

BWG Progress Report – 2012.

Objective 1: The effectiveness of the accountability system including planning, expenditure, performance, integrity and oversight of government at both central and local level is systematically analyzed and monitored, and the resulting evidence is used by a broad base of civil society and advocacy groups to improve the effectiveness and quality of their advocacy.

The 2012 Annual Plan:

In keeping with objective 1 of the strategic plan for 2011/13 – as outlined above, the following is an update of the progress of implementation of activities agreed upon in the 2012 Annual Plan of the Budget Working Group (BWG).

- **The Budget Working Group Annual Plan for 2012.**

The 2012 Annual plan was drawn and approved by the Budget Working Group in February as the guide for the activities they would be implementing through the year.

- **Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) Advocacy.**

Advocacy for the establishment of a PBO is still on-going. We have held meetings with the Clerk of the National Assembly, Private Assistant to the Speaker, Director of Planning and ICT, Chief Parliamentary Legal Counsel and Director of Parliamentary Committees. The advocacy approach has been to approach the Office of Parliament and secure their buy-in from the bottom up starting with the officials of the office of Parliament heading up to the Speaker. The approach registered good feedback which necessitated re-printing of the brief ("*Strengthening Parliament's Budget Oversight Function: The case for a budget office*") for distribution through the office of the Director of Planning and ICT. To date we have registered the endorsement of the establishment of the PBO by the Speaker. This was stated in the sixth meeting of the eighth session of Parliament held on 20th June, 2012 after the budget had been presented. In line with that Speaker has also endorsed the creation of a Committee for the Budget, which is also a good initiative in as far as advocacy for budget transparency is concerned.

- **Drawing a template for the citizen's budget.**

We are in communication with the Ministry of Finance regarding this activity. We have notified the Ministry of our commitment to continue our cooperation with them in preparing the Citizen's budget. PF continued to constantly communicate with MOF regarding early preparations for production of the CB for 2012/13. MOF informed PF that they were doing preparations early enough and would be able to share the zero draft they were preparing. In September 2012 MOF invited the PF BWG to working sessions at which the team worked upon the zero draft MOF had prepared. The sessions ended successfully and the CB was uploaded on the MOF website early November 2012. The Citizen Budget publication was printed and shared to Policy forum for widely dissemination early February 2013.

- **Policy engagement**

We did participate in the Annual Policy Dialogue (APD) that happened on the 26th and 27th January, 2012 at the Blue Pearl hotel. The Annual Policy Dialogue is a forum that provides a platform for constructive and open dialogue between Government, CSOs and Development Partners on topical policy issues that will lead to the making of informed policy decisions. The objective of the APD was to discuss policy issues including their implementation status, challenges as well as possible ways forward for challenges

raised. The meeting attracted good representation from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Development Partners (DPs) the Private Sector and Government representatives. The guest of honour in this year's APD was the Prime Minister, Honourable Peter Kayanza Mizengo Pinda. This year CSO's were given the opportunity to voice their opinion at each and every agenda that was raised. In his CSO statement, the Chairman of Policy Forum highlighted issues of budget transparency, weak tax collection mechanisms and the growing national debt as major contributors of the vicious circle of poverty among Tanzanians. In his recommendations he proposed that government strengthens tax collection mechanisms and thinks of ways of broadening the tax base. He also urged development partners to assist government in initiatives to curb capital flight. Other papers presented were the MKUKUTA II Annual Implementation Report, the Poverty and Human Development report on growth and income poverty, governance and accountability and quality of life and social wellbeing, which were all commented on by CSOs. Other papers were Trend of macro-economic indicators, presentation of the Joint Assistance Strategy for Tanzania (JAST) and the Five year Development Plan all upon which CSO concerns were raised. The two day dialogue was closed by the Minister for Finance who called on all stakeholders to utilize the key messages from the two days in efforts to reshape the implementation of policies, strategies and programmes. He also stressed that Tanzania will work towards reducing aid dependency in terms of its share of the national budget and support building the capacity of the private sector and civil society so they can effectively participate in the country's development agenda.

- **Localisation of the OBI.**

This activity aims to measure the transparency of the budget process at local level looking specifically at the issue of access to budget information as well as the mechanisms that are in place to influence citizen participation in the process. Questionnaires for the survey have been prepared and beefed-up following discussions with the Capacity Enhancement Department and the experience of SIKIKA who have embarked on undertaking a similar study. Owing to issues that arose in the course of the discussions, the approach agreed, as the first step, is to go out and train the Policy Forum member (that we will be working with on the project) on the objective of the project and the local government budget cycle after which we will be monitoring them on the process of data gathering. Data compilation and analyses will follow thereafter and be documented for purposes of advocacy.

- **Other Activities:**

Budget working Group pre Budget statement call for an Equitable and Just Budget.

The statement was published as the minister for Finance was about to table the National Budget for Financial for the Year 2012/2013 in the June Parliament session. Some key policy issues were raised one being urging the Government to ensure a fair distribution of resources across the country since its commitment in 2004 to utilize a resource allocation formula, also to improve the quality of education through better school inspections, the government is also advised to ensure effective use of resources in the agriculture sector since agriculture is the main source of employment and livelihood for more than 75% of the population.

Analysis of 2012/13 National Budget.

The Secretariat usually dedicates the breakfast debate of the month of June to analyses of the national budget prepared by the Budget working Group. The June breakfast debate was specific to the state of the health sector and was themed "Health Sector Budget Allocations: *Is the state of the Health sector improving?*" Presentations were made by Dr. Flora Kessy who made a presentation titled "*Health sector expenditure trends from 2006/07 to 2011/12*" followed by a presentation by Simon Moshy of Sikika titled "*10 years of the Abuja declaration and Health Equity*". The discussant of the debate was Dr. Rufaro Chatora, the WHO representative to Tanzania. The debate was well attended with active participants and received good media coverage. Deliberations of it can be found on our website (www.policyforum.or.tz).

Drd

- **Governance Study**

The governance study focuses on governance and accountability issues that occurred throughout the year. The 2010 – 2011 study is nearing its final stage of preparation. Material input from each of the departments of the secretariat was compiled for input into the report. The consultant has submitted the draft we have worked on finalizing it is now printed and it will be launched on the February PF breakfast debate.

CHALLENGES

- Inaccessibility of budget documents delayed BWG budget work. Eg delay in getting policy briefs on time.
- Members commitment-minimal-organizational versus BWG work

LESSONS LEARNT.

- **Advocacy campaign needs strong evidence generated from research findings.**
- Lobbying and Budget skills among BWG members as well as clear understanding of budget process and its challenges are very critical in ensuring campaign and advocacy success
- BWG has also learnt that, the choice of advocacy strategies depends on the country's existing social and political context and the government's willingness to work with CSOs. Public campaign works most effectively where the media is vibrant and citizens use their voices to demand for accountability. Lobbying and negotiation (engagement) applies when the government is willing to work with CSOs and oversight bodies are stronger and have power to influence changes.
- Effective Budget advocacy should be aligned with the budget cycle. If one wants to influence changes, understanding the budget process matters as it facilitates synchronization of budget advocacy with the budget cycle. For example, if one wants to influence budget allocation during the planning phase, then one should know the timing of the planning process at both central and sub-national level in order to understand various events happening during budget planning.
- Budget advocacy is very unpredictable and one can never be certain of what will be implemented or advocated at any time as things keep changing. As a result organizations must be flexible and ready to address the ongoing changes.

- Politics has a lot of influence in budget work, one must always take this into contention.