

Part I

# **POVERTY AND HUMAN SECURITY**



# Human security and poverty reduction in Zambia

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## INTRODUCTION

The time has come to go beyond the state-centric view that has informed much of contemporary discourse on security. We do not intend to gloss over the fact that many violent conflicts that have engulfed humanity have been the result of the violation of national interests by external aggressors. The end of the Cold War has also witnessed the escalation of intra-state conflicts that in the past tended to be subsumed under the East-West ideological overlay.

In this study, however, we are arguing that there is a need to view countries gripped by severe poverty as legitimate security concerns. For this reason, this study has embraced the broader concept of human security as a useful analytical tool for addressing latent security problems. Not only does the concept of human security lead us to an understanding of the root causes of many conflicts, but it also possesses the potential to serve as an early warning mechanism when it is used to influence policy actions.

It is gratifying to note that world leaders have recognised the intricate links that bind issues of development, cooperation, and peace. The Millennium Declaration by the world leaders in September 2000 and the subsequent establishment of the United Nations Security Commission are testimony that, indeed, a broader concept of security is an imperative. The same spirit is evident in the thrust of the thinking of African leaders on security as embodied in the founding documents of the African Union (AU), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Against this backdrop, this study regards the poverty that pervades Zambian society as a silent threat to human security. We contend that poverty is a silent threat to human security because it is an element of structural violence that can easily explode into open conflict. Our main

purpose is to demonstrate the need to factor the issue of poverty into the country's security policy considerations. The study also intends to make the point that many countries – such as Zambia – that have not experienced large-scale intra-state armed conflict are just as deserving of development assistance as countries in post-conflict situations. The study specifically analyses the issue of poverty in Zambia within the context of the country's adoption of the PRSP. Using data based on fieldwork conducted in Mansa and Samfya districts in one of the poorest provinces of Zambia, it is argued that a lot remains to be done to elevate poverty reduction to a priority national development strategy so that one of the most lethal threats to human security in the country may be tackled. Two issues that are relevant to policy are given prominence in the study, namely state capacities and popular participation in formulation and implementation of poverty reduction activities.

The study is divided into five main sections. Following this introduction, we look at the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of human security and efforts to operationalise it at various levels, including SADC and the Zambian government. This is followed by an analysis of the poverty situation in Zambia. In the fourth section data is presented from the study's fieldwork. The study concludes with recommendations that would help the Zambian government view poverty as a serious human security issue needing urgent attention.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on data collected via a combination of secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources consisted of a review of reports by government, civil society, bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, and academic publications. Primary data is based on results of fieldwork interviews conducted in the two districts of Mansa and Samfya in Luapula Province in north-eastern Zambia. Fieldwork interviews took the form of conversational interviews with provincial and district heads of government line ministries, civil society leaders and traditional rulers. Interview guides were prepared for each of the above categories of respondents and administered with the assistance of two research assistants, male and female. In addition, focus group discussions were held with four community groups, two in each district. Altogether 53 respondents participated in the study: 16 key informants (9 Mansa and 7 Samfya) and 47 community members (38 Mansa and 9 Samfya). Fieldwork was carried out between 25 October and 2 November

2004. A dissemination workshop was held at the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) Africa Centre on 15 December 2004. The workshop was attended by participants from civil society, government, the University of Zambia and media personnel. Feedback from the workshop participants and comments by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) liaison person were then incorporated into the final report.

### **HUMAN SECURITY, POVERTY, AND PARTICIPATION**

Pervasive poverty is a silent threat to human security. This is implicit in the definition of human security advanced by many commentators. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for example, asserted that:

“Human security can be said to have two main aspects. It means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities.”<sup>2</sup>

The above definition clearly implies that for the multitudes of humanity caught up in the poverty trap, their human security is compromised. Chronic hunger, disease and repression are common features of poverty. Poverty also entails a precarious existence subject to “hurtful disruptions”. Whereas traditional state-centric views of security occupy themselves with territorial interests and foreign aggression, the human security approach casts the spotlight on people’s welfare.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the concept of human security equates security with people rather than territories, with development rather than arms.<sup>4</sup>

Focus on the security of individuals, however, does not diminish the importance of national security, as expounded in the state-centric approaches. Many authors recognise that national security and human security are mutually supportive.<sup>5</sup> An effective, democratic state that promotes and protects the welfare of its people is a precondition for strengthening the legitimacy, stability, and security of its own existence. Seen from this perspective, security of the state is not an end in itself, but a means of securing security for its people.<sup>6</sup>

Poverty negates human security. Poverty, like human security, is a multi-dimensional social phenomenon. Poverty not only entails lack of what is necessary for material well-being, it also has important psychological

dimensions.<sup>7</sup> Poor people lack voice, power, and independence to participate effectively in community life.

Poverty aggravates social exclusion and disaffection. It undermines human dignity and self-esteem. Not surprisingly, hunger, unemployment, homelessness, and illiteracy provide powerful emotional appeals for separatist movements and those seeking to wrest control of state power, even by illegitimate means. It is unconscionable to think of human security while ignoring the problem of poverty.<sup>8</sup> This is because the multi-dimensional threats to human security, such as economic insecurity, food insecurity, political insecurity, and environmental insecurity, also work to aggravate poverty.

It follows, then, that strategies which address the above threats to human security ought to simultaneously address poverty and provide an enabling environment in which human development can take place. The Commission on Human Security has identified four priorities for policy action to promote human security:

- encouraging growth that reaches the extreme poor;
- supporting sustainable livelihoods and decent work;
- preventing and containing the effects of economic crises and natural disasters; and
- providing social protection for all situations.<sup>9</sup>

The Zambian government has explicitly recognised these priorities for policy action in order to promote human security. The government's poverty reduction strategy, among other things, exposes pro-poor economic growth and social safety nets for vulnerable groups in society. Similarly, the government has established a disaster management unit in the Office of the Vice-President to deal with sudden disruptions in social life.

Other governments hold a similar view. The Japanese government's approach to human security, for example, combines micro-credit schemes, promotion of basic education, provision of social safety nets, and support for conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction.<sup>10</sup> Understood in the manner we have described above, human security provides us with a holistic concept capable of "nipping conflict and instability in the bud".

Participation is the third leg of our triad. It also ranks as one of the important constitutive elements of human security. Our discourse on human security and poverty reduction would therefore be incomplete without showing how popular participation is linked to both.

Cardinal to an understanding of the essence of human security is the notion of developing the capabilities of individuals and communities to make informed choices. This view was aptly stated by the Commission on Human Security when the commissioners observed that “human security starts from the recognition that people are the most active participants in determining their well-being”.<sup>11</sup> The potential of poor people and communities to contribute to their development is enormous, as many professional development practitioners have come to recognise.<sup>12</sup> It is now a truism that interventions aimed at reducing poverty are bound to meet with limited success if the poor themselves are not given a prominent voice in selecting, designing and implementing poverty alleviation programmes and projects. The reasons are obvious: “Poor women and men have detailed knowledge and have context specific criteria about who is poor and not poor.”<sup>13</sup>

Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith<sup>14</sup> have defined participation as a process through which stakeholders shape and share control over development initiatives. Eberlei<sup>15</sup> has noted three important elements of this definition, namely the process character as opposed to one-off participatory events, inclusiveness of all societal actors (stakeholders), and a form of joint policy-making. He then expands on these three elements to define what he calls institutionalised participation:

“Institutionalised participation can be defined as a rights-based, structurally integrated, and legitimized process through which capable stakeholders shape and share control over development initiatives.”<sup>16</sup>

Eberlei’s definition of institutionalised participation is particularly useful in the conceptualisation of poor people’s role in the poverty reduction processes introduced by government and other outside agencies.

Unfortunately, practice presents a disconcerting picture. Pulverised by poverty and physical dislocation, many poor people and communities face serious obstacles in taking the destinies of their lives in their own hands. Yet guaranteeing human security demands that poor people and communities play an active role in development initiatives that promote giving community groups authority and control over planning, implementing and monitoring poverty reduction programmes. The challenge is to find facilitators who will help the poor to discover their inert potentialities and activate them, so that they do not remain passive victims of poverty and the attendant insecurities that it tends to spawn. As Narayan and others have reflected:<sup>17</sup>

“Developing local organizational capacity requires facilitators who work with poor men and women to inform them about programs, rules, and assets. Poor people need organization to demand local-level transparency and accountability, a process that may also require protection from punitive actions taken by the local elite. So far, governments and most development assistance have focused on the rules, resources, and capacities of the formal systems of governance, and not on mechanisms to build the capacity of poor women and men to participate in local governance and to demand local-level transparency and accountability.”

In many parts of the developing world, civil society groups are facilitating communities to make informed choices and to rebuild their organisational capacities to stake claims to development resources. This empowering process is tantamount to taking closer steps towards attaining human security. An outstanding example is the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which has become a centre of excellence in showcasing how micro-finance can be used to fight poverty. That civil society has a special role in enhancing human security in Africa is no longer in question.<sup>18</sup> This has been recognised by many African leaders.<sup>19</sup> The real challenge is maintaining a climate of relations between the state and civil society that would allow the latter to thrive without being seen to be undermining the authority of legitimate states.

In concluding this section, we wish to point out that there is growing appreciation of the linkages between security, cooperation and development as suggested by the human security paradigm. At international level, the September 2000 Millennium Summit and its declaration to combat poverty is one of the best-known shifts in the conception of security by a collective body of international leaders. In the southern African region, the conceptual framework on peace and security of the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security can also be classified as representing a paradigm shift. To its credit, the SADC Organ recognises the role of non-state actors in the promotion of peace and development. This has created, at least in theory, important political space for civil society groups to partner with states in the region in shaping the peace and development agenda in the member countries.

The challenge for most countries in the SADC region is to translate global views of human security into national programmes. For our purposes, we are concerned with the domestication of the human security agenda by the Zambian government. Zambia has yet to re-orient its approach to issues of security. This re-orientation is necessary if Zambia



is to have a holistic approach to security concerns. In other words, policy-makers and important non-state actors need to transcend the traditional state-centric approach to security with its narrow focus on territory and foreign policy interests as its main units of analysis. It is encouraging that many of the ideas that underpin the human security discourse are already present in the Zambian debate. There are many ways in which human security issues are discussed without consciously alluding to the understanding which has evolved at the global level. There is, for instance, a vigorous campaign to entrench economic, social and cultural rights in the republican constitution. To this effect, many submissions have been made by citizens to the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) appointed by President Levi Mwanawasa in 2003. This position has been clearly articulated by civil society groups like the African Network on Human Rights and Development (AFRONET) and Women for Change (WFC).<sup>20</sup> Similarly, other on-going national debates relevant to human security focus on good governance and poverty reduction.

It is also encouraging to note that Zambia, both as government and civil society, has participated in international gatherings where issues of human security have formed part of the agenda. For example, Zambia was represented at the Copenhagen summit on social development in 1995 where the UNDP's concept of human security was discussed. Again, Zambia was one of the signatories to the Millennium Declaration that defined the Millennium Development Goals. Closer to home, Zambia is a founding member of SADC and subscribes to the SADC Organ. Similarly, in 2004, the Zambian government signed up for the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) under NEPAD. Zambia, therefore, already has the makings of what is required to formulate a comprehensive approach to peace and development based on the human security paradigm.

### **POVERTY SITUATION IN ZAMBIA**

If poverty is a negation of human security, as we have argued above, then Zambia's situation can only be described as precarious. In comparative terms, Zambia is said to have the highest level of income poverty and the fourth largest level of human poverty in the SADC region.<sup>21</sup> Whether seen in relative or absolute terms, poverty in Zambia presents the greatest challenge to the country's human security.

Deterioration in human development as measured by the UNDP's human development index (HDI) is often associated with conflict

situations. Although Zambia has never been embroiled in large-scale armed civil uprisings on the same scale as some of its immediate neighbours (Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and Zimbabwe), the country is no stranger to violent conflict. First, Zambia has experienced localised insurgency in the form of the Lenshina uprising in parts of Northern and Eastern provinces in 1965 and the Adamson Mushala-led guerrilla warfare in North-western province in the 1970s to early 1980s. Second, as host to several liberation movements that waged war against white minority regimes in the region in the 1970s and 1980s, Zambia paid a high price. Zambia suffered loss of human life and economic infrastructure as a result of military incursions by regimes which wanted to break the country's support to liberation groups. It does not therefore come as a surprise that the country's ranking in terms of the HDI closely resembles that of countries that are either in, or emerging from, conflict. Human insecurity and poverty in Zambia are therefore closely linked to a complex set of geo-political historical factors, economic policy failures, and the vagaries of dependence on a mono-economy. Seen from this perspective, the international community needs to treat Zambia in the same way that other countries in the post-conflict construction phase are treated.

Table 1 SADC human development index

Rank	Country
1	Seychelles
2	Mauritius
3	South Africa
4	Swaziland
5	Namibia
6	Botswana
7	Lesotho
8	Zimbabwe
9	Democratic Republic of Congo
10	Zambia
11	Tanzania
12	Angola
13	Malawi
14	Mozambique

Source: SADC Regional Human Development Report 2000: Challenges and opportunities for regional integration. The report is published by the United Nations Development Programme, the Southern African Development Community and the Southern African Political Economy Series Trust.

Once a prosperous middle-income country, Zambia today is one of the least developed economies of the world. About 80% of the population of Zambia are reported to be living on the equivalent of US\$1 per day.<sup>22</sup> According to the country's Central Statistical Office (CSO), 73% of the population live in poverty.<sup>23</sup> Poverty is more severe in rural areas (83%) than in urban areas (56%), though in recent years, poverty has increased most rapidly in the urban areas because of the decline in the fortunes of the economy, particularly its mining sector.<sup>24</sup>

Table 2 Overall and extreme poverty in Zambia in rural and urban areas, 1991–1998

Year	Zambia		Rural		Urban	
	Overall poverty	Extreme poverty	Overall poverty	Extreme poverty	Overall poverty	Extreme poverty
1991	69.7	58.2	88.0	80.6	48.6	32.3
1993	73.8	60.6	92.2	83.5	44.9	24.4
1996	69.2	53.2	82.8	68.4	46.0	27.3
1998	72.9	57.9	83.1	70.9	56.0	36.2

Source: CSO, Living conditions in Zambia 1998: The evolution of poverty in Zambia 1990–1996.

Households headed by females are the worst affected by poverty, an observation that was backed by the findings of the Zambia Poverty Assessment Study.<sup>25</sup> More recently, the Social Watch Report 2001 reported that social disparities between men and women in Zambia are widening. The report stated that: “When there is hunger in the home, its first victims are women and their youngest children. Unjust land policies in both modern and traditional tenure systems still restrict the advance of women.”<sup>26</sup>

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has contributed to the worsening of poverty in the country. Not surprisingly, the population of orphans has reached alarming levels and child-headed households have become a common phenomenon. The number of orphans attributed to the impact of HIV/AIDS was estimated at 620,000 in 2000 and is projected to reach 974,000 in 2014.<sup>27</sup> Homelessness, particularly among children, is threatening to reach catastrophic levels. In 1996, the number of street children was put at 75,000.<sup>28</sup> Vulnerability to poverty is said to be highest among small- and medium-scale farmers. This is not surprising, given the agricultural liberalisation policy measures that withdrew state support to farmers in the early 1990s.

Poverty in Zambia has been defined as “lack of access to income, employment opportunities, normal internal entitlements for the citizens

such as freely determined consumption of goods and services, shelter and other basic needs of life".<sup>29</sup>

Poverty is linked to a combination of factors, both personal and societal. In rural areas, poverty is largely attributed to poorly functioning markets for both the supply of farming inputs and the purchase of produce. The situation is aggravated by low productivity, which is due to a combination of factors, including outmoded technologies, poor infrastructure, lack of credit, and weak extension services. At macro level, however, poverty in Zambia can be traced to the poor performance of the economy over the last three decades. Zambia's per capita income declined from US\$752 in 1965 to US\$351 in 2002.<sup>30</sup>

The implementation of economic reforms supported by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund is widely considered to have contributed to deepening poverty in Zambian society. Livelihoods have deteriorated tremendously and access to basic social services such as education and health care have declined as a result of the introduction of cost recovery and user fees in the provision of these services. The introduction of user fees and cost recovery have coincided with increased unemployment due to the closure of companies which could not withstand the flood of cheap imports brought about by economic liberalisation.<sup>31</sup> To compound the problem of poverty, the abolition of food subsidies and the decontrol of prices have not been accompanied by the development of adequate social safety nets that could cushion the impact of the harsh economic environment on those who are least able to fend for themselves.

#### HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC

Freedom from despair, though less tangible, is considered another important dimension of human security. Alongside the scourge of poverty that we have discussed above, the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Zambia has deepened a sense of despair in the nation. Today, HIV/AIDS has become a serious impediment to Zambia's development process and the state of human security in the nation. Productivity and family life have been greatly battered by the pandemic. Statistics on the impact of HIV/AIDS present a sombre picture. At national level, studies indicate that one in six adults aged 15 to 49 years is HIV positive.<sup>32</sup> The proportion of the population living with HIV rises from 5% among 15–19 year olds to 25% in the 30–34 age group, before dropping to a level of 17% in the 45–49 age group.<sup>33</sup>

HIV/AIDS prevalence stands at 23% of the urban population, compared to 11% in rural areas. More women (18%) than men (13%) are infected with HIV/AIDS.<sup>34</sup> It is further estimated that 650,000 adults and children have died in the 17 years of HIV/AIDS in Zambia.<sup>35</sup>

Pervasive poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic have formed a deadly combination. Many households emaciated by poverty are failing to provide the kind of nutrition and care that can prolong the lives of HIV/AIDS sufferers. It is no wonder that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is having a field day – it has found a society whose capacities to cope with sudden shocks and sustained stress have already been severely weakened.

Pervasive poverty and an underfunded national health budget have become fertile ground for other diseases. There has been an alarming resurgence of opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis – which were well contained until the advent of HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s. It is no coincidence that the spread of HIV/AIDS has occurred alongside many vices and practices often associated with high levels of poverty such as the prevalence of other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); multiple sexual partners; low condom use; poor health; low status of women; urbanisation and mobility; early sexual activity; and archaic cultural practices that reinforce the low status of women.

The impact that HIV/AIDS has had on the national economy is incalculable. HIV/AIDS infection is highest among the most productive segments of the economically active population, which compounds the problem. Apart from slowing down economic activity, the disease has taken its toll on society through factors such as loss of bread winners; low productivity due to ill health; lost man-hours spent on visiting the sick in hospitals and caring for them in homes; and time off from work to attend funerals of relatives, workmates and neighbours.

#### STATE CAPACITIES

Government response to the threats to human security described above is generally considered weak.<sup>36</sup> This response has been in form of formulation of the PRSP mentioned above and a broad spectrum of policy reforms covering the entire public sector.

The PRSP consists of three broad thematic areas:

- the productive sectors comprising agriculture, tourism, transport, and energy infrastructure;
- the social sector consisting of education and health; and

- the cross-cutting issues of governance, HIV/AIDS, gender and environment.

Key public sector reforms include privatisation of state-owned enterprises, the Public Sector Reform Programme (PSRP) and the decentralisation policy.

Progress in the above areas has been sluggish because of a combination of factors: a heavy external debt, high dependence on donors who are not always forthcoming in honouring their financial pledges, lack of political will, and poorly formulated strategies.

Zambia's economic recovery is constrained by the country's heavy external debt, which was estimated at US\$7.1 billion in December 2002.<sup>37</sup> This translates into a per capita debt of about US\$700, placing the population of the country among the most indebted people in the world.<sup>38</sup> Debt servicing reduces the state's capacity to provide basic services to the people, as few resources are left for development investments. The country's poverty reduction strategy is estimated to cost a total resource envelope of US\$1,200 million.<sup>39</sup> Government has yet to prove that it can mobilise the necessary resources to fight poverty. Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), for example, has noted with great disappointment that "while there is an attempt to clearly classify and set aside money in the budget for Poverty Reduction Programmes (PRPs), the amounts have been inadequate to achieve meaningful poverty reduction. For 2002, 2003, and 2004, the amounts have been, respectively, 7.9%, 6.1% and 6.3% of the national budget."<sup>40</sup>

There are serious concerns that official rhetoric on poverty reduction has not been reflected in patterns of public spending.<sup>41</sup> In other words, the government needs to re-orient its national budget to increase spending on those areas that will immediately address the poverty that confronts the majority of the people, such as agriculture, education and health. A case in point is the attention given to addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the country. The 2003 national budget earmarked K12 billion for the purchase of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) intended for 10,000 AIDS sufferers across the country. But it took government a long time to work out the modalities of distributing these drugs. The general feeling in the country is that the budget for ARVs is too little to have any meaningful impact on the pandemic.

Other strategies must address the increasing problem of urban unemployment. Micro-credit and markets for the informal sector need priority attention. The issue of how to more effectively address the aspect of popular participation in the implementation of government policies is also important.

Vulnerability to the ravages of poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic that endanger human security in Zambia has been exacerbated by reduced state capacities to fulfil its obligations of providing adequate public goods and services. Public institutions have all suffered greatly in the wake of government efforts to adjust the economy to external shocks. Contraction in economic activities and formal employment has diminished government's revenue base. This has led to drastic cutbacks in public expenditure to the extent that nearly all public institutions are in no position to provide efficient and effective services. But even with the little resources available, Zambia's record of public resources management for development is abysmal. The World Bank calculates "government effectiveness" in Zambia to be only 26.9, on a scale from 0 to 100 (100 being the best).<sup>42</sup>

It is also argued that besides lack of resources to finance development, Zambia suffers from another fundamental problem, namely neopatrimonial politics. Neopatrimonialism is widely perceived as the defining feature of Zambia's political system.<sup>43</sup> The three features of neopatrimonialism put forward by Bratton and van de Walle are presidentialism, clientelism, and the use of state resources to sustain political interests. The tension that is said to exist between patrimonial interests and legal-rational principles of government results in mismanagement of public resources. In this sense, Zambia lacks a developmental state in the understanding advanced by Leftwich.<sup>44</sup> A major outcome of neopatrimonialism is that public expenditure will be tilted in favour of emoluments at the expense of development activities.

#### PARTICIPATION

Zambia formally launched its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 2002. Advocates of the PRSP have pointed to the issue of participation and domestic ownership at both national and local levels as the new quality in tackling poverty introduced by this process. Therefore there are hopes that the approach, by opening up space for participation in processes of decision-making to non-state actors, might lead to better success than past attempts.

We have argued above that participation is an important ingredient in human security. Leaning and Arie have argued that human security facilitates participation in the constructive collective project, the foundation of a successful community or nation state.<sup>45</sup> In Zambia, there are doubts about the character and quality of participation of the ordinary people in the major spheres of public life. Democracy as a political system, for

example, thrives best when underpinned by popular participation. This is particularly so in a system of representative democracy such as Zambia has. If voter turn-out can be used as a measure of participation, then the majority of Zambians do not have a say in the choice of their rulers. In the 2001 general elections, for example, only 2.6 million voters out of an eligible population of 4.7 million were registered.<sup>46</sup> When it came to actual voting, only 1.8 million (68%) turned up. This is not just due to ignorance. It reflects the sense of hopelessness in the future that the majority of the people have with regard to the political life of the country.

In the economic sphere, the formulation of the PRSP was characterised by the participation of a wide range of stakeholders including government, the private sector, academia, NGOs, donors, and the provinces.<sup>47</sup> Critics of the PRS processes on the continent have tended to argue that “governments preferred to use the loose concept of participation, which focuses almost exclusively at allowing people to participate in a controlled manner where the final product is not jointly validated and owned”.<sup>48</sup> It is particularly argued that the level of participation declined as the process approached finality. Indeed, in Zambia, civil society complained about being left out at the drafting stage.<sup>49</sup>

Eberlei’s definition of participation is a useful guide to evaluation of the Zambian experience with the PRSP.<sup>50</sup> Eberlei argues that “institutionalized participation has clearly defined political structures for dialogue between all stakeholders at national as well as at regional and local levels”.<sup>51</sup> These structures, though present in Zambia, are still very weak, particularly at local levels where poverty “resides”. In addition, most poor communities lack the capacities, both human and technical, to be involved in decision-making. In a nutshell, participation remains a huge challenge for human security in Zambia.

In the next section, we turn from the general to look at the particular ways in which communities, state actors, and non-state actors in Zambia are addressing the issues of human security, poverty reduction and popular participation. Our aim is to demonstrate that poverty reduction is best addressed as a human security concern with a strong element of popular participation.

## **MANSA AND SAMFYA CASE STUDIES**

### PROVINCIAL POVERTY PROFILE

Mansa and Samfya are situated in Luapula province in the north-eastern part of Zambia bordering the DRC. For administration, Zambia



is divided into nine provinces, namely Central, Copperbelt, Eastern, Luapula, Lusaka, Northern, North-western, Southern and Western.

The 2000 census of population and housing put the population of Luapula province at 784,613 people, with a growth rate of 3.4%.<sup>52</sup> Mansa and Samfya districts were estimated to have populations of 182,506 and 166,863 respectively, making them the two largest districts in the province.<sup>53</sup>

In economic terms, fishing is the most important activity, employing an estimated 60% of the population.<sup>54</sup> Farming, mainly of a small-scale nature, is the next most important activity. Luapula province is ranked as the second poorest province in Zambia, after Western province. The province is estimated to have a poverty level of 81%, which is higher than the national average of 73%.

Table 3 Overall and extreme poverty in Zambia in rural and urban areas, 1998 (percentage of population)

Location	Overall poverty	Extreme poverty
Rural areas	83	70
Urban areas	56	36
Central	77	63
Copperbelt	65	47
Eastern	80	66
Luapula	81	69
Lusaka	52	34
Northern	81	67
North-western	76	63
Southern	76	60
Western	89	78

Source: CSO, Living conditions in Zambia, 1998.

Mansa and Samfya districts fall within the Luapula Valley, where the poverty situation is more pronounced, with prevalent chronic food insecurity and nutritional vulnerability. Mansa district is the provincial headquarters of Luapula province. The population is concentrated along perennial streams, the Luapula River, and in townships. Villages are scattered and thinly populated. Mansa Batteries was the major industry in the district until 1994, when it was shut down. Other companies include a milling company, National Breweries, and small private firms.

In Samfya, fishing and fish-based trading constitute the backbone of the district's economy. Agriculture is also important, particularly on the mainland. Other economic sectors are of minor importance. The major staple food is cassava, which is grown all over the district. However, the district is food insecure, particularly during the annual fishing ban, which paralyses the local economy almost completely.

Samfya's population densities shift substantially during the year. After the agricultural season is over (April), many people from upland migrate to the swamps to engage in fishing and return only just before the next rains in November. The importance of this seasonal migration has increased significantly in the last thirty years because of the decline of the lake fishery in the late fifties / early sixties, and a sudden population increase in the seventies owing to an influx of retrenched miners from the Copperbelt. According to some sources, the size of the population in the swamps oscillates between 15,000 and more than 30,000 each season as a result of migration.

Poverty is undoubtedly a serious challenge to human security in the two districts. Poverty in its diverse manifestations is well understood by government officials, civil society activists and community members in these two districts. Not surprisingly, both districts have drawn up their own district poverty reduction strategies (DPRSs). Interviews with our target respondents, however, revealed frustration with the low level of funding for poverty reduction programmes. The release of funds by central government to the two districts is erratic and below approved allocations. Although statistics for the two districts were not available, the provincial figures provide a reliable indicator of the funding situation in the two districts. In 2003, K8.4 billion was approved for poverty reduction programmes in Luapula, of which only K3.1 billion was released.<sup>55</sup> In 2004, the authorised budget was K5.8 billion, of which K1.8 billion was released (as at June).<sup>56</sup> This means that very little development activities funded by the public purse are taking place in the two districts. A traditional ruler in Samfya district remarked that "sometimes I wonder whether government departments in this district ever get any money for their programmes".<sup>57</sup> His frustration with the government's performance was echoed by many people we interviewed. This has created a hostile climate against government officials in the two districts. Another respondent in Samfya informed us that government officials are afraid to hold meetings away from the district council offices because of unfulfilled promises they have made to the people.<sup>58</sup>

Fragmentation appears to be a major problem which may cut across the entire country. Disparate programmes are difficult to monitor and may even result in duplication of efforts. What is needed is strategic targeting of poverty based on local priorities. But this is difficult to achieve when no funds are made available for approved development activities. It is important to bear in mind that, apart from government, other actors, such as bilateral development partners and NGOs, support poverty reduction programmes.

A related problem in the two districts is the lack of sustainability of development programmes. Respondents complained that many initiatives are abandoned just when the local population has come to appreciate their importance. This is particularly so with donor-funded initiatives.

#### HUMAN SECURITY

Fieldwork carried out in Mansa and Samfya reinforced the picture that obtains at national level regarding knowledge and utility of the concept of human security. Government documents consisting of district situational analyses (DSAs) and district poverty reduction strategies (DPRS) made no reference to human security. Security concerns in the province, which plays host to refugees from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), are conditioned by the state-centric approach reviewed above.

Luapula has suffered from armed incursions by militia groups from neighbouring DRC and Rwanda. Like Western and North-western provinces, which border Angola, residents of Luapula are vulnerable to kidnappings and the seizure of property by marauding foreign militia groups. These factors have influenced government security policy in the province. Not surprisingly, the province tends to have a sizeable presence of government security forces, particularly along the border. Fortunately, unlike Western and North-western provinces, it has not reported any significant proliferation of small arms among the civilian population. This situation can change at any time if militia groups decide to exchange guns for food.

Interviews conducted in Mansa and Samfya revealed that threats to personal security are associated with increased crime levels. Unemployment and boredom, particularly among young people, were cited as the main factors contributing to crime in the two districts. It is clear from the literature and the discussions held with respondents that a holistic view of human security does not yet exist in the provincial debate. Yet it is evident from the situational analysis that a holistic view

of human security would clearly rank poverty among the major threats to peace and development.

#### PARTICIPATION

Participation of non-state actors is often lauded as the new quality in policy-making introduced by the PRSP. This opened-up space is viewed as important in shaping policy developments in the interests of the majority in society. In the context of our study, participation, if implemented in the manner discussed above, has the potential of enhancing human security through policies that effectively tackle poverty as well as by giving a voice to groups that have hitherto been mere bystanders in national processes.

At central government level, the overall coordination of the implementation of the PRSP is in the hands of the Ministry of Finance and National Planning. However, it is expected that participation will come from other line ministries, other government institutions, civil society, and international cooperating partners.

Within the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, the Planning and Economic Management Department (PEMD) has been established as the focal point for PRSP coordination, monitoring and evaluation. Other departments of the Ministry of Finance, however, are expected to participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP. To facilitate these processes, a poverty reduction and analysis unit has been set up to achieve the desired focus on poverty reduction strategies.

At the time of formulation of the PRSP, eight thematic working groups were established to facilitate the participation of other important stakeholders like civil society and international cooperating partners in the planning process. In October 2003, the working groups were transformed into sector advisory groups (SAGs) and their mandate extended beyond planning to include implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP.<sup>59</sup>

Away from central government, line ministries and provincial planning units are expected to play important roles in the budgeting, sectoral coordination, and monitoring of the poverty reduction strategies. It is also envisaged that after commencement of implementation of the newly launched decentralisation policy, district and sub-district planning units will be linked to provincial and national level planning systems.

The Ministry of Finance and National Planning is charged with the responsibility of consolidating the provincial and sectoral plans and

ensuring that they are translated into annual budgets. The decentralisation policy proposes development of a framework for local and central government planning and resource sharing mechanism. At provincial level, provincial development coordinating committees (PDCCs) chaired by provincial permanent secretaries are expected to provide policy guidance to the provincial planning units (PPUs) under the Ministry of Finance and National Planning. The PDCCs are composed of provincial heads of line ministries and are representative of the private sector and civil society.

At district level, the district planning units (DPUs) are to perform the same tasks as the PPUs, albeit with reduced authority. These are housed in the local authorities and are linked to the PPUs at the higher level and the community-based organisations at the lower level. The DPUs are critical in the planning and monitoring of the poverty reduction strategies. They coordinate the drawing up of district plans and their submission to the higher levels for further scrutiny and sourcing of funding. District development coordinating committees (DDCCs), chaired by district commissioners and made up of representatives of heads of line ministries, the private sector and civil society, provide policy guidance to the DPUs.

The planning and implementation of the PRSP therefore is expected to be carried out within the above governance framework. Actual practice, however, deviates substantially from this ideal pattern.

From the interviews conducted with government representatives, it was observed that the institutional and management structure for the planning of public expenditure and policy did not function in a coherent manner. Rather a variety of loosely coordinated activities (mostly in the form of services, sensitisation programmes and workshops on issues that fell short of real value development) were observed. A number of projects arising from such activities were sometimes half-heartedly implemented by line departments and projects. Donor-driven initiatives and sector-wide approaches have been seen as separate, add-on activities rather than part of a holistic development strategy.

Officials from the planning unit unsuccessfully lead in organising other government departments and managing the planning process of development programmes and initiatives to operationalise the poverty reduction strategy paper at the local level. In order to deal with the wide range of development issues, the Provincial Development Coordinating Committee (PDCC) and District Development Coordinating Committees (DDCCs) have been constituted, but are largely dominated by government

Table 4 Summary of interventions identified in PRSP and activities funded

Sector/area	Areas of intervention identified during provincial consultation	First PRSP progress report, January 2002 – June 2003	Second PRSP progress report, July 2003 – June 2004
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitise farmers on Marketing arrangements</li> <li>Empower farmer associations/ cooperatives in entrepreneurship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agricultural inputs to vulnerable but viable farmers under PAM – Programme Against Malnutrition</li> </ul>	
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in rural-based processing of agricultural, mineral and fishing products</li> </ul>		
Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase investment in mining sector</li> </ul>		
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve water and sanitation</li> <li>Scale up HIV/AIDS campaigns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borehole construction</li> <li>Rehabilitation of rural health centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rehabilitation of health infrastructure</li> <li>Provision of school desks</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve education facilities, teachers' conditions, distribution of learning materials</li> <li>More literacy classes/ emphasise importance of education</li> </ul>		
Environment			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity and water conservation in all districts</li> </ul>
Energy			
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding from treasury should be disbursed directly to districts</li> <li>Form district joint commission</li> </ul>		
Infrastructure development		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roads, rehabilitation and maintenance</li> <li>Resettlement programme</li> <li>Dam and weir construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rehabilitation of feeder roads</li> <li>Rehabilitation of local courts</li> <li>Beekeeping</li> <li>Resettlement schemes</li> </ul>
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage girl child education and gender balance in planning and implementation of programmes</li> </ul>		
HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase knowledge and attitude and behavioural changes, that is, practice</li> </ul>		

Sources: Ministry of Finance and National Planning (2002), Zambia Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper; Zambia's First PRSP Implementation Progress Report for the period January 2002 – June 2003; and Second PRSP Implementation Progress Report, July 2003 – June 2004.

line departments and institutions. The alluded-to dominance of the PDCC and DDCCs by government departments has compromised the effective planning and impact of development programmes. In practice, PDCCs and DDCCs are specifically assigned to deal with macroeconomic and expenditure issues. They are “supposed” to be responsible for preparing thematic plans and identifying priority areas for development that are derived from the poverty reduction programmes (PRPs). There has reportedly been political interference by political leaders, who have a habit of diverting public resources from their approved programmes at short notice to other sectors not listed among the district’s development priorities.

The PDCC is housed at the Provincial Planning Unit (PPU) and chaired by the permanent secretary. On the other hand, the DDCCs are housed at the district council offices. Concerns have been raised over the relationship between the PPU and the District Planning Office (DPO). The DPO does not fall under the jurisdiction of the PPU and this arrangement creates problems in the formulation and coordination of development priorities. The PPU, as a secretariat to the PDCC, is responsible for organising meetings, consultations and preparation of framework papers. Non-state agencies like civil society and traditional leaders are conspicuously absent from this setting. The PDCC and DDCCs have no permanent staff and depend on regular government employees for support.

Apart from the apparent disharmony between the district planning and provincial planning units, there seems to be a continuing problem of top-down approaches in driving the development agenda, with central government in Lusaka calling most of the shots. The organisation of the provincial consultative forum that discussed the PRSP, for example, did not give the provincial and district planning units adequate notice to make the necessary consultations with local stakeholders. The haste with which the provincial consultation was done appeared to be tuned to satisfying an already set agenda in which the participation of the provincial and district planning units was more of a formality rather than a process of adding real value.

Finally, district development activities are still characterised by fragmentation as different line ministries and departments seem to be more vertically integrated with their superior offices in the province and Lusaka than well articulated horizontally with related field offices. But for most departments, the provincial offices do not appear to be well linked to district offices, particularly the Provincial Planning Unit and the Provincial Education Office.

Field data also seemed to suggest that local voices were not always carried into the formulation of final government planning documents. First, it appears that the process of aggregating information from provincial consultations into national priorities may have created a disjuncture between actual provincial priorities submitted at the consultative workshops and what central government has finally come to fund through the national budget. Table 4 presents a summary of what Luapula province indicated as priority interventions and the activities that have so far been funded from the national budget in the province.

Government notes that, apart from direct funding for poverty reduction programmes (PRPs) that was channelled through the provincial administration (office of the provincial permanent secretary), several other programmes were funded through the respective line ministry headquarters.<sup>60</sup> That aside, however, there are apparent inconsistencies between what were identified as priority areas of intervention during the provincial consultative forum and what government has actually disbursed funds for.

Next, we compare government interventions that have received some funding and what the respondents identified as priority poverty areas in the districts of Mansa and Samfya.

We need, however, to point out here that we did not have access to complete data on funded programmes, therefore the picture presented here may be a distorted one.

Table 5 Funded poverty reduction activities and local priorities in Mansa

Funded activities	Local priorities identified through fieldwork interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road rehabilitation and maintenance</li> <li>• Resettlement programme</li> <li>• Sinking of boreholes</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of Fiyongoli Dam</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of rural health centres and Mansa General Hospital</li> <li>• Procurement of school requisites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• Teenage prostitution</li> <li>• HIV/AIDS</li> <li>• Street children</li> <li>• Lack of diversification of economic activities</li> </ul>

It is clear from the above two tables that there is an incongruence between the needs of the local population and the programmes being funded by the government under the auspices of PRPs. This calls for greater involvement of the local population in the design of PRPs.



To gauge exactly who participates at what stage of the planning process for development programmes depends on a number of factors, in particular government's readiness to invite a particular stakeholder to take part. Popular participation in PRPs – as is evident in other programmes and activities – is by invitation, though largely selective, by government officials. Opportunities and pathways for participation are not automatic. Civil society and other stakeholders have complained that the process of planning is “extremely non-consultative”, with almost complete exclusion of civil society and other non-state actors.

There is excessive government interference. Internally, there are also wrangles between different line departments. The Provincial Planning Unit (PPU) is concerned that PRP planning processes take place outside the PPU. It was pointed out that the PPU's input into the planning processes for development programmes did not usually form part of the final decision by central government.

The relevance and impact of civil society groups in planning development programmes are difficult to measure. A look into the operations and capacity of civil society members could help provide some speculative answers. Whereas government personnel tend to be relatively well qualified, the same cannot be said of most individuals running civil society organisations. These qualifications count a lot when dealing with issues such as macroeconomic analyses, models and policy analysis.

The major avenue open for participation by different civil society groups and other non-state actors in PRP processes is through workshops, conferences and seminars. These include workshops focusing mainly on gender mainstreaming, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and environmental awareness programmes. However, there is little evidence of civil society and other non-state actors facilitating public input into PRPs. The other group of consultative workshops and meetings involve targeting donor-driven projects such as the Luapula Province Livelihood and Food Security Programme (LPLFSP) funded largely by Department for International Development Cooperation of Finland (FINNIDA) and Danish Association for International Cooperation (MS-Zambia).

Government-driven consultations usually last a day or a few days at most, and involve a negligible number of stakeholders with little emphasis on the ordinary citizen. These consultations fail to identify key issues and priorities for poverty reduction. Field interviews revealed that consultative workshops were dominated by elected officials (councillors and some members of parliament) and government employees (the police and line ministry heads and in some cases Office of the President

personnel). There was limited regard for traditional leaders. It was also clear from the study that women and the poor were underrepresented. Since government officials are largely responsible for drawing up the list of invitees, it can safely be concluded that the government does not provide women representation.

Government appears to be lacking stronger resolve to achieve a more representative cross-section of participants in formulating PRPs. Data from focus group discussions gives a strong indication that this is not by accident, but design. Local communities appear not to be aware of PRPs and are not sure if their problems are going to be catered for. Focus group discussions revealed that most people knew very little about government-supported PRPs.

The above analysis has serious implications for the implementation and the whole concept of ownership of PRPs. The interviews also revealed that people are less willing to accept and implement programmes that they were not consulted about. Most people were angry that such an important exercise as formulating and prioritising PRPs took place without their input. There was a common feeling that local people are used as conduits by some officials to get access to resources that are then mismanaged.

It is evident from the interviews that civil society groups are merely “passengers” in PRP processes. The Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) has been instrumental through its secretariat in Lusaka in mobilising civil society to engage directly with the PRSP process, but unfortunately civil society groups are not party to formulating PRP programmes. The dialogue within civil society on issues of PRPs is weak. For example, there is no follow-up on members who belong to particular development committees within government. They do not have a formal mechanism for reporting back.

Participation of civil society in government development programmes is cosmetic. The CSPR, for example, has one representative on the provincial planning forum. Government is in the habit of calling meetings at short notice. This does not give CSPR member organisations time to consult their constituencies on issues to be included on the agenda. As a result, the only CSPR representative on the forum does not carry the views of other civil society groups in the district. The CSPR representative’s contribution therefore becomes limited to the views of his own organisation. This cannot be said to be participation of civil society in the planning process.

The quality of civil society participation is affected by a number of factors, some of which have already been alluded to. Other impediments to civil society participation in government development programmes are listed below:

*a Lack of awareness of the PRSP process*

Many individuals did not understand the relationship of the PRPs to highly indebted poor country (HIPC) debt relief, its role in present and future International Financial Institution (IFI) conditionalities, and its links to reforms in the public expenditure management. A lot of them did not take ownership of the PRSP, thinking that it was meant only for government.

*b Lack of capacity*

Civil society groups did not have sufficient information and a mandate from their constituencies to represent them. Apart from documentations from the CSPR in Lusaka, there was no evidence of participatory research work to inform the PRSP process by any civil society group. There was also a lack of technical expertise especially in non-welfare issues, resulting in failure to field people in technical working groups.

*c Organisation of the consultative process*

Government's organisational failures in implementing innovative participatory approaches undermine civil society and other non-state actors' participation both in working groups and district development programmes. In some of the government working groups such as PDCCs and DDCCs, leadership problems existed.

*d Facilitation of PRP processes*

Civil society groups and individuals alike complained of government's domineering influence in PRP working groups and processes. In some working groups such as the LPLFSP, donors took on the facilitation role, leading to a more organised process.

*e Timing and time-scale*

Many respondents, including some government workers, felt the PRPs are hurried. The time pressures mean that civil society organisations (CSOs) have no chance to consult their constituencies even if they wanted to. Moreover, CSOs lacked the ability to initiate and the drive to engage in dialogue within civil society.

*f Inadequate information*

Limited and inadequate information is provided to stakeholders by government and civil society, in the various stages of formulating

Table 6 Funded poverty reduction activities and local priorities in Samfya

Funded activities	Local priorities identified through fieldwork interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Konikalia-Mbulu road</li> <li>• Kapoma-Kauni road</li> <li>• Mwansa-Kombe Sashi</li> <li>• Clearing of channels at Katanshya-Kampolombo, Kalimakonde-Itala, Kunkula Buchinda and Kampolombo Kalasa Mukosa</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of Kapata Clinic</li> <li>• Construction of septic tank at Samfya stage II Health Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• Inadequate health services</li> <li>• Early marriages among both boys and girls</li> <li>• High rates of school drop-outs</li> <li>• Increasing population of orphans</li> <li>• Hunger</li> <li>• Teenage prostitution</li> <li>• Poor distribution of agricultural inputs and purchase of produce</li> <li>• Lack of alternative sources of livelihoods besides fishing</li> <li>• Lack of rural credit</li> <li>• Deforestation</li> <li>• Overfishing</li> <li>• Lack of sustainability of development programmes</li> </ul>

poverty reduction programmes. Important documents are circulated only on the day of the meeting. This leaves no room for proper reading and critiquing or consultation.

#### *g Political boundaries on participation*

Clear limits exist on what civil society can comment on and participate in. Civil society is excluded from the main decision-making committees. At national level, for example, the macroeconomic framework was not made available to civil society organisations until a few weeks before a scheduled launch.

#### STATE CAPACITIES

It was evident from fieldwork carried out in Mansa and Samfya that often a serious gap exists between the lofty policy pronouncements by central government in Lusaka and the implementation realities as one

moves farther away from the capital. Resource constraints include lack of funding for approved programmes, a weak human resource base and poor logistics. In short, state capacities at local level are too weak to effectively implement government policies. The situation was most acute in Samfya district, where several public officials were serving in acting positions. Nearly all departments were understaffed.

High turnover of personnel was common in most government departments as officers left in search of the proverbial greener pastures because of low salaries and poor conditions of service.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study reiterates the point made at the beginning; pervasive poverty such as is obtaining in Zambia is a serious human security concern. Poverty endangers human security through its effects on the quality of life. In a country where over 70% of the population live in poverty, the situation not only endangers personal security but can also lead to rising resentments against established order and result in explosive conflict. In thinking about security, Zambia is better served using a human security perspective than relying on the traditional state-centric approach.

The rudiments of the human security approach are already present in the Zambian national debate. Much of this has flowed from the global agenda on human security to which both the Zambian government and civil society have contributed as participants. The first step towards a comprehensive human security approach in Zambia therefore would be domestication of many of the international agreements to which it has appended its signature. This should run alongside continued participation in on-going international gatherings aimed at strengthening global human security. Again for Zambia, SADC and NEPAD protocols on human security would be useful starting points of such involvement.

The concept of human security also entails a heightened role for civil society. This is clearly enshrined in the regional protocols concluded by SADC and NEPAD. Although the regional protocols do not specify clearly the expected roles of civil society, they provide important recognition of their importance. It is up to civil society to seize this opportunity to explore ways of building partnerships with government that would translate the global agenda on human security into domestic policy actions.

Our case studies of Mansa and Samfya reveal that human security not only is a concept that is relevant to actors at the centre, but also has implications for areas farther away from the capital. In any

case, it is in the local communities that poverty is experienced and security endangered.

## NOTES

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