



policy forum

PRESS RELEASE

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Policy Forum has decided to dedicate this month's debate to the issue of Constituency Development Catalyst Funds (CDCF). The debate is titled "**Is CDCF Bill Unconstitutional: The analysis of the CDCF Bill in Tanzania**".

The Constituency Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF) Bill passed by the National Assembly on July 31, 2009, provides additional resources for development at the local level by channeling money to constituencies. The CDCF would thus supplement the existing funding mechanisms for local government and be allocated in the budget of every financial year and after parliamentary approval, the funds are disbursed to the constituencies to be spent on development projects as identified and prioritised by local citizens.

The reasons put forward by our Members of Parliament on why introduce the CDCF is that it will provide additional resources for communities to spend on priority sectors namely primary education primary health care, water supply and agriculture. Additionally, it is argued that MPs spend their own money to help poor people in their constituencies, and so the CDCF will relieve them of that burden and also that CDCF will catalyse development in their areas.

However, a good number of Civil Society Organizations have reservations on the introduction of CDCF to Tanzania. Of note, they are concerned that the introduction of CDCF will undermine the oversight role of parliamentarians as it is questionable whether they will be able to perform their function independently and thus effectively hold the executive to account on funds they will be responsible for implementing. Additionally, the CDCF will create a parallel structure alongside the existing local government structures and this increases the burden on the already overwhelmed local government officials. Moreover, CSOs argue that the CDCF will increase the cost of administering local funds by using money which could have been used to increase the resources available for the projects themselves.

Moreover, will CDCF force the Government to raise taxes as has been the case in other countries? Will it undermine efficient use of resources and will it be possible to monitor these effectively without guaranteed access to quality information? These issues, along with suggested alternatives to address the concerns of Parliamentarians in executing their work, will feature as part of the discussion during the Breakfast Debate on Friday, 29th of August 2009. Invited participants at the meeting include Government representatives, 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 **Harold Sungusia** of Legal and Human Rights Centre and **Neville Meena** of Kulikoni Newspaper.

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Signed for Policy Forum