



**THE (PMO-RALG) LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR REVIEW MEETING, BLUE PEARL  
HOTEL 4<sup>TH</sup> -5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

**CSO OPENING STATEMENT**

Your Excellency, Permanent Secretary, (PMO-RALG),  
Distinguished dignitaries, and Executives of the Government,  
Esteemed members of Civil Society Organizations,  
Members of the press corps,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Good morning

Honourable Minister, we, members of the Policy Forum, representing over 100 different Civil Society Organisations working together to increase informed civil society participation in policy processes, appreciate the honour of being accorded this opportunity to present an opening statement at this auspicious meeting.

Honourable Minister, We recognize that PMO-RALG has done a number of initiatives to enhance the ability of local government authorities to provide basic services to the people and hence improve their status as the major implementers of Government policies at the local level. We also appreciate the efforts done by these local authorities to increase competence in managing and monitoring financial resources brought to them from the central government. We believe the implementation of the first phase of the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP I) can somewhat be attributed to this improved administrative capacity. We also take note that there is some improved collaboration between LGAs and Civil Society Organisations and this can be manifested in the attempts by the former to take advantage of the institutionalization of the Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys guidelines meant for stakeholders monitoring public spending at the local level; however, there is hardly any evidence that LGAs are using the guidelines to date.

Honourable Minister, we have to, nonetheless, also take note of the challenges that **PMO-RALG** is experiencing as it tries to improve service delivery at the local level.

For instance, despite the many improvements, there still is inadequate competency within the labour force, especially in the Councils. This is caused partly by the inability of LGAs to attract, recruit and retain qualified professional staff, pointing to the need of accelerating and concretising the initiatives regarding special incentives to draw staff voluntarily to these councils. Using the health sector to illustrate the problem, despite progress in the implementation of MMAM (Mpango wa Maendeleo ya Afya ya Msingi)<sup>1</sup> through increased student enrolment in health training institutions, posting of trained staff to Councils and building of more dispensaries and health centres, there is evidence that a large number of

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<sup>1</sup> Health Sector Performance Profile Report (2009)

the recruited and posted health workers in the underserved regions are not reporting or they report and leave after a while. Salary payments for the newly posted staff are still taking between 6 to 9 months.<sup>2</sup> This can be attributed to the problem of efficiency and effective planning for available Human Resources in Health (HRH) at the council level. With regards to this, CSOs recommend urgent implementation of the Health Sector Performance Audit by the CAG.

Honourable Minister, there are still systemic problems with regards to financial management. The timeliness of intergovernmental transfers, particularly aimed for development, is a challenge, affecting efficient delivery of basic services and timely execution of development projects.<sup>3</sup> We recommend that mechanisms be put in place to improve the situation including, but not limited to, the formulation of a new Local Government Finance Act and the updating of the Local Authorities Financial Manual so that they are in full compliance with D-by-D. It would also be beneficial to government if CSOs are involved meaningfully in the formulation of these documents.

Honourable Minister, we believe that there is a general lack of political willingness of some actors at central level to mainstream the Decentralisation by Devolution policy accordingly. There is even perception amongst some civic actors, in fact, that some in central government oppose D-by-D. The introduction of the Constituencies Development Catalyst Fund, which we feel risks creating an additional burden to PMO-RALG and LGAs, has done little to allay these concerns. We believe this is indicative of a lack of shared vision within the leadership. Indeed, this challenge has been mentioned in the review of the LGRP I and is aimed at being addressed in the LGRP II. Decentralisation by Devolution, therefore, should be the undertaking of the entire government and not limited simply as the responsibility of PMO-RALG. We recommend, hence, for the urgent concretising of the institutionalization of D-by-D in government processes at both central and LGA levels.

Honourable Minister, PMO-RALG needs every available support of other actors in Local governance to overcome these mounting challenges. CSOs on the other hand, have tried strongly and persistently to support PMO-RALG. However, CSOs have been experiencing several challenges in their efforts to influence the decision-making process. These include:

1. Lack of political willingness of some LGAs to work with CSOs,
2. Accessibility of information particularly budget documents from councils,
3. Poor citizen and CSOs participation in running of councils activities,
4. Undue demand of allowances whenever CSOs want to meet with LGA officials for the interest of citizens,
5. Misconceived perception of some LGA officials on the role of CSOs; Many a time, they perceive the role of CSOs to be limited to service delivery agents.

Honourable Minister, as we envision and discuss the need for enhanced and more responsive Local Government Authorities during this annual review, we would like to urge the importance of transparency and accountability to achieving better service delivery and fostering a healthy civic culture at the local level. As a nation, we should shift away from the habitual top-down approaches of governance and move towards inclusive and

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<sup>2</sup> Health Sector Performance Profile Report 2009 Update

<sup>3</sup> Effectiveness of Decentralisation by Devolution: Financial Resources Versus Absorption Capacity (2010)

communicative approaches that effectively empower communities to achieve the development they desire.

Thank you