evening session where Richard Hamphris was going to make presentation about the Commission for Africa.