

BUDGET WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 27TH MARCH 2014

VENUE: POLICY FORUM SECRETARIAT.

Attendance:

1. Bakar Bakar Kepa
2. Florian S. Sikika
3. Fidelis Paul WaterAid
4. Makumba M. Hakielimu
5. Godfrey Bony Hakielimu
6. Nicholas Lekule Policy Forum
7. Nuru Ngailo Policy Forum
8. Semkae Kilonzo Policy Forum

Agenda

1. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on February 6th 2014
2. Update of the Review of the Citizens' Guide to the Budget Process - Hakielimu
3. Update of the Review of the Five Year Development Plan - PF Secretariat
4. Engagement with the Parliamentary Budget Committee - Water Aid/PF
5. AOB.

1. Opening of the Meeting and Confirmation of February 6th 2014 Minutes

The meeting was opened by the chairperson who started by welcoming BWG members to the meeting and asked participants to introduce themselves. He then passed them through the previous meeting minutes. The following were the comments which were made by participants;

Fidelis from Water Aid asked for his name to be included in the attendees list of the February meeting.

Kepa was asked to share their policy brief on tax once they have finalized it.

2. Update of the Review of the Citizen's Guide to the Budget Process

Representatives from Hakielimu confirmed that their organization will lead the process of making a document on the Citizen's Guide to the Budget Process and will share the same with all members of the BWG. They promised to share the schedule for undertaking this on 01/04/2014 which shall contain the names of the 5 people who will take part in making the document, Sikika, WaterAid and PF secretariat were proposed to take part in the same.

A representative from Sikika said that they intend to use their citizens guide to specify the kinds of documents citizens can access from the LGAs. Members asked Sikika to share this with the LGWG since they are also working to see how CSOs/citizens are using the PMORALG circular.

It was agreed that, we should delegate this task to a specific organization to access all the 19 documents and share the same with other CSOs as the PMORALG circular stipulates; this can be done by having a list of districts and the CSO responsible to access the document at the district.

Sikika volunteered to act as a representative in accessing these documents in the 10 districts they are working in after they have shared this with the people they work with in the districts.

It was proposed that, member organizations should at least have an archive or database where they can store budget information which can be accessed by the general public. PF shared on how they use their bibliography in their website to do this which functions even on Google when a person searches for a publication.

It was said that the tax tree which is applied in Finland presents the database for budget information of the government. Members of the group were asked to brainstorm on how this can be applied to Tanzanian context. It was suggested that PF contact with the task force from the Ministry of Finance to see the possibility of meeting them and sharing the idea. In this meeting, Linda from KEPA will be given an opportunity to explain to the wider group how this works and how the task force can use this model in enhancing budget transparency.

Resolution:

- Hakielimu to share with members of the group the schedule for producing the citizens' guide to budget process.
- PF secretariat to check with the task force from the Ministry of Finance for a possible meeting to discuss how the tax tree can be used in Tanzania.
- Linda to prepare some notes as a guide to the wider group on how the tax tree can be used in Tanzania.

3. Review of the 5 Year Development Plan

The secretariat updated members of the group on the initiative they had taken to see if there have been reviews of the Five Year Development Plan. From the Planning Commission, it was highlighted that reviews were done. However, it was difficult to access these reviews.

It was suggested that, having one holistic review of the whole plan could be something cumbersome and unrealistic for CSOs to do. Alternatively, CSOs can look at the reviews that are done sector wise to see how they can input.

It was again suggested that, in the meanwhile we can start to use forums like the breakfast debate to promote discussions about this. People from the World Bank, Donors, financial institutions, and National Audit Office can be part of the dialogue.

Resolutions

- Policy Forum’s Breakfast Debate to be used to promote discussions on the Five Year Development Plan
- Sector reviews and assessments to be conducted so that they can be used in assessing the Five Year Development Plan

4. Engagement with the Parliamentary Budget Committee
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PF and Water Aid updated members on their initiative in organizing a workshop with the MPs specifically the Parliamentary Budget Committee on PBO and other budgetary issues or on other issues that are of interest the group.

One member suggested that, working with the parliamentary committee is a good idea since their engagements with the committee turned out to be very effective.

It was agreed that the secretariat should take the lead in following up with the secretariat of the committee to plan for this session at least to take place on the second week of April.

It was further suggested that, every sector/ organization can come up with one slide for the secretariat to compile so that we can have a simple presentation to be presented to the MPs.

Resolution:

- The secretariat to start organizing the meeting with the budget committee to be conducted in the second week of April
- Members to come up with a simple presentation preferably one slide from every sector/organization

5. AOB

- BD slot for budget for 2014 to be conducted in May
- It was proposed that once we come up with a press statement on budget, we can at the same time organize for a press conference.

Closing:

On this note, the chairperson thanked the members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 1.00 pm.

Convener approval.....

Secretary.....

Date.....