

**Proceedings of the International Forum for sharing of experiences on PRSP
Monitoring and Implementation – the involvement of civil society**

Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CRPR) Zambia

Held in Lusaka on the 23^d –24th June, 2003

List of Acronyms

AFRODAD	African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
CFA	Commonwealth Forestry Association.
CONASA	Community Based Natural Resources Management and Sustainable Agriculture
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction.
DSA	Debt Sustainability Analysis
GAPVOD	Ghana Association of Private Voluntary
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation.
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IMF	The International Monetary Fund
MEJN	Malawi Economy and Justice Network
MFNP	Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MS-ZAMBIA	Danish Association for International Development.
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPES	National Poverty Eradication Strategy
OYV	Operation Young Vote
PAM	Programme Against Malnutrition
PEAS	Poverty Eradication Action Strategy Plan
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategies
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
PSIA	Poverty Social Impact Assessment
SAPRI	Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
TAS	Tanzania Assistance Strategy
TWG	Technical Working Groups
WB	The World Bank
ZANACO	Zambia National Commercial Bank
ZESCO	Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation
ZMK	Zambian Kwacha

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Executive Summary

The International Forum on experience sharing on PRSP monitoring and implementation - the involvement of civil society, that was held from 23rd to 24th June 2003 at Mulungushi village complex, Lusaka in Zambia attracted both international and local delegates.

The forum was officially opened by the Deputy minister of Finance and National Planning in Zambia Honorable Mbita Chitala. The conference whose sole object was to share experiences on PRSP drew delegates from Angola, Ghana, Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, Malawi, Nepal, Germany, Netherlands, Zanzibar and Zambia the host country. The forum which was initially planned for 45 delegates but due to vast interest it generated both locally and internationally it was attended by more than 65 persons including International organisations like CORDAID, GTZ, CAFOD –UK, EURODAD and DFID.

World Bank senior partners officer - Africa region Veena Siddharth, International Monetary Fund Country representative for Zambia, Dr Mark Eylln, gave presentations on their expectations from the PRSPs while the World Bank Country manager for Zambia also gave a brief talk during the forum.

More than 15 papers were presented during the two -days meeting, which also saw participants breaking into three working groups on Networking, Advocacy and partnership building. The presentations were mainly centered on civil society's experiences in drawing up, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of PRSPs. Country case studies of Zambia, Mozambique and Angola were presented as a way of having an in depth insight on; civil society mobilisation for PRSP implementation, CSO / government relationships around the PRSPs and indeed governments commitment to the PRSP implementation.

After fruitful deliberations the delegates agreed to continue networking as a way forward. Mozambique was chosen to take the leading role of building partnership within CSO while Zambia was challenged to develop a network website. As for Uganda, the forum agreed that it would spearhead the Advocacy issues on the PRSP.

The main conclusions that emerged from the forum and the subsequent recommendations that would be derived from the forum were centred on networking between South-South countries and greater involvement of CSO in PRSP monitoring, especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa. The conclusions related, not only to the countries where the PRSPs were being implemented but to broader bilateral and multilateral Institutions that provide various forms of support to Highly Indebted Poor Countries.

Chronicle of Events

----- Day One - Monday 23rd June 2003 -----

Session One

1.0 OFFICIAL OPENING AND WELCOMING REMARKS

1.1 Arrival and registration of participants

Participants arrived between 08:00 and 09:00 hours; registered and were given files that contained a workshop programme, prepared materials on country and technical paper presentations from participating organisations.

1.2 Official Opening

All protocols observed, the day started with a greeting and prayer from a participant from Zambia and then a workshop programme outlined by workshop moderator Mrs. Matondo Yeta.

1.3 Welcoming remarks

Fr. Peter J. Henriot, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), made these remarks. Fr. Henriot recognised and welcomed participants from both within and outside Zambia. He challenged participants, especially from other countries to sample the Real-Africa experience characteristic of Zambia. He added by explaining the intents of the civil society in Zambia and the objectives of the international forum as one related to sharing experiences of the different levels of PRSP implementation in different countries, be it by government or civil society, on one hand, and the lessons learnt to foster a more refined and mutually beneficial approach.

He noted that other than being a technical forum, the gathering would explore the various opportunities, threats, attempt to exhaust and dissect the cross-cutting issues on poverty reduction strategies for intervention. He observed that the importance of the forum lied in the fact that it had been called by concerned groups - the civil society who largely interacted with the different functionalities at community, family and individual levels.

He concluded by recognising the fact that every bit of human values ought to be explored and encouraged to persevere through a myriad of issues that acted as impediments to poverty eradication measures at all levels of society, be it government, bilateral, multi-lateral institutions, civil society and otherwise.

He ended by encouraging participants to be mindful of the difficulties that women, children, youths and indeed men who were not present in the forum were experiencing in various communities in different counties while bearing in mind that the overriding goal was to effectively act as change elements to poverty and its multi-faceted elements.

1.4 Keynote address by Guest of Honour, Deputy Minister of Finance and National Planning, Hon. Mbita Chitala, MP.

The Minister felt honoured to have been accorded the opportunity to officiate at such an important forum for sharing experiences on PRSP Monitoring and Evaluation.

He recognised the fact that in the genesis of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), The Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) worked closely with government in gathering views from around the country that were incorporated in the final PRSP by not only conducting an independent consultative process, but also got involved in the 8 working groups set up by government and contributed in the formulation of the group's reports.

The Minister explained that the Zambian PRSP had noted essential priority areas that needed urgent attention and these included:

- Economic growth;
- Social investment;
- Infrastructure
- Governance
- Cross-cutting issues of HIV/AIDS, Environment, water and sanitation, roads, infrastructure and gender.

He informed participants that the government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) was in the second year of implementing the PRSP and had allocated ZMK 420 Billion (Zambian Kwacha) towards Poverty Reduction Programmes in the current year's budget (2003). The Minister looked forward to learning of some best practices in PRSP implementation and monitoring from the participants at the forum.

1.5 Vote of thanks by Paula Assubuji (Mozambique)

On behalf of the civil society and participating government organisations and individuals, she paid tribute to the insights provided by government and the opportunity that had arisen to share cross-country experiences for the betterment of our societies.

She noted that the notion of "Poverty Eradication" would not be well meaning if not characterised by practically addressing the building blocks of poverty in its wider dimensions. She further said that common understanding was not only a problem but also a challenge and responsibility for the civil society and that there was need of taking care of the freed resources by strictly channeling them to poverty reduction programs. Together with government, there was need for the civil society to improve the atmosphere of dialogue.

Lastly, Ms. Assubuji emphasised that there was need for participants to go back to their respective countries with much information and more vigor on PRSPs and challenges.

Session two

2.0 PAPER PRESENTATIONS

2.1 Background and overview to PRSP and HIPC Process by Dr. Mark J. Ellyn, the IMF representative to Zambia.

Dr. Ellyn exhaustively and dissectively dealt with conflicting issues surrounding debt driven development in Zambia and other eligible countries. He explained that there were particular benchmarks set by IMF for participating countries to meet.

He maintained that eligible countries must establish a track record on adjustments and reforms in order to receive HIPC assistance. At the decision point, the IMF and World Bank formally accepted a country's HIPC Plan and conduct the Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA).

According to Dr. Ellyn, the country should implement a formal poverty reduction strategy and receive interim debt relief on an annual basis. At the completion point, the IMF, World Bank and other donors provide the remainder of the committed debt relief. He reported that Zambia reached the decision point in December 2000 and this entitled Zambia to receive a total debt service relief from all its creditors worth more than US\$3.8 Billion or about $\frac{2}{3}$ of its external debt. Zambia's completion point would be met after meeting the HIPC triggers that were characterised by macroeconomic and structural reforms, which among others included concessioning of ZESCO, offer to sell majority controlling interests in the Zambia National Commercial Bank (ZANACO) including progress in combating HIV/AIDS and improve health sector in general.

He confirmed that poverty levels were, otherwise, rife in Zambia, in spite of the above measures.

2.1.1 Discussion Session I

Rev. Mebina from Tanzania noted that in the preparation of PRSP there was high level of people's participation while in coming up with PRGF's conditionalities, people were not consulted. Consequently the Zambian people had refused privatization. Would Zambia under these circumstances still receive funding?. In response the IMF country representative, Mark Ellyn said that it was crucial for the Donors to come up with conditions since they had keen interest in the expenditure of received funds, hence their lead involvement in the drawing up of the PRGF conditions was to ensure that expenditure was within the confines of the lending agreements. He further explained that usually the donors also had an idea on the social - economic and political status of the countries they would lend money or offer assistance when drawing up conditionalities.

The participant from Uganda wanted to know whether the Zambian Government had a national plan on poverty reduction before the drafting of PRSP in 2000 / 2001. Mark Ellyn, mentioned that there was no long term plans in terms of poverty reduction in Zambia after 1991. In addition PRSPs initiated by the Bretton Wood Institutions was a motivation to countries which did not have any national poverty reduction plans to use as an instrument to address high levels of poverty in their respective countries.

During the discussions it was noted that CSOs had a pivotal role to play in the success of the PRSP thus there was *need for IMF to build their capacity and improve the IMF / CSO cooperation and partnership.*

2.2 A SWOT Analysis of the PRSP in Ghana: A Civil Society Perspective:

The paper was presented by Mrs. M. Abrokwa (Enhancing Opportunities for Women) who is the Vice Chair of GAPVOD.

In 1999, the World Bank and the IMF endorsed the preparation and implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) after an observed slow rate of growth and wide-spread poverty in low income countries. This instrument or development was categorically classified as a clear departure point from previous programmes in several respects, three of which were of particular interest to civil society:

- (i) The link with HIPC guarantees resource flows for implementation;
- (ii) The free-hand given to borrower nations to identify country-specific development priorities and lay their own road-map for tackling poverty was a positive change and meant that the programme would be government-driven;
- (ii) The emphasis on "broad and extensive civil society consultation" gave hope that the needs and voices of the poor would come up in the public debates.

Although Mrs. Abrokwa was admittedly not privy to an in-depth assessment of levels and quality of civil society participation in the various countries, her best bet was to concentrate on Ghana where her knowledge was best. The government of Ghana completed the draft GPRS in March 2001. By February 2002, the document had been passed as a working document.

However, notwithstanding the importance for implementing Poverty Reduction Strategies developed, certain vital organisations were left out. For example, labour unions, which represents one organised civil society, was less formally engaged while also the unorganised CSOs such as farmers, rural dwellers that are over-represented had no platform to articulate their concerns. In effect, participation of CSO had been limited, as the final write-up reflected more of government's priorities than those of CSOs. Though, in spite of these flaws, the principles underlying the GPRS offered the greatest prospect for CSOs to join in analysing poverty reduction related policies, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. There had been also a weakness in CSOs as they appeared diverse and fragmented when it came to their involvement in the GPRS programme.

2.3 Efficacy of Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation by Government and Civil Society in Uganda:

Pastor John Santos Labeja presented the paper.

From defining monitoring and evaluation, Pastor John Santos Labeja reported that the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) which also became Uganda's PRSP was launched in 1997 as PEAP 1. There had since been a revision in 2000 and was still on going 2003.

He observed that when government takes a strategic decision to invite non-state actors to participate, the chances of success are greatly enhanced. The experiences were, however, the opposite as NGOs had been excluded to participate in the nature of macroeconomic policies to achieve the set goals. The continuation of highly controversial elements in the new loans had led many groups in Uganda to ask, "What goal do PRSPs have, if the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAPs) stayed the same?" what good are Participatory Social Impact Assessments (PSIAs) if SAPRI findings are not taken seriously?

As a measure of intervention, the Uganda Poverty Monitoring Network was established to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the various stakeholders (or is it stockholders) on one hand and overallly exploit synergies between stake holder institutions on the other hand so as to minimise waste though unnecessary duplication.

Session three

2.4 Assessment of Civil Society Participation in PRSP implementation and Monitoring in Tanzania:

This was presented by Rev. J. Mabina

In the past decade, Tanzania had undergone a series of macro-economic and structural reforms and subsequently realised considerable success in reducing inflation, interest rates and achieving stable foreign exchange rates and reductions in government. Notwithstanding these successes, Tanzania was still ranked the 5th poorest nation in the world and unlikely to meet the Y2015 of reducing poverty of 24.2%.

The PRSP as an initiative of HIPC was first introduced in Tanzania in October 1999 following consultations between the Government of Tanzania and the **Bretton Woods Institutions** namely World Bank and IMF. Under the new Cologne terms for HIPC, to qualify for debt relief, there must be a PRSP to indicate commitment to using debt relief for poverty reduction. A consultative process was initiated but due to deadlines set, it had limited participation, mainly taking on a consultative nature.

The major landmarks were the developments of the national Poverty Eradication Strategy (NPES), vision 2025, the Tanzania assistance strategy (TAS) and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The information and prioritisation of areas of focus in addressing poverty already identified in all these documents greatly influenced the inputs into the PRSP and helped in making it a document that was owned by the country despite the short time involved in its preparation.

Lessons Learnt

- **Funding Leakages:**

Delays in releases and receipts of funds from the Treasury to line Ministries and local government structures were rife. These delays developed particular fertile ground for misappropriation, leakages, misallocation and re-allocations. Other offshoots included lack of transparency, low level capacity of local authorities in planning, budgeting, financial management and accountability. Others were weaknesses at local authority levels as they ignored plans developed by communities in spite of the Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) being introduced.

- **Popularising of PRS:**

The Civil Society Organisations (CSO) have an important role to play in monitoring the implementation of PRS. It was expected that through participation and monitoring exercises, CSOs would play an advocacy and lobbying role more efficiently and consequently come up with more pro-poor centred approaches. It was also recommended that CSO take up popularising PRS through drama, IEC materials, TV and Radio discussions including the print media informal focus group discussions and meetings.

2.5 Key Issues in Implementation and Monitoring of PRSP in Malawi: The Role of Civil Society

Mr. Mabvuto Bamusi of the Malawi Economic and Justice Forum (MEJN) presented the paper and highlighted the fact that the establishment of a the level of citizen participation required a dispensation of quality public services.

In June 2003, the MEJF forum carried out a service delivery satisfaction survey using different tools such as questionnaires, sample sizes and field date analysis. Selected areas for intervention included:

- Health care
- Education
- Agriculture
- Infrastructure
- Security

The results revealed grave disparities in the effectiveness of implementation or domestication of government priority initiatives at the local and community level. Such disparities surrounded areas of education, security, agriculture, health and other essential delivery services.

Out of the 21 thematic working groups looking at agriculture, gender and etc, the CSOs participated in 19 of them. This success was achieved partly because MEJN participated at two levels: (1) input and (2) output. It was difficult to go straight into the first level since it appeared not easy for CSOs at the input level to penetrate government. MEJN worked with parliament to get through from the input to the output level.

2.6 Challenges of Participation in PRSP Implementation - World Bank

This was articulately presented by Veena Siddhart, who moved through her wider experience with related organisations and interactions with low-levels of society to develop an opinion that took into consideration the pro-poor in different societies across the world.

She explained that factors which led to the PRSP were as a result of Global campaign for debt relief and greater transparency; New development literature (“Assessing Aid” 1998) showed that ownership and good policies rather than quantity of aid were the influential factors for development; 1997 ESAF Evaluation recommended greater discussion in-country of the reform process; Incorporating principles of transparency and ownership into agreements made at 1999 Cologne G-8 Summit

She mentioned that PRSP began as a requirement for HIPC Debt relief – announced in September 1999. Early PRSPs and interim PRSPs tended to have shorter time for participation because of pressure to obtain debt relief; over time, PRSPs had spread to non-HIPC countries (Sri Lanka, Albania, Tajikistan, Guatemala, etc.)

Elements of the PRSP included:

- Government leadership and ownership;
- Participation of various stakeholders;
- Donor support of programs vs. individual projects;
- Links to MDGs and poverty reduction;
- Three year framework;
- Monitoring and Evaluation plans.

Implementation Challenges of PRSPs:

- Bringing the PRSP to public attention and securing public support;
- Translation into local languages;
- Communication plans;
- Integrating participation into policy reform;
- Sectoralizing and decentralizing participatory process related to PRSP implementation;
- Piloting participatory approaches to public expenditure management;
- Promoting enabling legal frameworks for civic engagement;
- Supporting Parliaments in fulfilling their national roles;
- Establishing appropriate monitoring and feedback mechanisms.

Ms Veena Siddhart said that the **Positive Outcomes of the PRSPs** were many among which included;

- Increased focus on poverty monitoring and poverty data as one positive result of the PRSP process – examples include Albania, Burkina-Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.
- Public expenditure system was one key area to open up participation through budget analysis and community monitoring;

- Budget Analysis: (taking place in Malawi with the MEJN), public expenditure reviews and public expenditure tracking surveys (to be launched by Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia);
- Citizen Report Cards: At the outcome level, citizen report cards evaluate public services in a fairly technical manner, including poor people's views, using criteria they themselves define. There was usually a wide public dissemination of the results, putting pressure on public and government action;
- Community Monitoring: Involved target groups directly in the monitoring of public services both in defining indicators and collecting and analyzing the data.
- Decentralization and good governance strategies;
- Public Information and Debate.
- Participation in Progress Reports and PRSP Review: When civil society is strong enough, they can draw up their own progress review of the PRSP. These would be used to inform or examine a government progress report or to contribute to a general debate between stakeholders and would be held at a national level and include representative institutions relevant for the topics discussed.

Limitations

1. Civil society did not have the capacity to cover all issues relevant to PRSP implementation. While focusing on key aspects was realistic, the civil society review process risked getting lost in too many issues.
2. While civil society did introduce more data in the PRSP-debate, it risked remaining under-utilized by decision-makers, if the lobby and advocacy efforts surrounding the CSO-review were not strong enough.

Follow up actions

- Donors, governments and Northern NGOs could support greater capacity building to improve participation and empowerment in PRS implementation;
- Northern NGOs and Southern networks could continue to provide information and strategic advice about global processes;
- Donor harmonization to coordinate their aid must be deepened so as to put less strain on governments;
- Governments must work with civil society and other stakeholders to improve transparency and accountability, thus reducing needs for external imposition of accountability frameworks;
- Link PRSP implementation with monitoring of the economic reform program and the accompanying Poverty and Social Impact Assessment;
- Link PRS with Medium Term Expenditure Framework and concrete budget allocations;
- Improve relatively weak participation of private sector and local government.

In concluding her presentation Ms Siddart said that there was need to continue to identify, collect and share experiences among PRSP countries and international community particularly in the area of participatory Monitoring and Evaluation and supporting of a participatory public expenditure management .She further said that direct support and capacity development of stakeholders engaged in developing participatory arrangements, mechanisms and approaches was important hence the need for strengthening of institutional capacities in the area of civic engagement.

----- Day 2, 24th Tuesday June 2003 -----

Session one

2.7 Institutionalising participation in the PRSP Implementation, Monitoring and Review Process

The paper was presented by Dr. Walter Eberlei, Institute for Development and Peace, Federal Republic of Germany. Dr. Eberlei began by introducing himself and informed participants of his wider experience in development related issues through his Political Science discipline at both local and international levels.

In an effort to tap and channel local and national efforts and inputs in the development of nationally viable civil society participation in issues that relate to eradicating the many factors that give rise to poverty, the presenter recommended formulation of standards for participation of civil society. These standards included;

- i) The rights of the citizenry to access essential services in their respective countries;
- ii) Well developed and inclusive governance structures that offered the fullest participation of citizens in social, economic, cultural and environmental structures without regard to gender, status, and or physically challenged;
- iii) Legitimacy of the areas of intervention that offered essential departure points from the shackles of poverty;
- iv) Capacity to deliver the goods and services for the benefit of the country and its people.

He maintained that organisation of systematic learning processes would forge cooperation among countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), build upon and tap institutional comparative advantages from a wide range of local and international organisations and initiatives such as the civil society for poverty Reduction (CSPR) in Zambia, which was made up of several non-governmental agencies, thematic working groups and areas in the context of promoting participatory governance.

Subsequently the established links, networks, coalitions would provide further synergies on which parliaments would draw strength from. These programmes would depend on development oriented legislative instruments of the constitution and law.

Such an approach would serve as pedestal and platform for addressing collective responsibilities in nationally befitting development programmes and empower the poor and powerless. In a nutshell this would demand real national ownership of development programmes as opposed to political big wigs.

Box 1: Institutionalised Participation

Institutionalised Participation can be defined as a rights based, structurally integrated and legitimised process through which capable stake holders, shape and share control over development initiatives.

(Black: Brinkerhoff/Goldsmith 2001:4)

Box 2: Standards for PRS Participation

1. Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic rights (freedom of: opinion, information, media, association, networking, campaigning...) • PRS cycle: defined, rule-based role for parliament and civil society.
2. Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainably anchored dialog structures at national and regional levels. Merely meeting in a workshop or seminar may not necessarily mean (discussion)? But is simply an ad hoc measure; • Regular, relevant information flows, enabling effective monitoring; • Elements of decentralised decision-making.
3. Legitimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliament: debates, decisions; • Civil society: representative, independent, inclusive, democratic; • The poor: empowered to participate themselves (empowered also includes disempowerment of others including ourselves;) • Regular, relevant information flows, enabling effective monitoring; • The international context: real country ownership.
4. Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human and technical resources (analysis, lobbying, ...); • Effective networks; • Access to information (in due time, sufficient scopes...).

Participation Assessment

PRS countries with:

- Strongly institutionalised participation (Uganda, Burkina Faso)
- Moderate participation (Zambia)
- Weak participation (e.g. DR Congo, Mozambique, Madagascar)

Basis

28 indicators for the four participation standards: rights structures, legitimacy, and capacity

Box 3:

1. Rights	Uganda: Budget Act South Africa: Access to Information Act [Bolivia: Law on National Dialogue]
2. Structures	Tanzania: Poverty Monitoring System Uganda: PAF, UPPAP, Budget Group Mauritania, Zambia: Decentralising PRS Kenya, Gambia: Pre-budget consultations
3. Legitimacy	Kenya (Kilifi): Empowerment of the poor Zambia: Representative CSO network Ghana: Parliament approves MTEF
4. Capacity	Tanzania: PRSP version Kenya: Popular info on Budget Process Ethiopia: Training for Parliamentarians

Example: Institutionalising Participatory Budget

Many participatory budget initiatives worldwide, often in co-operation between governments, parliaments and civil societies:

- Brazil/Porto Alegre: Participatory budgeting;
- Uganda: Poverty Action Fund;
- South Africa: Gender and Pro-Poor Budgeting;
- Tanzania: Gender Budgeting.

Pro-Poor Budgeting: The South African Experience

Alta Fölscher, IDASA (2003):

- Institutions matter;
- Creating effective institutions is a learning process;
- Budget process is essentially a political rather than purely technocratic one.

2.8 Zanzibar Poverty Reduction Strategy: Proposed Poverty Monitoring and Institutional Set-up

Presentation by Slaus Mwisomba

Zanzibar is part of the United Republic of Tanzania. However, it also had peculiar problems relating to high levels of poverty that needed a more focused attention. The style used in the mainland of Technical Working Groups (TWGs) would be adopted together with the use of Annual Work Plans (AWPs), quarterly and annual progress reports.

The poverty monitoring system of the Zanzibar Poverty Reduction Plan (ZPRP) would include:

- Institutionalising the process of collecting data;
- Data analysis;
- Research promotion, analysis of poverty related issues;
- Information dissemination to domesticate government efforts at local community, structures through information, education and communication (IEC) tools;
- Promote evidence based development planning.

To institutionalise the set-up, the following three levels were proposed:

- Data collection;
- Analysis and advisory and;
- Policy

2.9 Discussion Session II

Dr. Milimo from PAG agreed with the presentation that touched on empowering the poor. However in an event that participation in programmes was effected without regard to ownership, how would participation be used for project ownership?

In response the presenters said that ownership was important in the development processes of any developmental project. Of importance would be the involvement of civil society in all the planning stages. This filtered in, a sense of responsibility at the level community.

Mrs. B. Mpepo from CSPR asked how parliamentarians would be brought on board? Considering their low level of participation in poverty reduction strategies in the past.

Accordingly, the presenter outlined the fact that other than being confrontational, CSOs would approach parliamentarians and encourage them to contribute their knowledge and experience to the development process of poverty reduction through strategies that were issue based, transparent and participatory.

Mrs. B. Mpepo also asked the presenter from Zanzibar as to whether Zanzibar had developed some benchmarks to meet PRSP objectives; *“do you think some of the technical benchmarks as outlined by Dr. Walter Eberlei in his presentation will be met?”* Mr Slaus Mwisomba agreed and mentioned that in fact it was in the second stage through which the established benchmarks would be operationalised, and it was their desire to make use of the shortfalls and successes underscored (if any) by other countries implementing the PRSPs at different levels.

Session two

3.0 COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

3.1 Angola

The presentation was made by Jose Gregorio and centred on:

- Civil society mobilisation for PRSP implementation and or monitoring;
- Civil society and government relationships around PRSPs;
- Government commitment to PRSP implementation;
- Resource mobilisation for PRSP.

The prolonged civil war in Angola backed by international military intervention over the control of natural resources gave rise to widespread poverty and social instability in Angola. Seventy two percent of the population lived below the poverty datum line, specifically less than US\$1.00 a day.

From the onset, the implementation of the PRSP involved through informed structures of government, civil society and community representatives. Although the Brentton Woods Institutions focused on inflation control, privatisation of essential enterprises and liberalising the economies, there had been little results achieved as inflation had more than doubled, the sale of state enterprises had given rise to widespread plunder of resources and corrupt practices at the expense of national development.

With such a gruesome scenario, the outcomes had not been positive either and have since given rise to:

- Unemployment
- Poor economic performance;
- Lack of fiscal discipline;
- Weak international linkage to institutions such as AGOA and NEPAD;
- Little compliance to IMF and IBRD (WB) terms and conditions;
- Low production and weaker governance structures and commitment.

The educational sector had been severely hit with the ratio being 2 500 pupils per teacher. Debt servicing had assumed the rate of 6% of oil revenue.

With the foregoing, the government felt it imperative to launch a 2003- 2004 transition programme with the assistance of international institutions. This transition programme took due cognisance of the effects of the war and how to address:

- Landmines
- Refugees repatriation;
- Life-expectancy pegged at 45 years;
- Reducing the 106% inflation rate;

Such a myriad of development impediments had not inspired the confidence of the international community in the poverty reduction strategy plan initiated by government especially given the US\$ 12 billion external debt burden.

3.2 Mozambique

Presentation by Humberto .T Zaquea and Paula Assubuji

The emergency of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSPs) had changed planning systems in the countries where they were elaborated. Besides being one of the conditions to qualify for HIPC initiative, they were also a linking point between this initiative and national planning systems.

Mozambique shares some difficulty milestones in implementing the PRSP. The main lessons were that civil society actors were still neglected and it was imperative that a way through which different actors would interact and together build a comprehensive poverty reduction platform was found.

The World Bank considered the PRSP as a medium term policy guide, containing macroeconomic, structural and social policies that would lead to economic growth and poverty eradication, while mobilising external savings for internal budget deficit.

Thus the government and civil society were fundamental actors in identifying the country's problems and or constraints and proposed measures to combat the short coming in its implementation. In most instances, the relationship was hampered by suspicions from either sides , government and institutions.

Other than solving overriding issues of poverty, PRSPs have gave birth to pertinent questions as tabulated hereunder:

- Poverty is it the core issue to address?
- Civil society, government and development partners, are they the main actors in poverty eradication strategies?
- Who owns the PRSP process?
- Are participatory processes incorporated?
- Is the PRSP process comprehensive?
- Would the top-down-top flow of information be realigned to include bottom - up?
- Is there a measure of responsibility at the individual, government and donor level as to warrant effective adherence to workable norms and protocols?

The answers to the above concerns have not been explicitly satisfactory. Some constraints have accompanied the PRSP process, among them;

- The lack of clarity on what participation is and to what extent different partners should be involved;
- Lack of capacity, both human and financial, as well as limitations caused by poor infrastructures;
- Time constraints, as most of the countries will manage the process in such a way as to be quick as possible.

The contents of the PRSP document in Mozambique was greatly influenced by the manner it was elaborated: civil society actors were invited to go and "appreciate" after the document was already prepared. Besides, the meeting time was limited and so were the materials, including the very PRSP, which was too complex a document. Notwithstanding the fact that CSOs participated, there was no feed back from government casting validity of the terms and contents of the PRSP document in some levels of uncertainty.

Against the foregoing, it was only safer for the CSO to brand the document as one based on theoretical rudiments and in many ways disconnected from the reality on the ground.

The government of Mozambique had openly declared its commitment to involving civil society in the joint efforts to address and combat poverty. Despite this broad vision and acknowledgement of the important role civil society had to play in the process of poverty reduction, the experience shown that most of the main actors supposed to be involved had little knowledge of do not know the PRSP itself or the monitoring and evaluation strategy paper and none of them had been involved in the discussions. To make matters worse, even the consultative forums were monopolised by government.

With the foregoing, the high expectations attached to the PRSPs by external partners did really cast legitimate doubts as to how practically viable the whole document, and its domestication, would make sense on the ground.

3.3 Zambia

The CSPR in Zambia Coordinator, Besinati P. Mpepo, gave an analysis of factors that impede the development processes of PRSPs. The presenter noted that in some countries, civil society groups question the meaning of true civil society participation versus rubber-stamping in PRSPs. Ms Besinati Mpepo disclosed that it formed part of the initial concerns in Zambia. The fresh memories of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) imposed by the strong powers of the Bretton Woods Institutions did cast legitimate fears in the civil society institutions.

Zambia's civil society participants in the PRSP was not because its participation was a requirement of the IMF/World Bank, but mainly because of the clear recognition of the need for poverty reduction to be high on Zambia's development agenda, especially arising from the following four premises:

1. The civil society was addressing the most profound moral challenge facing Zambia today- poverty. The fact that more than 73% of our people lived in unacceptable human conditions that cannot be ignored,
2. The PRSP was not a process only for funds solicitation but was to be national medium term development framework to effectively eradicate poverty;
3. The PRSP was not a short –term process with a one – off outcome, but would continue for years to come with constant evaluation and revision based on realistic assessment of results.
4. The PRSP might not be branded "home grown" unless civil society has effectively participated the process of which is a requirement of the IMF/world Bank signifying the clear recognition of the need for poverty reduction which is high on Zambia's development agenda.

The origins of the civil society for poverty reduction (CSPR) in Zambia was based on the premise that Zambia had a large and vibrant civil society and that not all civil society were part of the formulation process of the current PRSP (2002 to 2004) due to reasons such as lack of awareness, time frame etc. however, it would be said that there were some notable representation to act as departure points. Some CSPR member organisations were also part of the various PRSP working groups of the government from the time of PRSP inception. The efforts employed by CSPR had led to the preparation of a report, namely: " A PRSP for Zambia-

A Civil Society Perspective" launched in July 2001. The cooperation of civil society in the formulation of the effective and practically viable PRSP document had continued through issues of monitoring and evaluation.

Overall, the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MFNP) was coordinating the implementation of the PRSP with the participation of its sectoral line ministries and departments, some civil society organisations and cooperating partners. As a network, C SPR would not play an active role in the delivery of commitments made in the PRSP, but would otherwise utilise united efforts in PRSP monitoring. However, effective participation of C SPR members and other society organisations were encouraged to work with government in implementing the programmes.

To that end, C SPR was playing an active role in monitoring and evaluating PRSP implementation at two levels:

1. Government monitoring structure;
2. Civil society structure.

Government was fund raising its PRSP monitoring system whose system would work through various structures including the working groups that were constituted during PRSP formulation. C SPR, on the other hand has engage two PRSP monitoring approaches:

- a) Expenditure tracking and;
- b) Poverty monitoring.

In the past, civil society / government relationships were close to nil. Over the past years, there has been a significant improvement though rocked with high levels of suspicions.

For the PRSP to succeed in Zambia, there must be a large amount of political will and commitment. And since the budget is the primary tool for PRSP implementation commitment must begin from budgetary allocations.

It was important to note that the 2003 budget carried a reduced budgetary allocation to the PRSP as a priority. This was from the notable fact that allocation to poverty reduction programmes (PRP) had been cut from ZMK 450 billion in the 2002 national budget to K 420.7billion in 2003 budget representing a 6.5% decline in nominal terms and significantly more in real if one was to take into account the 26.7% inflation that occurred by the end of 2002.

Zambia's poverty reduction programmes continued to suffer in the light of rising concerns for the government to stick to fiscal monetary policies, huge external debt burden have shown that even the debt relief from the HIPC was not sufficient to meet the resource requirements for the challenge of poverty that Zambia is facing.

3.4 Discussion session III

One participant asked why Mozambique and Zambia had reportedly developed a good working relationship between CSOs and government, but there was also an increasing level of opposition from different sectors of society. The participant further asked on the best mechanisms for finding the departure point?

As for Tanzania case a question was posed on whether the country had increased its infrastructure to cope with increased enrolment as a result of abolishing educational fees. (there had been an immediate increase in classroom levels to more than 100 pupils in some cases). In response it was mentioned that the buildings and schools had not been increased.

It was mentioned by the presenter from Uganda that in the Northern Uganda, poverty had increased and 66% of the people were living below the poverty datum line, but in the South and Central parts of the country 35% of the people were poor". The distinguishing factor for this disparity was conflict. The north was conflict ridden as against these South. However, the 35% poverty level for the South part of Uganda was not across the board. There were so many areas evidently showing high levels of poverty beyond the 35% mentioned.

Mrs M. Abrokwa was asked why in Ghana, there was evidently mistrusts between CSO and government and whether there had been any attempts to bridge the gap. She agreed that they had been an attempt to bridge the gap through the NGO policy, which was still in draft. However she was quick to mention that the Northern part of Ghana exhibited high levels of poverty. There were so many NGOs that had sprung up, some included family NGOs while others were stomach-driven CSOs

On how Ghana had fared in economic term? Ms Abrokwa indicated that;

- Inflation had reduced from 48% to 15%;
- Interest rates had also lowered to 27% from 35%;and
- Refurbishing of most of the schools had been done, although still in process.

In Uganda, the District Technical leaders had the power to co-opt members of their choice into the planning committee. This arrangement was porous, and would be used to leave out essential technocrats and CSO to input into the process. Macro-economic issues are very technical and difficult to be easily articulated by every sector of society. Based on the above premise, there had been little input by people on the grassroots.

In Malawi at the peak of food crisis a number of issues came out. Mr. Bamusi explained that the maize was sold out on the advice of IMF. On the other hand, the EU indicated that Malawi had enough food while referring directly to potatoes and rice availability. This was where the problem arose in the definition of what is food. *Nsima* (pulp) was food according to Malawians and not Irish potatoes and or rice. The PRSP at national level was not working well. About 40% of the PRSP funds come from external partners. Domestic debt stock was at ZMK 40 billion.

Mrs. B. Mpepo recalled that at an earlier workshop she attended in Harare Zimbabwe, AFRODAD workshop, it was indicated that the PRSP was working extremely well. She sought the indulgence of the Malawi representative as to what the situation was at the moment.

Mr. Bamusi, in his response, reported that in implementing the PRSP, the government had taken the lead. CSOs appeared secondary. This was where the problem lied. Some CSOs e.g. on agricultural related projects are actually doing something tangible. But most of these went unrecorded defeating one of the purposes of PRSP implementation where all development activities are to be inventoried.

Mr. Bhuban Bajracharya from Nepal also reported that the PRSP was in its first year of implementation. But, were yet to devise the role NGOs/CBOs in the regular and data collection mechanisms and PRSP implementation. He then wanted to find out in what areas CSOs would input in government attempts based on comparative advantages?

It was then mentioned that the capacity of CSOs was to conduct special studies, tracking implementation stages, coordinate evaluation and priority forming.

In addition to the above ,Tanzanian CSOs made its government to report PRSP implementation through the local media in order to provide information to the grassroots. And quoting 'IMF' presentation *"If a government does not want support it should say so"* Rev. Mabina felt that the presentation by IMF was misleading. This was so because they (IMF) know well that borrower government's were vulnerable and would use every means to get the money.

And Uganda reported that the country had a very strong CSO network. Through this, they stood to support the efforts of the government by presenting their case to donors. Government /CSO relations were well and only needed mutual encouragement.

A participant from Zambia asked how others were working with trade union in the mobilisation of the PRSP? Pastor Labeja from Uganda noted that first, collaboration appeared thorny, but over time, comparative advantages were worked out to safeguard the interests of CSOs capacity to be organized and provide the needed check and balances on government performance level.

One participant questioned whether there was an effort to involve CSOs in the preparation of the PRSP in Uganda? Ms Vicky Luyima from Uganda answered by stating that there was participation of CSOs in Uganda and that Uganda used the its already developed poverty reduction plan for the country to input into. PRSP

As for the Angolan case, on the consultation for the documentation of the PRSP, Participants asked if they had worked with the displaced populations internally and externally? There was not much space for CSO to act in Angola. Currently Jubilee Angola was a coalition of NGO working on PRSP Debt and Development.

It has been very difficult for CSOs to operate due to the following:

- i) The country was under transition from war to peace;
- ii) The people were displaced;
- iii) The level of under development was high; and
- iv) There was currently no proper CSOs monitoring and evaluation framework currently.

Besides, the government was not addressing the concerns of the welfare of the refugees. On PRSPs implementation, there were some efforts, CSO in particular Jubilee 2000 was taking a survey to establish the extent of damage to the country and come up with concrete plans for remedial actions. Already data from eight provinces had been collected whose report would soon be published to share findings.

4.1 A Finger on the Pulse: by Johan Van Rixtel, Cordaid, - Netherlands

Mr. Rixtel made mention of Cordaid's strategic plan for 2003. He disclosed that in 2003, Cordaid wanted to focus on the question of what PRSPs would actually deliver? To answer this question, more information was needed about the quality of discussion between civic organisations and government institutions. Also the (or lack of) concrete linkages between policies to reduce poverty and actual results in the field needed to become clear.

On the forehand Cordaid believed that to make PRSPs work, monitoring on different levels (national, district, local) was extremely important especially when it was combined with relevant feedback mechanisms to question policy makers and inform the general public. Cordaid wanted to engage in a debate with NGOs in several (African) countries to learn and to define Cordaid's own role more clearly within the context of PRSPs and the activities of Cordaid's partners had developed.

It was also reported that in 2003 Cordaid had started a programme called "finger on the pulse." Together with partners, Cordaid wanted to find ways to strengthen the work of partners beyond its funding activities. For example by taking the initiative to produce and publish a kind of PRSP watch with, on the one hand, a focus on best practices in the field of monitoring and relevant feedback mechanisms. On the other hand, information on governmental poverty reduction policy intentions and its implementation could be a part of such a publication.

Together with the Dutch health organisation *Wemos* Cordaid organised a seminar in 2002 about the relationship of PRSPs and health policy. For 2003 Cordaid and *Wemos* would look more closely on the involvement of the Dutch government in sector policies and its consequences for the implementation of the PRSPs. Most likely this information would be used for lobbying efforts in the Netherlands.

He looked forward to continuing the debate on what PRSPs actually delivered and how collaboration would be strengthened to develop relevant instruments and strategies to make PRSPs real tools of poverty reduction.

4.2 BRIEF TALK BY THE WORLD BANK COUNTRY MANAGER - Zambia

This was given by the World Bank Country Manager Mr. Ohene Nyanin.

He welcomed the participants to the conference and stressed that there was need for CSOs to be focused in complementing efforts in reducing poverty. In particular, he was of the view that:

- The CSOs had been instrumental in contributing to the working of World Bank;
- As partners, there was need to collaborate in reducing poverty, as the PRSP was the best document or plan since the people or countries themselves owned it;
- There was need for ownership of our own plans;
- The PRSP had set opportunities for people to determine and decide their own future;

- PRSP was a blue print for counties to also enhance millennium goals;
- Participation of PRSP was improving day by day; and
- There should be continuous refinement of the PRSP so that all stakeholders would be included in the implementation.

5.0 GROUP WORK

5.1 Preparation for group work

Earlier, on day 1, participants were encouraged to choose between any one of the following groups:

- Group 1- Role of civil society beyond PRSP monitoring;
- Group 2- Advocacy issues on PRSP by civil society;
- Group 3- South-to-South networking.

Accordingly, the above formed the basis for working groups and participants broke in their respective working group areas.

5.1 Report Backs

The presentations from the working groups included a time for comments and clarifications.

In general, the working groups deliberated on sector specific thematic areas in order to assess the efficacy of strategies being employed by governments. Participants felt that governments should be seen to participate in the sensitization programs in association with civil society so that all efforts to reduce poverty appear representative and participatory.

5.1.1 Group one: Role of Civil Society beyond PRSP monitoring

This group discussed and identified issues that they thought CSO would be involved in apart from PRSP monitoring. These issues were:

- A was need to build trust between government and CSOs so that as stakeholders we would sit together to render support, checks and balances to all development processes;
- Enhance partnership between government civil society, IM,F World Bank and other Donor partners
- CSOs should be involved in implementation at community level;
- Civil society should be involved on issues of good governance and advocate bottom up planning.
- Carry out independent reviews;
- Extended PRSP working groups down to the community level and build strong institutional capacity for focal points at provincial through to in district level;
- Capacity building, lobbying, policy formulation and promotion of dialogue between all stakeholders;
- Focus on resource mobilisation by involving communities and their respective representatives;
- That CSO be involved in Budget development processes;
- Involvement of CSOs participation in all national decision-making processes.

5.1.2 Group 2: Advocacy Issues in PRSP by Civil Society

Group 2 matrix

Macro issues	Cross cutting	Micro issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RPGF Conditionalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation in decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Representation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resource Gaps for funding PRSP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Legal framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Debt relief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pledges versus Disbursements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capacity Skills and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Governance transparency, corruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Networking coalition building 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Penetrating IFIs 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Debt sustainability 	

This group identified three issues that required involvement of civil society through advocacy namely macro, micro and intermediate issues.

(l) Under **Macro issues** there was need for;

- An end to resource gaps in the funding of PRSP programs;
- Implementation of Debt Relief pledges;
- Additional or increased sustainable aid;
- Dealing with governance issues i.e. corruption, accountability and transparency;
- Having debt that the countries would manage to repay back without problems; and
- Clear Conditionalities- PRGF from lending institutions that had a human face.

Debt relief:

Current debt relief measures were insufficient and CSOs regretted the decline in aid flows to Zambia, a country with very little capacity to repay its debt. The group proposed a cancellation tied to conditions to tackle poverty eradication by means of sound economic management that could result in significant enhancement of living standards. First of all, the group noted that borrowing must be responsible on the part of government. Responsibility also applies to lending institutions and proposes guidelines for loan acquisition processes.

Governance transparency / corruption:

The prevailing lack of resources could be mitigated through prioritisation and prevention of corruption and misuse. Trust must be built between CSOs and government in order to precipitate increased responsibility in the fiscal management of resources. Partnerships between government, civil society, IMF, WB and other donors-parliament must also be enhanced.

Civil Society groups reiterated their support for an economic diversification based on

- Establishing a Copperbelt diversification authority;
- Focusing on value-added production of goods and services;
- Concentration on sectors with a high growth potential in the short and medium term;
- Optimising Zambia's participation in the global market; and
- Concurrent harmonized selective implementation of Export Processing Zones (EPZ).

(iii) Under **Micro Issues** the following needed to be considered:

- Representation of CSOs in budget tracking and expenditure;
- Need for accountability to monetary reallocation and misallocation; and
- Capacity building of CSOs in terms of skills in monitoring, advocacy & lobby and Budget tracking.

(iii) Cross cutting **Macro / Micro issues**

- There was need for CSOs to be involved in all manner of decision-making, planning, debate and formation of policies.
- The Legal framework should be well structured as to empower the civil society in providing the essential checks and balances in programmes of national development.
- There was also need to promote the wider participation of the Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in decision-making processes that affect the nation.
- Modalities for funding are not clearly spelt out by both multi-lateral and bilateral institutions.
- Many of the pledges as made by both bilateral and multilateral institutions end up not being disbursed in the long run. Such an eventuality derailed purposes that were otherwise intended to be used against the pangs of poverty.
- Networking and coalition building among all key stakeholders was essential if we were to embark on a collaborative approach to development programmes.
- It was also important for CSOs to penetrate International Financing Institutions (IFIs) in order to share decisions that affect borrower nations' development processes and as part of the negotiating process there should be an entry point for CSOs in all agreements entered into with governments.

5.1.3 Group 3: South to South PRSP Networking

Group 3 matrix

Networking (Sharing experiences)	Priorities
• Discipline among CSOs	• Evaluation & Monitoring
• South to south poverty network	• Information & advocacy
• Network website	• Capacity building
• Task force	• Development of sharing tools
• E mail discussions	

The working group began by defining networking in term and content as one which incorporated the sharing of experiences and in the context of PRSPs requirements:

- Discipline among CSOs;
- South-South poverty network;
- Make use of other existing websites carrying information on PRSPs such as World Bank, IMF and the many civil societies in which countries the PRS are being implemented;
- Establish a Task Force to steer network; and
- Conducting online discussions on e-mail.

Priorities for Intervention:

1. Monitoring and evaluation.
2. Information sharing and advocacy..
3. Capacity building.
4. Developing and sharing tools.
5. Funding

[This would take cognisance of the existing cordial relations and intended to support by both multilateral and bilateral partners such as Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD), Irish Aid, Usaid, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN System, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and others.]

5.2 Discussions Session IV

After some discussion on the pros and cons of being hosted in the interim by World Bank's website the participants agreed that they should design and maintain an independent website for the network. In this respect it was vital for the participating countries, CSOs or CSO networks to identify or explore the vast expertise within them selves in terms of website development.

The issue of what would transpire to the rural and peri-urban communities that do not have access to electronic media was discussed and the proposed task force under networking was mandated to look in to that issue. For the network to be operational there was also need for it to be institutionalised.

At national level email communication was a necessity while at community level-sharing experiences using other media would be implored. There was need for utilisation of local resources initially.

Ms Besinati Mpepo from Zambia maintained that there was need for a meeting again in 2004 so as to evaluate what the stance on PRSP was by the participating counties (a follow up conference to the 2003 one).

After the studies on poverty monitoring it was imperative to CSOs to get back to the research sites so as to share their experiences with the communities rather than share their finding only during annual poverty conferences.

Uganda shared experiences on their Republican Constitution and outlined that in their constitution there was provision for citizens to voice their concerns on national issues that affected them. It was envisaged that in the same vein there was need for other counties to advocate for constitutions that not only protected their citizen rights but also mandated the people to take their government or leaders to task on national issues that affected their daily lives i.e. Poverty. The PRS policies needed to be hinged in the legal framework of a country.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The conference participants as a way forward discussed the following:

- Networking
- Advocacy and information sharing issues
- Setting up a website
- Need for a follow up meeting.

Would it be necessary to set up website representing CSOs in sub-Saharan African? Can there be some volunteering countries?

Participants explored various options for networking including the use of websites, as a form of sharing experiences bearing in mind the particular needs peculiar to each country.

It was finally agreed that the following countries would take a lead in the establishment and development of a website, advocacy and Civil Society PRSP monitoring programs.

6.1 CSO Networking- website

CSPR Zambia was Chosen to host a web network for starters until such a time when it is fully operationalised.

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ZAMBIA

6.2 Advocacy Issues on PRSP

Uganda was chosen to spearhead the development of the advocacy program that would enable civil society to advocate issues pertaining to the PRSP in the network.

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UGANDA

6.3 Role of Civil Society Organisations beyond PRSP

One of the roles recommended was the building of partnerships, and collaboration in the area of information sharing and solidarity. Mozambique was given this role although tentative terms of reference would be developed in the course of implementation. Mozambique was chosen to initiate ways in which the Civil Society would be involved beyond PRSP monitoring in the network

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MOZAMBIQUE

As for tentative dates and venue for the next international conference or follow up meeting, they were not set. However, the participants agreed that it was vitally important for them to organise another such meeting the following year (2004).

7.0 Closing remarks by Besinati Mpepo, Co-ordinator, CSPR, Zambia

The Co-ordinator felt honoured to have had been given a chance to see the meeting through time to conclusion and hoped that such an opportunity to share country experiences would unfold again. She reminded participants that if poverty reduction strategies were to genuinely address the various dimensions of poverty-including insecurity, vulnerability, gender inequalities and access to opportunities, work, assets, and welfare, then genuine and effective participation of civil society in key issues of development processes needed to be practically addressed. She encouraged participants to continue to demand the right to participation and ensure that their input is valuable and makes a difference in the lives of the people. In addition, she encouraged governments to empower civil society and provide space for their legitimate participation in providing the checks and balances in development processes.

She thanked the sponsors of the forum, members of the Information Dissemination and Advocacy and CSPR staff, CSPR provincial focal points, as well as the participants from the various countries represented and encouraged them to enjoy the cultural evening that had been planned for delegates to sample a part of Zambia's variety of cultural dimensions.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The main conclusion that emerged from the forum and the subsequent recommendations that would be derived from the forum were centred on networking between South-South countries and greater involvement of CSO in PRSP monitoring, especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa. The conclusions related, not only to the countries in which the PRSPs were being implemented but to broader bilateral and multilateral institutions that provided various forms of support to Highly Indebted Poor Countries.

**INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR SHARING OF EXPERIENCES ON PRSP MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION – THE INVOLVEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY
23RD TO 24TH JUNE, 2003**

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