



# **policy forum**

## **Mid-Year Progress Report**

**January to June 2007**

# Policy Forum Progress Report – January to June 2007

This year, Policy Forum has entered a new phase in its evolution as a strategic policy advocacy network. This is the first year where we begin the year as a fully registered legal entity, following our obtaining registration in October 2006. We have a new 3-year Strategic Plan, having completed our first Strategic Plan in December last year. We have a new expanded secretariat office, with a Policy Unit now in place. Policy Forum has assumed full responsibility for its own financial and administrative management, a responsibility formerly shared with HakiElimu. Our membership continues to grow and we now have 65 fully subscribed member organizations. All this shows that we are maturing as a network. The challenge will be to sustain the growth of the network while remaining relevant to our members' diverse policy advocacy needs.

We have already begun to move in some interesting new directions. We have begun to work with Parliament more strategically and are in the process of finalizing an arrangement with the Office of Parliament and the Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa (IDASA) that should enable our work with parliament to be more regular and more strategic. We are looking into ways of strengthening the impact of our media work by making more information available to members to help us make more informed decisions when deciding to use the media for our advocacy work. We are strengthening our partnerships outside of Dar es Salaam, most visibly shown by the presence of 2 members Committee based outside of Dar es Salaam on the Policy Forum Steering Committee with whom our practical collaboration is already increasing. We have launched 2 new publications. The first is the SERA (meaning POLICY) Newsletter, a quarterly publication and the second is JUKWAA (meaning PLATFORM), a monthly publication that discusses a policy issue from 3 different perspectives to generate broader understanding of and public debate on specific policy issues.

The 2 Working Groups (Budget and Local Governance) are increasingly vibrant as is demonstrated by the improved quality of our budget advocacy, the acclaim received from parliament for our contribution to the recent Amendment to the Local Governance Laws, and the rate at which publications have been produced and shared this year.

**Objective 1: The implications and impact of policies and their implementation are analyzed, monitored independently, and the resulting information is used by a broad base of civil society and advocacy groups to improve the effectiveness and quality of their advocacy.**

**1.1 Analytical think pieces:** 4 briefs were produced analyzing the budget guidelines to generate and inform public debate prior to the 2007/08 National Budget Speech. These were under the following headings:

1. *Budget Brief 1.07: What will the 2007/08 Budget Say?* – This brief highlights key features from the budget guidelines for 2007/08 and compares it with the last 2 financial years.
2. *Budget Brief 2.07: What do the budget guidelines say about who wins the quick wins?* – This examines the apparent policy shift to direct more resources to a few strategic programmes and compares it with the stated policy intention of government to improve the welfare of all Tanzanians.
3. *Budget Brief 3.07: What do the budget guidelines say about governance and accountability?* – This analyses three key aspects of the budget guidelines relating to governance and accountability. These are:
  - a. Allocations to key national institutions of governance
  - b. Increased fiscal decentralization and accountability of local governments

- c. The proposed introduction of a Constituency Development Fund that allocates discretionary funds to constituencies under the management of MPs.
4. *Budget Brief 4.07: What do the budget guidelines say about some key social sectors?* – This discusses the proposed increase in overall allocations to key social sectors; It discussed the proposed wage bill increase in the light of human resource shortages in key sectors at district level; and it points out the implications in large amounts of off-budget funds.

Policy Forum has received considerable positive feedback on these briefs which have been quoted and analyzed in the press on a number of occasions. The briefs have been used by civil society organizations both within and outside of Dar es Salaam, academics, politicians in making various points about the budget. We have also received interest in this approach to increased civil society participation in the budget from a civil society group in Mozambique.

5. The Tanzania Natural Resources Forum in collaboration with Policy Forum secretariat, produced a two page brief on the TRAFFIC report, a report which pointed out some of the far-reaching and long-term implications of illegal logging for Tanzania. This report has generated considerable interest in the media and in Parliamentary debates on the budget. The brief was distributed at a CSO exhibition at Parliament in June where all copies taken were distributed prior to the end of the exhibition.

The main lesson we learnt was that rigorous budget analysis that requires a considerable time and resource allocation that is not always consistent with the pressure on CSOs to be flexible and responsive. As we devote more consistent time and resources to budget analysis we anticipate that the depth and rigor of our analysis of the budget will be strengthened.

**1.2 Analytical support to civil society policy engagement:** The two main activities in this area so far this year have been our contribution to the advocacy around 2 Bills that have been discussed this extensively this year. The Freedom of Information Bill that generated heated debate in the media and civil society was a main focus of CSO engagement this year. The Policy Forum secretariat and members contributed to the research and advocacy that resulted in the Bill not being tabled in Parliament until further amendments were made. This was a major victory for civil society since the Bill was widely considered to be one that restricts rather than enabling access to information. The Secretariat also wrote the Policy Forum statement on the draft Bill which was released in the press.

The second was what has now become the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act. Policy Forum and Legal and Human Rights Centre coordinated a group of CSOs who wrote a statement which was presented at a stakeholder consultation held by the Parliamentary Committee for Constitutional and Legal Affairs. While the Bill has now become an Act, a number of concerns that were raised by stakeholders in the debate around this Bill (including Policy Forum) were taken on Board and the Bill was amended. On this Bill, the Policy Forum secretariat coordinated consultation between its members and the legal expert commissioned by the donor community to scrutinize this Bill. Both the expert and the Task Force assigned with the task of scrutinizing the Bill indicated that they had found this interaction to be productive and beneficial.

Finally the Policy Forum Secretariat has been in dialogue with the Accountable Governance Working Group in the Development Partners Group (DPG) to decide how to make funding for advocacy work more accessible and conducive to the achievement of results. This discussion was initiated by Policy Forum towards the end of 2006 and has now resulted in a set of Guidelines being developed for civil society funding that has been presented at a meeting of all Heads of Mission where it was received favorably and a commitment made to go back to

their respective agencies to seriously consider how this can be taken into account in their country strategic planning for Tanzania.

Finally we have developed a draft Code of Conduct for NGOs that we plan to share with other networks. The purpose was to develop something that was not too legalistic for NGO actors to understand and still maintained the rigor required to hold ourselves and each other to account. This has been share at the Annual General Meeting and was circulated to members and the major networks for comment. WE now plan to translate it into Kiswahili and to hold a meeting to finalise it before it is submitted to the NGO Council as a proposal.

**1.3 Proactive participation in the Budget Process:** The Budget Working Group of Policy Forum has been visible and active this year. In March this year, Policy Forum, in collaboration with HakiElimu, coordinated a training course on budget analysis and advocacy that was provided by the Civil Society Budget Initiative of the International Budget Project. Members who were trained were required to commit to active participation in the Budget Working Group. The budget briefs described earlier were a collaborative effort within the Budget Working Group. The group also made a presentation to the Finance and Economic Affairs Committee of Parliament prior to the Budget Speech and receives commendations from the Committee Chairperson and the Deputy Minister for Finance for their well-researched and up-to-date analysis. Several public presentations, and television and print media interviews have been done by members of this group and the profile of the group has been prominent in the media around budget issues.

**1.4 'Fuatilia Pesa' Public Expenditure Tracking (PETS) Project:** The PETS Manual is now complete and is about to go to print. A DVD to raise awareness of and market PETS has also been commissioned by the Local Governance Working Group of Policy Forum and is in its final stages.

**1.5 Governance Study:** It was proposed that we conduct a major study on CSO participation in policy processes. This work is likely to begin during July to feed into the consultation process for restructuring the stakeholder dialogue initiated by Government. However, due to tight deadlines and competing priorities, it is not yet clear yet what form it will take and whether it will be the type of structured in depth study that we had originally envisaged.

**Objective 2: Analysis and monitoring information produced by Policy Forum is widely disseminated to policy makers, civil society and the general public in a manner that is accessible, interesting, relevant and useful to the intended target audience.**

**2.1 Policy Forum Website:** A website designer was commissioned to set up the Policy Forum website in November 2006. While he did begin to work on the website, his contract was terminated in June this year due to his failure to deliver a website to the agreed specifications, after postponing the agreed deadline several times for various reasons. Policy Forum is now negotiating with an alternative website designer. In the meantime we are setting up a temporary website in-house so that our information can be accessible on-line. We expect the temporary site to be live by 20 July 2007.

**2.2 Monthly Issue Guides:** In April this year, Policy Forum began to produce monthly issue guides under the title of *JUKWAA* (Platform) discussing a policy topic from several points of view and then inviting the readers to debate the issue and share their views. These have been produced on a monthly basis and disseminated in hard copy and via print media. So far the topics have been as follows:

1. Can MPs work for us via Constituency Development Funds?

2. What should Tanzanians do about the Energy Crisis?
3. Central vs Local Government: Where is public money most accountable?

The number printed was 1500 in English and 2500 in Kiswahili of each issue. These have been distributed at various events and meetings. We are also beginning to have discussions with some of our partner networks in the regions to see how we can distribute them more widely outside of Dar es Salaam

**2.3 Popularization of Policy Documents:** This year we plan to produce popular versions of 3 publications. These are:

1. A citizen's guide to the budget process
2. A simplified version of the new village government regulations from a citizen's perspective.
3. A simple, user-friendly version of the new Prevention and Combating of Corruption (PCC) Act

Work has begun on all 3 of these documents. However, due to delays in fundraising this year, it is likely that printing will take place towards the end of the year for all 3 of these popular documents.

**2.4 Breakfast Debates:** Breakfast debates have continued to take place on a monthly basis in collaboration with HakiElimu. During the first half of 2007, the topics discussed during the first half of this year have been:

1. the Proposed Freedom of Information Bill
2. The Proposed PCC Bill
3. Mining Contracts and Revenues in Tanzania
4. Assessing 5 years of the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP)
5. Revenues and Governance in Logging in Tanzania
6. Budget Revenues: Where does the money come from?

Policy Forum also held an extra-ordinary Breakfast Debate on *Analysing the dynamics of power in Tanzania* in June.

Attendance has generally been good and media coverage has been encouraging. With effect from July 2007, Policy Forum will take over the logistical arrangements of these debates from HakiElimu.

**2.5 Communication with Members:** A communication strategy has been developed to guide internal and external communications within Policy Forum. This is primarily designed to improve communication within the network, but will also guide Policy Forum's external communication in order to ensure that it is strategic, targeted, efficient and effective in reaching Policy Forum objectives.

The quarterly *SERA* Newsletter was launched at the Policy Forum Annual General Meeting (AGM) in April this year. The AGM was used to disseminate key information in hard copy and on compact disk. We expect to continue mailing hard copies of key documents so that members with limited access to email can also receive information in hard copy. Monthly meetings have continued to be held each month with Policy Forum members on the first Thursday of each month. Attendance at these meetings has been varied. During the second half of the year we will look into how to make these meetings more useful to members.

**2.6 Strategic Use of the Media:** Policy Forum and its members have continued to develop close links with the media in the following ways:

1. *Pilika Pilika Soap Opera:* We continued to sponsor governance messages in Pilika Pilika Soap Opera for the first 6 months of this year. Once this is completed. As at end of July we will have sponsored this programme for one-year and our contract will have

ended. It has been decided that during the second half of this year Policy Forum will focus on gathering information that will assist the network and its members to monitor and evaluate the benefits and costs (direct and indirect) of using various forms of media. This will help us put in place and appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework for our media work and will also help us make more informed decisions when investing in advocacy via the media in future.

2. *Jukwaa issue guides:* All three issues of *Jukwaa* have been placed in one English and one Kiswahili newspaper each month during the third week of the month. While we have begun to receive some feedback on them indicating that they are beginning to spark some debate. We anticipate that over time feedback will increase.
3. *Enhancing media reporting on policy issues:* The Coordinator of Policy Forum has been appointed to the Steering Committee of a fund currently being established to build the capacity of the media to report on policy issues. The fund is in its nascent stages and is therefore currently a substantial time commitment. As it matures, the role of the Steering Committee is expected to diminish.
4. *Monitoring and Evaluation:* The communication strategy introduces an element of better information to guide decisions on the use of media for advocacy. This will be a primary focus during the second half of this year.

### *Challenges*

Consistently accessible information to members continues to be an issue. Our newly developed communication strategy aims to address this and we anticipate this will improve the interaction both within Policy forum and externally.

**Objective 3: The ability of civil society organizations to understand, to monitor, and to strategically, proactively and effectively engage with and influence national and local policy processes is enhanced.**

**3.1 Regional Policy Networks:** Policy Forum has begun to collaborate more with its partner networks in the regions. Policy Forum is currently discussing with TNRF the possibility of collaboration on certain areas as well as the possibility of sharing human resources in certain areas of our respective strategies. Mwanza Policy Initiative has recently obtained funding and has indicated an interest in renewed discussions beginning in July this year to establish areas of collaboration with Policy Forum. Now that our Policy Unit is in place, we expect that more concrete collaboration with partner networks will be established. We will also spend some time during the second half of the year to look into the possibility of establishing links with one additional policy network. It is likely that only preliminary dialogue will begin this year. This is more realistic than the original intention of 2 networks.

**3.2 Member Orientation:** As in previous years, an orientation session was held in advance of the AGM on 12 April 2007. This year we took a slightly different approach from previous years and focused on a more practical way of enabling best practice within our member organizations and working groups to be shared to improve policy advocacy. We began the session with two presentations and a debate on a proposed 'Code of Conduct' for NGOs., this was followed by a bazaar for Policy Forum Working Groups, related sector working groups and partner and member NGO networks to display their work, conduct mini-workshops, and network. After lunch we organized field visits to various organizations within and outside of civil society who are either doing interesting policy advocacy work or are important resources for organizations doing policy advocacy. The orientation session ended with a 20 minute reporting back session the next morning prior to the AGM.

**3.3 Systematic documentation of advocacy experience:** There has been some documentation of experience in the SERA newsletter. There was also a lesson-learning case

study on our engagement with the Local Government Act Amendment process. More systematic documentation will become more consistent once the website is live.

**3.4 CD on Local Government Machinery:** There have been discussions in the Local Governance Working Group to revive this activity. A cd has been produced by the Prime Minister's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government (PMORALG) which was launched on 1 July 2007. The Group will continue to discuss the best way to demystify the local governance machinery to ordinary citizens during the second half of this year.

#### *Challenges*

The establishment of regional policy networks and assistance in organizational planning for policy engagement are primarily dependent on the readiness of these organizations/networks and their demand for these services. Part of the responsibility of the new Policy Unit will be to work with the relevant networks to help them achieve readiness. However, the primary initiative has to be from the organization(s) in question. Given that this is a demand-driven activity, it is difficult to determine how many are likely to make use of this resource.

There is also money available for members of regional networks to attend monthly meetings. However, we have come to realize that the problem is not money but time. During the latter half of this year, more of an effort will be made to market this resource to the networks in question and to find out the reasons for not making use of it.

**Objective 4: Active participation by Policy Forum as a network in national policy processes is selective and strategic in order to enhance the quality of engagement and to engage where impact is most likely to be achieved.**

**4.1 Policy Engagement:** There has been a shift in our policy engagement this year. We are engaging more with Parliament and less with the executive. This has not been deliberate. It is partly the result of the executive not being as open to our participation in policy consultations as they were in the past (Policy Forum was explicitly excluded from this year's annual Public Expenditure Review consultations) and partly because our work with Parliament has been somewhat successful in yielding results. Specific activities so far this year have been as follows:

1. *Freedom of Information Bill:* A controversial draft Freedom of Information Bill was introduced towards the end of 2006. This Bill received considerable criticism from various parts of civil society, primarily the Media and human rights organizations led by the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT). Policy Forum, on its part focused on sharing information about the Bill and its implications through a Breakfast debate, through a public statement published in the media and through its member networks, and by researching and sharing information with the MCT team tasked with drafting an alternative bill. The alternative Bill was drafted and shared. The Government was originally adamant but eventually agreed to retract the Bill and redraft it in a more consultative way. The Bill has now become 2 draft Bills, a Media Bill and a Freedom of Information Bill. Consultations with stakeholders are still underway with stakeholders and the bills are likely to be tabled in parliament towards the end of this year. There have been reports that the Government is now more open to public inputs than in the past.
2. *Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bill:* Policy Forum's contribution to this Bill is described in 1.2 above. As a result of that and other consultations, stakeholders' opinions were taken on board by the Parliamentary Committee on two counts:
  - a. The draft bill did not enforce the Director of Public Prosecutions to give reasons for refusal to prosecute those charged with corruption. The final law requires him to do so.

- b. The draft bill proposed that the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau be governed by a board. In the final law, the proposals were scrapped entirely as it was seen to limit the independence of the Bureau.

These two changes are not minor achievements and are a result of hard work by all those involved in constructively analyzing the draft Bill

3. *Budget Analysis Seminar with Finance and Economic Affairs Committee:* With support from the Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa (IDASA) and the Australian High Commission, Policy Forum co-organized a Seminar with the office of Parliament for the Finance and Economic Affairs Committee of Parliament on 2 and 3 June. The purpose of the seminar was to begin the process of deeper collaboration between MPs and CSOs on budget issues, to share the analysis done by various members of civil society, government and the private sector, and to build greater trust between civil society and Parliament. The most notable impact of the Seminar was that when the Minister for Planning presented the draft budget to the Committee the next day, the committee rejected it on the basis that not enough research had been done prior to its preparation and in his speech rejecting the draft budget, several of the presentations made during our seminar were quoted. The seminar was also widely reported in the press and we received several commendations from the MPs and the office of parliament on the usefulness of the information shared.
4. *Annual PER Review:* While Policy Forum was excluded from the Annual PER Consultation, several members of Policy Forum attended and made presentations. As a result Policy Forum actively contributed to the preparation of these presentations and therefore the key issues were made. It was also an opportunity to share the Policy Forum Briefs in advance of their launch on 4 June.
5. *Routine Data Working Group:* Policy Forum now has consistent representation on the Routine Data Systems working group of the MKUKUTA Monitoring System. A member of the Policy Unit was involved in the preparation of the annual work plan for the group and participated in its presentation to all Council and Municipal Directors.

**4.2 Collaboration with others:** Policy Forum continues to collaborate with other development stakeholders wherever possible. The most notable event this year has been Policy Forum's participation, for the first time, at the Annual CSO Exhibition at Parliament. While parliamentary turnout was not as high as expected, it was an important opportunity to network, to raise awareness about our work and to recruit new members.

**4.3 Local and International Networking:** The Secretariat and Steering Committee have contributed to various reports and studies by participating in interviews and meetings on a regular basis. In addition to our collaboration with IDASA which aims to strengthen our work with Parliament, Policy Forum has also entered into a collaborative relationship with the Civil Society Budget Initiative (CSBI) of the International Budget Project (IBP). We expect this collaboration to enhance our budget work. We also have begun to establish links with the Centre for Social Accountability (CSA) based at Rhodes University in South Africa. CSA has been doing resource tracking and rights based public accountability work at local government level for the last 10 years. We anticipate that this collaboration will lead to mutual learning and will enable us to share lessons to improve our mutual effectiveness in this area.

### *Challenges*

The main challenge here is the fact that the 'rules of the game' around participation of the various stakeholder groups is still unclear. While there is participation by various members of civil society in many policy discussions, the basis on which participants are selected is still unclear. While sometimes government may allow civil society to self organize, at other times they are prescriptive to the point to deciding who may and who may not represent civil society in certain meetings, or even identifying someone themselves, sometimes who are not even from civil society, and deciding that this person will represent civil society in this dialogue.



Invitations and documentation to civil society (which is often lengthy and uses inaccessible language) continue to be distributed late, most often on the day of the meeting, despite numerous protests. Donors and Government often dominate consultative meetings both in numbers and in status. Names of people and organizations are removed from mailing lists without explanation. The dialogue process is generally disorganized, which is part of the problem. However, one must acknowledge that as long as civil society participation remains weak, Government decisions and actions will not be subject to in depth scrutiny by domestic stakeholders. Even when it is subject to scrutiny, the scrutiny will be uninformed and easily dismissed. On a more positive note, the government has begun an initiative to improve the policy dialogue structure. A draft has been shared and the deadline for comments or contributions is 30 July.

Consistent and strategic use of policy spaces continues to be a problem. As advocacy organizations mature, we anticipate that this problem will decrease and signs of this are beginning to show. While we have even allocated resources to work on this problem under Objective 3, the uptake has been limited due to either a lack of demand or a lack of readiness where demand was present.

### **Financial Issues**

The total approved annual budget for 2007 is Tshs 516,650,463/=. The expectation was that fundraising would be completed and funds received during the first half of this year. However delays in finalizing our 3-year strategic plan (approved at the AGM on 13 April) and in finalizing our audit for 2006 have forced us to delay calling our donor meeting which is currently scheduled for 17 September 2007. Our fundraising strategy requires that we fundraise from within the network prior to sourcing funds from external donors. This has also contributed to delays in fundraising. As a result, the amount of money we have in hand for 2007, including what was carried forward from 2006 and what has been collected and pledged so far this year is Tshs 245,106,758/=. As you will see in the attached financial report, expenditure during the first half of this year totals about 13% of the total annual budget. However it is 45% of the money actual money available for this year and 37% if we include the pledges that have yet to be disbursed. We have tried to be conservative in our spending so that we do not spend too much until we are sure of how much money we shall be able to raise. This is particularly since whatever we raise is more likely to be forthcoming towards the end of the year and we cannot count on it yet. Our strategy is to prepare the groundwork for major spending items, such as printing and publishing, to be commissioned in the last 2 months of the year. Otherwise these items will have to be carried forward to next year.

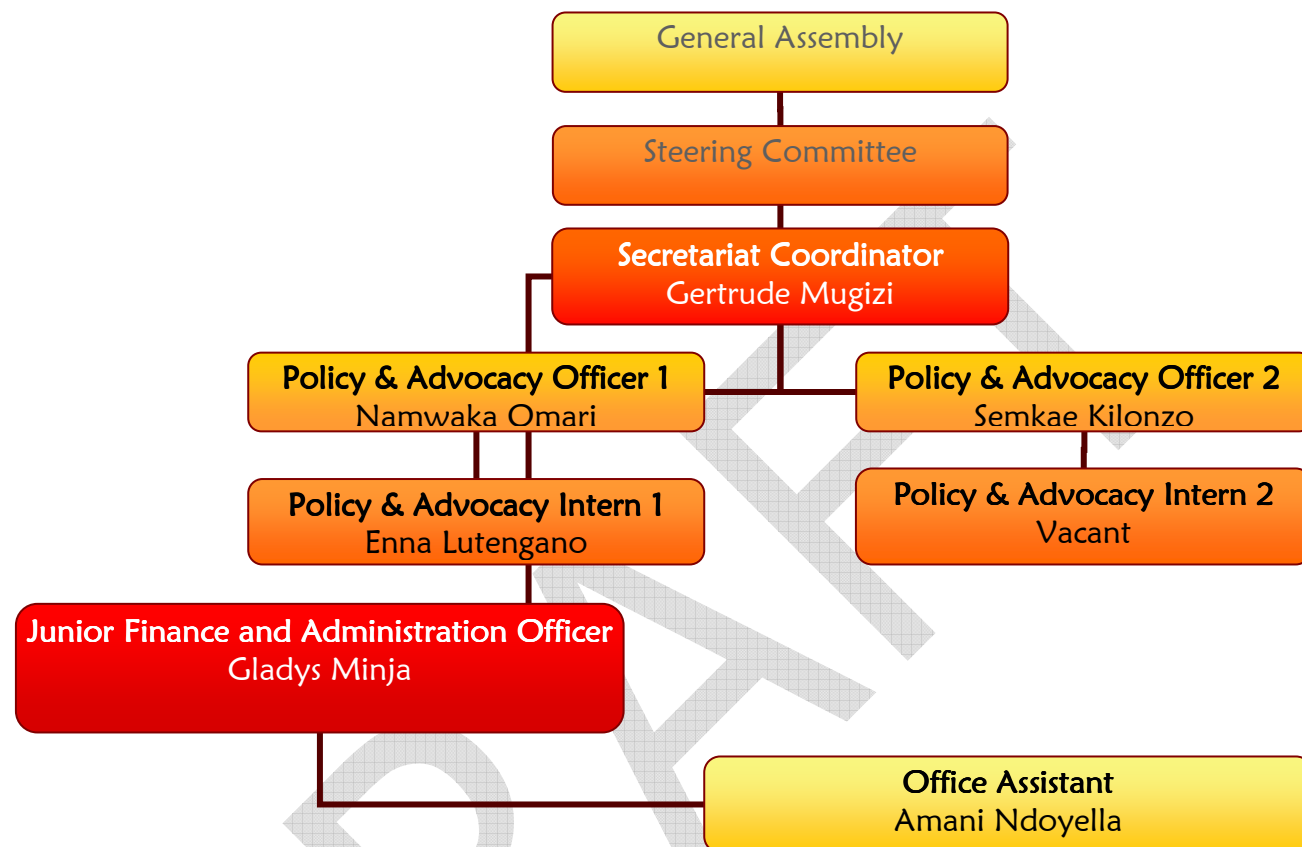
### **Summary of financial shortfall**

In Tanzania shillings			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount budgeted</b>	<b>Amount obtained and pledged</b>	<b>Deficit</b>
2007	516,650,463	244,026,500	271,543,705.01

Since the contract between Policy Forum and HakiElimu for financial and administrative oversight ended on 31 December 2007 we have implemented new arrangements. We have entered into an agreement with MEKONSULT Accounting Firm who is responsible for closing out books at the end of this month, ensuring that adequate systems are in place for financial controls and acting as an internal auditor to strengthen out financial oversight. The Junior Administration and Finance Officer has also assumed additional financial responsibilities. At the end of this year this arrangement will be reviewed to assess its effectiveness.

## Staff Establishment

The new staff establishment as at 30 June 2007 was:



As you can see, Policy Forum recruitment is almost complete and what is now left is to ensure that the team is properly oriented, supported and developed to provide the support required to continually strengthen the network.

## Governance Issues

Policy Forum held its Annual General Meeting this year on 13 April 2007 whereby a new Steering Committee was elected. At the June Steering Committee meeting a new Chairperson and Vice Chairperson were also elected. The composition of the new Steering Committee is as follows:

<b>Organization</b> (location is outside Dar es Salaam)	<b>Individual(s)</b>	<b>Designation</b>
The Leadership Forum	Hebron Mwakagenda	Chairperson
Kivulini (Mwanza)	Maimuna Kanyamala	Vice Chairperson
Tanzania Natural Resource Forum	Andrew Williams	Member

(Arusha)		
TACOSODE	Theofrida Kapinga	Member
Oxfam GB	Fred Kwame	Member
Vacant*		
Vacant*		

\*At the AGM, elections only produced five members, despite the fact that the preferred number is seven. It was agreed that the other two members would be sought over time through the established channels for electing interim Steering Committee members. However, since the Memorandum and Articles of Association allow for anywhere between five and nine members, the current Steering Committee is able to function normally while the remaining vacancies are being filled.

## Conclusion

This new phase in the life of Policy Forum has not been without challenges but we are slowly looking to overcome them and the reputation of the network is a testament to this. The secretariat has matured to a stage where it can function independently. Collaboration is beginning to extend concretely beyond the urban centres. The network has seen a diversification in the entry points it uses to influence policies this year with some interesting outcomes. Finally, Policy Forum is slowly carving out its space through the consistent production of publications and materials in an effort to move from reactive participation to proactive influencing. These signs of maturity tell us that we are moving in the right direction. The challenge remains to ensure that we remain on this path and that we establish a network that will survive as an institution despite any shocks that may occur to eventually become a social movement for positive change in Tanzania.