

BRIEF REPORT OF THE 7:30 BREAKFAST DEBATE – APRIL 29TH
2011

IS CSO - GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION CRITICAL TO GOOD GOVERNANCE IN
TANZANIA?

In many countries of the world the relationship between government and civil society is not satisfactory , meaning that there are problems which get in the way of a smooth and mutually supportive working relationship. Sometimes this is due to laws and regulations which do not produce a supportive environment for civil society organisations and sometimes it is more a question of attitudes and prejudices that prevent valuable collaboration.

That is why Policy Forum dedicated its April 2011 debate on the significance of CSO-Government collaboration in Tanzania, The debate is titled: **Is CSO- Government collaboration critical to good governance in Tanzania.** The debate included two presentations:- One was done by Mr. Kenny Manara who is a consultant of the Aga Khan Foundation and the other was done by Mr. Raymond Mnenwa from REPOA.

The Debate was facilitated by Alex Ruchyahinduru from Policy Forum.

The first presentation was done by Mr. Kenny Manara, who started by giving an outline of the presentation which was the background of a study on Drivers of CSOs-Government Collaboration: the implications for pro poor service delivery in Tanzania to identify factors affecting the success of collaboration at both central and local government level, the same was commissioned in 2009 by NGO Resource centre. He gave out the approach to the study, which was from the national level (Tanzania Education Network, TEN/MET, Women's Dignity Project and MVIWATA) and the district level (Morogoro District (ATI), Kilosa District (CHSB) and Mvemero District (DADPs)).

Kenny Manara pointed that, the lessons learned from the study were; collaboration between CSO-Government is limited in the sense that collaboration is strongest in the implementation of sector programmes and the government has ultimate say over who gets invited, this is due to the fact that on one side the government sees CSOs as being partners and the other side sees CSO activities as a threat to its interests and hence the state feels that national security is at risk.

This study also established that, at the central level collaboration between the organizations and the government is mainly evident in

consultation while monitoring is dominant at the local level, and few strong civil society organizations that participated in policy discussions were mostly based in Dar es Salaam. This, according to the findings means that rural areas are often not heard at government level, a situation calling for the need to increase the capacity of rural based CSO's.

He continued to say that, in the late 1990's collaboration was heading to the right direction. A notable example was the government White Paper No.1 of 1998 on whether a new constitution should be written. In practice, such efforts are undermined, e.g. The Mining (Amendment) Act 2010, General Election 2010, Constitutional Review Bill 2011.

He Concluded by saying that, the constitution and Framework envisage broad and sustained CSOs-Government collaboration, In practice collaboration is limited.

Efforts to integrate and strengthen collaboration should be based on the understanding that CSOs-Government collaboration is part and parcel of the broader institutional framework in Tanzania and fundamental to the national aspiration for good governance and development.

The second presentation was done by Raymond Mnenwa, who started by defining CSOs as very heterogeneous groups, he said that in Tanzania there are over 3000 registered CSOs pursuing varying interests and objectives; services provision, advocacy, lobbying, research and analysis (with some degree of cooperation).

The government is required to provide a supportive legal and institutional environment in which the citizens can operate and participate effectively in the development processes and thus supportive environment is a function of good governance.

Dr. Mnenwa said that, CSOs in Tanzania operate at different stages of policy development (formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation) undertaking initiatives aiming to promote human rights, democracy and to increase the accountability and government responsiveness to its citizen.

He went on to say that, the cooperation between CSOs and Government is good for good governance since there are different players (such as service providers, activists, research analysts, advocates) in the development process and hence the government cannot do it alone.

He continued to give the experience of REPOA on working with the government, and said that the CSO-Government partnership is crucial in development but under certain circumstances the government has been deliberately ignoring technical reports which were very resourceful.

“It is rather strange to find that when the World Bank uses our reports to verify certain issues from the government that is when we are considered as important partners for clarifying technical issues” He added.

Mr. Manara concluded by saying that, so far the relationship between the two partners is only vivid at the central level, and seriously restrained at the grassroots, which are the epicentre of development activities.

The discussant of the event was the director of Accountability in Tanzania Programme (Act), who started by saying that CSO is a very wide concept, it is not just NGO's.

He suggested that, NGO's should be consulted more with the government and gave Mkukuta as an example of where the government had worked with CSO's, something which had successful outcomes. He also gave an example of another policy document on HIV-AIDS, where there was an analysis of multi social working groups in Tanzania, for instance Njombe worked with the district, ward in the dissemination of Aids information.

To him the government agenda is much less than what is actually happening.

He further pointed out that, after policy formulation there are other four processes which should follow, which are consultation of NGO's, collaboration of NGOs with the Government, implementation and lastly the evaluation stage.

He added that, Tanzania has very good policies but the problem is implementation (which is less than 40%).

Comments and Questions from Plenary Discussion:

- As CSO's we should not only point our fingers to the government but we should ask ourselves, what about cooperation among CSOs for effective cooperation with the government?

- Through partnership, it can be an opportunity for CSOs to collaborate among themselves. CSOs have decided to form strong alliance like those of Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO), Policy Forum and PACT Tanzania which enhance the voice of CSO in reminding the Government of its responsibility.
- Is cooperation good for good governance?
- Is the government willing or not, to collaborate with CSOs? or is the our government accepting critics from CSO's? This is a major challenge especially for those CSO's with resources (power).
- The government should also deal with external challenges/issues that affect on how policies are being made, issues like; how people from the grassroots associate considering the fact that it is illegal to associate unless you have a legal authorization? And how issues from the grassroot level being reached to the central level?
- As CSOs we should ask ourselves who are we representing and to whom are we accountable? In the whole process of collaborating with the government (CSO's usually collaborate with the government in areas of policy formulation or service delivery).
- To collaborate with the government there should be strategies on how to do so therefore the question comes, Are there any strategies on how to engage with the government?

Respond to the comments and Questions:

- Collaboration is significant to good governance therefore the government should realize that all roles of CSO's be it service delivery role, political role or advocacy role are equally important to national development.
- We can take the experience of REPOA as an example, sometimes the government resists taking their findings but later on they come to realize their importance.

- Collaboration at the local level should be intensive since there are other issues from the local level which can be addressed through this collaboration.
- Since there is a diversity of government machinery, we can use this opportunity to channel our ideas or we can use people from the government whom we think can channel our ideas.
- If you have any issues tell it to the people and not the government since doing so to the government ignites fire.
- We need to find ways on how to collaborate with the government, where there is an opportunity use it to air your opinion that is the multiplicity of space should be used.

Mr. Alex Ruchyahinduru closed the discussion and he welcomed again participants for the next 7:30 Breakfast Debate.