

Speech by Policy Forum Chairperson at the Opening Ceremony of the Social Accountability Monitoring Conference.

27<sup>th</sup> August, 2013

Dar es Salaam

Your Excellency, Deputy Minister, Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Government,

H.E. Ambassador of Switzerland,

Distinguished guests,

Esteemed members of Civil Society Organizations,

Members of the press corps,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning. On behalf of Policy Forum, I would like to join the Coordinator in welcoming you all to this auspicious event and extend my gratitude on behalf of the co-hosting organisations for taking the initiative to provide a platform where we can share experiences from the implementation of social accountability monitoring interventions.

Honorable Deputy Minister, we recognize that your ministry has done a number of initiatives to enhance the ability of local government authorities to provide basic services to the people and hence improve their status as the major the implementers of Government policies at the local level. We also appreciate the efforts done by these local authorities to increase competence in managing and monitoring financial resources brought to them from the central government.

We also take note that there is some improved collaboration between LGAs and Civil Society Organisations and this can be manifested by your ministry working together with Policy Forum to improve subnational level budget transparency. Our request to have 19 local-level budget-related documents made publically available on request for Social Accountability interventions was honored when your ministry issued a to Regional Administrative Secretaries for transmission to LGAs instructing them to make the documents available. The circular is intended to bring clarity for LGA officials when approached by CSOs as well as complement existing laws governing the provision and access to public information in Tanzania and not replace them.

We hope this circular will help eliminate the misconceived perception of some LGA officials on the role of CSOs. Many a time, they perceive the role of CSOs to be limited to service delivery.

Honorable Deputy Minister, we have to, nonetheless, also take note of the challenges that your ministry is experiencing as it tries to improve service delivery at the local level. For instance, as our Social Accountability Monitoring report that you are launching today shows, despite the many improvements, there still is inadequate competency within the local authorities' labour force. This is caused partly by the inability of LGAs to attract, recruit and retain qualified professional staff, pointing to the need of accelerating and concretising the initiatives regarding special incentives to draw staff voluntarily to these councils.

Using the health sector to illustrate the problem, despite progress in increased student enrolment in health training institutions, posting of trained staff to Councils and building of more dispensaries and health centres, there is evidence that a large number of the recruited and posted health workers in the underserved regions are not reporting or they report and leave after a while.

Honorable Deputy Minister, we also believe that there is a general lack of political willingness of some actors at central level to mainstream the Decentralisation by Devolution policy accordingly. There is even perception amongst some civic actors, in fact, that some in central government oppose D-by-D.

We believe this is indicative of a lack of shared vision within the leadership and the institutionalization of D-by-D being limited to PMORALG. We therefore urge for the entire government embrace this concept.

Honorable Deputy Minister, as we envision and discuss the need for enhanced and more responsive Local Government Authorities during this conference, we hope you will take away few pointers for your ministry to create the enabling environment that will help us realize the right to social accountability.

Lastly, I once again wish to thank Policy Forum secretariat, MSTCDC, Forum Syd, ActionAid, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) in Tanzania and the PSAM for their support in the preparation of this meeting and all those who have contributed their untiring effort in making this conference a success.

Thank you