



policy forum

SERA

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From the Coordinator

Dear Reader,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the very first issue of *SERA*, our quarterly newsletter. Its purpose is to give the wider Policy Forum Membership and our partners a peak into some of the interesting things we have been up to during the quarter. We hope that in future, our main working groups will also use this space to regularly share more widely the important work that is being done within these groups.

We expect 2007 to be an exciting year for Policy Forum and its members. We are engaging more directly with the legislative process and have been directly involved in advocacy on 2 high profile Bills already. While

scrutiny of public money has always been at the core of our work, we are beginning to upscale the nature and quality of our engagement in this area and this is why we have highlighted the work of the Budget Working Group in this issue. Finally we are introducing 2 new regular publications. The first is this newsletter. The second is the *JUKWAA* issue guide which will be published on a monthly basis in the media in Kiswahili and English. Here, we will select a topical issue each month and present it from several points of view. We hope that *JUKWAA* will help to bring pertinent policy issues to the forefront of public debate not only in our work spaces but also in our homes, in our schools and even in our social spaces.

We anticipate that future issues of this newsletter will be used by Policy Forum working groups to share aspects of their work which may be of interest to a wider group. I am certainly energized by the enthusiasm and commitment from member organizations that is already becoming evident this year and I am confident that this will take our work to an even higher level. If you would like to contribute to future issues, please contact Semkae Kilonzo at [po-](mailto:policy2@policyforum.or.tz)

[licy2@policyforum.or.tz](mailto:policy2@policyforum.or.tz).

All my best,

Gertrude Mugizi.

Quarter 1

Highlights:

- *The new Policy Unit has been established- meet the staff on the website!*
- *Jukwaa and Sera: Policy Forum publications launched in April.*
- *Policy Forum Website Online: www.policyforum.or.tz*



Jukwaa is one of the publications launched in April

Annual General Meeting 2007

Policy Forum expects to conduct this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 12th and 13th April at White sands Hotel, in Dar es Salaam. Participants from various civil society organizations, most of whom are Policy Forum members, are expected to attend.

During this AGM there will be various activities. On Day One there will be a debate on the NGO's Code of Conduct in the morning to enable a broader understanding of the Code of Conduct and what it means to civil society.

There will also be a Bazaar for where

various organizations will display and give information on their activities to other members and participants. This event will be for such groups as the Budget Working Group, Local Governance Working Group, HIV/AIDS Working Group as well as

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AGM 2007 Continued

networks working in the field of policy like TEN/MET, Health Equity Group, Mwanza Policy Initiative and TNRF. The groups will display the work that they do, present it to the participants and recruit new members.

In the afternoon of Day One, participants will go on field visits to several organizations with a policy focus as part of enhancing the learning and experience

sharing element of the meeting. Groups of 10 will visit member organizations and some public organizations.

On Day 2 the formal business of the AGM will be conducted. This will include the discussion and adoption of audited accounts, annual report 2006, strategic plan 2007-2009 and 2007 annual plan. Candidates for the Steering Committee get a chance to address the plenary,

and the Steering Committee Elections will follow.



“The CSOs were also assured that the Zanzibar government had also begun processes to formulate anti-corruption legislation.”

Policy Forum’s Involvement in Deliberations on Two Bills

As part of Policy Forum’s strategic engagement in the country’s national policy processes, the network participated in deliberations on two draft bills currently being discussed among stakeholders: The Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bill (PCC) of 2007 and the Freedom of Information (FOI) Bill of 2007. In January the FOI Bill was the topic of the Breakfast Debate and in March the Debate discussed the PCC Bill.

With the former bill, consultations were between the Parliamentary Committee for Constitutional, Legal and Administration Affairs and various key stakeholders including Civil Service Organisations (CSOs) led by the Legal & Human Rights Centre (LHRC) and Policy Forum. The CSOs presented their concerns to the committee and Hon. Phillip Marmo, the Minis-

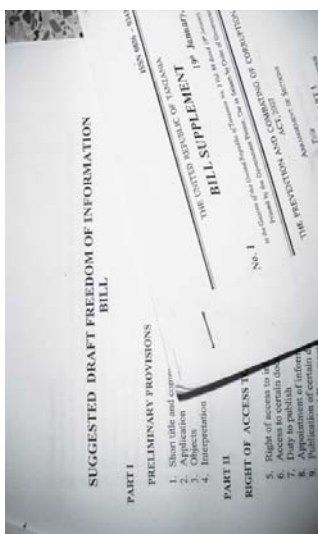
ter of State at the President’s Office in charge of Good Governance, responded by accepting that some of the provisions in the draft would have to be amended. These were with regards to ensuring the protection of whistleblowers and imposing adequate penalties towards offenders as deterrence. The CSOs were also assured that the Zanzibar government had begun processes to formulate anti-corruption legislation. Minister Marmo also agreed that PCCB Reports should be made public.

With regards to the Freedom of Information Bill, Policy Forum also took part in a consultative meeting between the government and stakeholders which resulted in a decision to allow more time to produce a draft that was amicable to both parties. However, it was unclear

what framework would be used to arrive at such a document. On its part, the government said that considering the comments being put forward, it seemed unrealistic to table the bill in parliament in April and meanwhile welcomed recommendations from various stakeholders on how to improve the draft.

It was also agreed that the discussions regarding the Media Service Act should be detached from the deliberations on the Freedom of Information Bill as the two were unconnected.

Policy Forum’s participation in the two processes is part of its efforts to collaborate with like-minded partners and play a role in strengthening solidarity within civil society so that it can impact the policy process more effectively.



Budget Working Group

The Budget Working Group evolved from our work with the Public Expenditure Review Process. It was an effort to make our engagement with the process more strategic and effective.

The Budget Working Group aims to ensure greater understanding and awareness of the budget process in the public. Its activities focus mainly on publicizing information about the budget, which is done by analyzing technical information and translating it into documents that every citizen can understand in both Kiswahili and English.

The Budget Working Group produced several briefs and a news paper supplement of the 2006/2007 budget due to their engagement in the 2006/2007 budget. These briefs summarize information from the budget guidelines and the budget. In March 2007, six members of the Budget Working Group attended an intermediate budget analysis and advocacy training

workshop offered by the International Budget Working Group and co-hosted by HakiElimu. The training was instrumental in providing the Budget Working Group with skills and information that will help them carry out the analysis that supports the group's work.

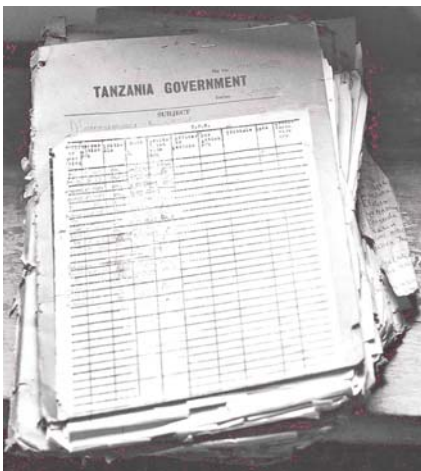
For 2007, the Budget Working Group is planning to produce a Citizen's Guide to the budget that will explain Tanzania's budget process to the media, civil society organizations and the interested citizen. It also expects to advocate for the translation of key budget documents, and to assist with translation if necessary. Sectoral Budget Briefs will also be produced and disseminated widely using the media. During the next quarter, the group is in the planning to prepare analytical briefs, news paper supplements, comments and analyses focusing on budget allocations and priorities for 2007/2008.

We encourage Policy Forum members to

join the Budget Working Group and to take part in the exciting work that it does. The group meets once a month for two hours and there are two levels of membership: Core Members actively take part in activities, and Supporting Members who have a watching brief. For more information contact Enna Lutengano at

intern@policyforum.ot.tz.

"FOR 2007, THE BUDGET WORKING GROUP IS PLANNING TO PRODUCE A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO THE BUDGET THAT WILL EXPLAIN TANZANIA'S BUDGET PROCESS TO THE MEDIA, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE INTERESTED CITIZEN."



Parliament Watch

"Honorable Deputy Speaker, before discussing this bill, the Committee had an opportunity to hear from several stakeholders who attended the committee hearing. The stakeholders came from the Legal and Human Rights Center (LHRC), the National Organization for Legal Assistance (NOLA) and Policy Forum. These stakeholders' contributions were very valuable to the committee. I would like to congratulate your Office for enabling such a mechanism to exist. It has

many benefits in the improvement of Government Bills, and supports the important matter of the increased involvement of citizens in the legislative process."

Hon. George Lubeleje, Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional, Legal and Public Administration, addressing Parliament on November 14th 2006.





policy forum

First Floor
132 Magore Street
Upanga
P.O. Box 38486
Dar es Salaam

Phone: +255 22 2121288
E-mail: info@policyforum.or.tz
Website: www.policyforum.or.tz

MAKING POLICIES WORK FOR THE
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About Policy Forum: Policy Forum is a network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This growing network currently has over 50 member organizations, all of which are registered in Tanzania. The aim of Policy Forum is to make policies work better for the people of Tanzania, and especially for Tanzanians living in poverty. As a member-led network, Policy Forum strives to enhance and augment the voice of ordinary citizens in national policy processes while advocating for poverty reduction, equity and democratization in Tanzania. Policy Forum's work has three main areas of focus: local governance, public money and active citizen voice.

Jukwaa: a New Publication from Policy Forum!

In April 2007 the first edition of *Jukwaa*, Policy Forum's issue guide, will be released. *Jukwaa* is designed as a two-sided brief which aims at informing the reader about a topical issue while stimulating debate about this topic by presenting different points of view. The publication is aimed at readers in the general public and can be used by people at all levels of society, from students right up to policy-makers. It is in English and Kiswahili.

The first issue of *Jukwaa* will discuss Constituency Development Funds, and the some of the arguments in favor and against bringing such a mechanism into the Tanzanian government system. Constitu-

ency Development Funds are already in place in Kenya and will likely be introduced in Tanzania within the year. There is a danger that this will be done with minimal involvement of the citizenry in any debate or public decision-making processes. Addressing the topic in *Jukwaa* allows us to publicize the topic and encourage a debate on it before it is presented to the public as an existing mechanism.

The second issue of *Jukwaa* which is due to come out in May concentrates on the problem of energy. Although recently the focus has been on electricity, the majority of Tanzanians are not consuming electricity directly- we are

more dependent on firewood, charcoal and kerosene for our daily energy consumption.

These forms of energy come with their own problems of supply and affordability and environmental impact. The discussion introduces the idea of alternative energy that could be sustainable and affordable for a majority of people who still use primary energy: vegetable oils.

Jukwaa will be released on a monthly basis and will aim to be address issues that are current in the policy environment. Members are invited to provide topics that they feel need to be addressed in the publi-

cation by contacting the Policy Unit.



Upcoming Events

April:

Policy Forum AGM 12-13 April at White Sands

May:

1) Accountability Conference, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania 3-5 May

2) Public Expenditure and Annual Review mid-May

June:

Parliament Budget session begins mid-month

For more events check the calendar on www.policyforum.or.tz