



policy forum

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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Policy Forum and HakiElimu have decided to dedicate this month's debate to the issue of water supply in Dar es Salaam. The debate is titled ***"Is what you see what you get?: Transparency & Accountability in the Budget Process"***.

To what extent does the general public have access to quality information on the budget process? Are they in a position to engage in a public dialogue with government and parliament? Although the government has made strides in previous years in opening up parts of the budget process, there are concerns that the budget information provided needs to drastically improve as it is too complex for a lay audience, not always accurate and reporting is often spread across a number of different formats which are not necessarily comparable. Moreover, there is also concern that there is no strong legal platform from which citizens can request information where it is not forthcoming. On the demand side, there is concern that the general public, civil society and members of parliament are not adequately taking advantage of the existing opportunities to hold government to account for the budget.

Whilst it is recognised that public financial information is complex and therefore presenting it in a user-friendly manner is challenging, it remains necessary as the legislature and electorate must be informed of the decisions being made and the extent to which these decisions are being implemented. How, therefore, can improvements be made to the way such information is presented so as to enable the electorate to engage with government more critically? Can there be a better connection between relaying policy priorities and the financial figures? On the demand side, can the general public, the media and civil society make better use of the available information for better oversight and scrutiny?

These issues, along with the progress and challenges encountered and intervention opportunities specifically at the Local Government level in executing the budget will feature as part of the discussion during the Breakfast Debate on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> of June 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 **MÖVENPICK ROYAL PALM HOTEL DAR ES SALAAM** 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 **Gertrude Mugizi** of the Policy Forum Budget Working Group and **Shireen Mahdi** of the Donor Partner Group.

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Signed for Policy Forum

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