



policy forum

PRESS RELEASE
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Policy Forum and HakiElimu have decided to dedicate this month's debate to the issue of accountability within civil society. The debate is titled "**Transparency & Accountability within Civil Society: An Opportunity for Self-reflection**".

Civil society in Tanzania has emerged as a serious political actor in the country's processes of governance and development and with it, so has the call for NGO accountability. This so-called 'third sector', now finds itself faced with concerns over its legitimacy, effectiveness, and reliability. These concerns, coupled with questions about the 'check and balances' on NGO activity, has come at a time when the number of civil society organisations continue to grow and money from donors continues to flow.

Are there sufficiently rigorous mechanisms to ensure transparency accountability within civil society in Tanzania? Is there an internal drive from within the sector to improve the 'checks and balances' that already exist? Different sections of the NGO sector have attempted to respond to this by creating accountability systems like improving organisational capacity, assessing performance, and setting standards. For instance, the National Council of Non-governmental Organizations (NACONGO) and the Policy Forum have each formed a Code of ethics for their constituent organisations. It is hoped that such internally formed mechanisms will help promote an open, transparent, accountable, effective and enabling environment for NGOs to operate in.

In practice, however, do such self-regulation mechanisms by NGO networks really help promote ethical behaviour from its constituents? Are these mechanisms enforceable? Civil society organisations, unlike a government that is primarily accountable to voters or a business that is principally accountable to owners and shareholders, are accountable to many stakeholders. They are accountable to donors for the funds they receive, to those they collaborate with in mutual activities, the publics they purport to serve, staff members they employ, and to government who ensure they adhere to regulations. With many stakeholders who potentially have differing interests, how can CSOs manage to be fully accountable to all?

These issues will feature as part of the discussion during the Breakfast Debate on Friday, 25th of July 2008. Invited participants at the meeting include representatives of Government, private sector, civil society, donors, the media and concerned citizens. The discussions are held over light breakfast and enable participants to reflect and debate the issues.

The 7:30 People and Policy Debates are held on the last Friday of every month and this month the venue will be the BRITISH COUNCIL along **Ohio Street**, from 0730 to 0930. Their main purpose is to examine and debate the extent to which policies serve ordinary people, and identify imaginative questions and solutions.

The debates are organised by Policy Forum. The main presenters for this month's debate are **Godfrey Tweve** of the National Council of Non-governmental Organizations (NACONGO) and **Bubelwa Kaiza** of Concern for Development Initiatives in Africa (ForDIA).

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Signed for Policy Forum
