GSDRC
Governance and Social
Development Resource Centre

**Helpdesk Research Report: PRSP Monitoring and Accountability in Fragile States**
**13.03.08**

> **Query:** Please provide a review of the literature on monitoring and accountability mechanisms for PRSPs in post-conflict or fragile states. This should include examples as well as more general materials on best practice.

1. **Overview**
2. **Key Documents**
   - General
   - Conflict-Sensitive Approaches
   - Examples
   - Accountability
3. **Additional information**

## 1. Overview

The focus of this query is institutional arrangements for Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) process monitoring. Most of the literature found for this query emphasises that instead of concentrating all activities in a single body, a wide set of actors should be involved, each having their own role. Within the government, for example, the central ministries of finance and planning may be responsible for designing the monitoring and evaluation strategy, monitoring its implementation, using the results, and providing data on expenditures; the sectoral ministries will usually provide data on outputs; the central statistical agency will be responsible for collecting of data from households and individuals and external research centres, universities, and NGOs, will often also collect and analyse information. It is generally agreed that, from the outset, a clear and coherent framework for this institutional arrangement should be developed. In addition, a well-resourced and well-placed unit, which can take ultimate responsibility for the work, is necessary for any monitoring system to be effective.

The research for this query found very little literature which addresses the specific issue of monitoring systems for PRSs in fragile or conflict-affected states. It is hoped that the related literature included instead will offer some guidance on best practice in designing monitoring systems. In addition, some of the documents below do include some general challenges and recommendations for conflict-affected contexts. These include:

➢ The monitoring process can be hampered in conflict-affected countries by the poor security situation, the lack of democratic rule, weak civil society and media, and the lack of capacity in state institutions.
➢ The distribution of power in the institutional arrangements, and the structure of relationships between government and non-government actors, can either reinforce or undermine the power imbalances that have contributed to conflict.
➢ In formulating monitoring strategies, donors must be realistic about the often severe capacity constraints in national governments, especially with regard to monitoring and evaluation systems in line ministries. Most commentators suggest that in the initial phase, the focus should be on supporting existing institutions and sources of

information which are functioning reasonably well while providing more general capacity building.

➢ In a conflict context, building trust is paramount and so mechanisms for reporting PRS progress to the public need to be developed.

Promoting participation in monitoring processes, through civil society groups, parliaments, donors, is one principal way of ensuring accountability for the implementation of the PRS. Much of the literature focuses on the role of civil society in this regard. As with state institutions, community based organisations in conflict affected countries can often lack capacity. While efforts have been made to include civil society actors in national dialogue on PRS processes, these seem to have focused more on formulation, than on implementation and monitoring. While in some countries independent civil society monitoring or participatory monitoring arrangements have been planned, most are not yet operational.

## 2. Key Documents

### *General*

- Bedi, T. et al., 2006, 'Beyond the Numbers: Understanding the Institutions for Monitoring Poverty Reduction Strategies', World Bank, Washington DC
  http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPAME/Resources/383220-1153403450741/0821364847.pdf

This volume provides lessons on the design and functioning of PRS monitoring systems, based on the experience of twelve PRS countries (Albania, Bolivia, Guyana, Honduras, the Kyrgyz Republic, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Niger, Tanzania, and Uganda). In Part II, the paper highlights that the institutional designs adopted by these countries appear broadly similar. Each PRSP monitoring system contains the following basic elements:

➢ A high-level *steering committee:* this provides political support and oversight and is usually chaired by the prime minister, minister of finance, or, in presidential systems, a senior adviser to the president. This body is often also responsible for PRS implementation as a whole. It sets monitoring priorities, approves progress reports, and communicates monitoring outputs to the government.

➢ A *coordination unit* or *secretariat:* this coordinates monitoring activities, convenes interagency meetings, compiles data, and drafts reports. This can be located within the office of the president or prime minister, or in a ministry of finance or planning, and it usually contains a small number of dedicated staff.

➢ Several *interagency committees* and *working groups:* these promote interagency cooperation and dialogue. These may be responsible for defining indicators and information needs, preparing sectoral reports, and advising policy makers. They often include representatives of civil society and donors.

➢ The *national statistics institute:* this is one of the most important primary data producers and may also be responsible for compiling data from line ministries, setting overall data standards, developing information technology platforms, and providing technical assistance to other data producers.

➢ *Line ministries:* these are usually required to nominate a point of liaison with the PRS monitoring system; this may be an individual official or a dedicated monitoring and evaluation or statistical unit that has responsibility for compiling sectoral data.

The paper argues however, that while these institutional structures look broadly similar in outline, their performance is strongly influenced by power relations among the various actors, the administrative and political culture, and the relative capacity of agencies. The key considerations in developing and strengthening these relationships are set out in pp. 25-34. These include issues of leadership, coordination, liaison with line ministries, the role of the national statistical system, and involving local governments and local agencies.

- Lucas, H. et al., 2004, 'Research on the Current State of PRS Monitoring Systems', Institute of Development Studies, Brighton
  http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/dp/dp382.pdf

This report reviews recent literature on the monitoring of PRSs. It discusses four issues: institutional arrangements; the role of non-government organisations; implementation and intermediate output monitoring; and how results are used. The main findings are:

  - The severe capacity constraints in national governments are not sufficiently acknowledged. International agencies should be less ambitious about what can be achieved and in what time frame;
  - The "technical secretariats" which are responsible for implementing monitoring, are of central importance. While their need for analytical skills is widely acknowledged, expertise in data management, communication and marketing are also necessary;
  - Building cooperation between ministries and agencies responsible for producing data is proving difficult. Success often depends on the status, capabilities and personalities of key people, and not on formal mandates and frameworks;
  - Unless countries have strong local monitoring systems, building local PRS monitoring capacity should not be an immediate priority, given the magnitude of this task;
  - There is often confusion about the role of civil society in government monitoring systems. It is important that all stakeholders are aware of the potential for the involvement of civil society and that sufficient thought is given to the capacity, information access and influence required for civil society to perform their role;
  - Administrative data provides essential information, but often this is not of sufficient quality for PRS monitoring. Possibilities for combining this with other sources to generate "best estimates" should be explored;
  - Demand for PRS monitoring information, other than to meet donor requirements, is often very weak. Monitoring systems must include marketing and communication activities to build this demand.

- Booth, D., 2001, 'Chapter 1: Overview of PRSP Processes and Monitoring' in Booth, D., 2001, 'PRSP Institutionalisation Study: Final Report', Strategic Partnership with Africa, Washington DC
  http://www.odi.org.uk/PPPG/cape/publications/db_prsp_ch1.pdf

This chapter reviews the approach to monitoring and information issues that has been taken in PRS processes so far, and the issues that need to be considered in the future. The author argues that monitoring proposals are unduly focused on the final objectives and not enough on how they are going to be reached. The supply of information from household surveys and other sources is also biased towards the measurement of final outcomes or impacts, rather than the intermediate outcomes that are critical to implementation-tracking and policy improvement. The author also argues that among the different institutional models currently being tried, those that concentrate the coordinating responsibility close to the locus of decision-making about resources seem preferable. In all cases, there is a crucial ongoing role for the non-governmental stakeholders that have been involved in PRS design, and for well-delivered donor support.

- Booth, D. and Lucas, H., 2002, 'Good Practice in the Development of PRSP Indicators and Monitoring Systems', Overseas Development Institute, London
  http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/wp172.pdf

This paper reviews Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) indicators and monitoring systems. Section 5.3 'Institutional design: concentrate or disperse?' briefly highlights two divergent institutional approaches in Uganda and Tanzania. In both countries, a network of interested institutions (data suppliers and users) has been established to coordinate PRSP monitoring. However, they differ in their degree of centralisation:

- ➢ In the Uganda case, the Poverty Monitoring and Analysis Unit serves as a secretariat for the Network, and plays an active role itself, benefiting from a strategic location within the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The author argues that this set-up has facilitated the integration of NGO-managed Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) and statistical data from all sources as well as the relatively frank and extensive dialogue between government and NGOs that has been a feature of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP).
- ➢ In Tanzania's Poverty Monitoring Master Plan, a relatively elaborate networking arrangement has been mapped out, which is formally very inclusive. The Plan does not envisage an empowered secretariat, in what seems to be a deliberate effort to disperse initiative and authority away from any single centre. The Ministry of Finance appears as one actor among several, in spite of its lead role in the PRSP processes.

### *Conflict-Sensitive Approaches*

- Evans, A., 2003, 'National Poverty Reduction Strategies in Conflict-Affected Countries in Africa', Briefing Note 6, PRSP Monitoring & Synthesis Project, Overseas Development Institute, London
http://www.prspsynthesis.org/brief6.pdf

In this briefing note, a brief section on 'Implementation' (p.14) argues that conflict-affected countries face institutional challenges in a number of respects, including basic public sector capacity. Experience shows that a very basic level of institutional capacity - to collect, analyse and interpret data, to formulate and implement policy actions, and to plan, budget and track expenditures – is fundamental to national ownership of a PRS. In these circumstances donors need to proceed carefully and be prepared to invest early in building some of these basics and resist the temptation to bring in consultants to do the work on behalf of governments. The process must proceed at a pace suited to the development of institutional capacity of the country. Donors can support PRSP preparation and implementation in a number of ways:
- ➢ Supporting the establishment and staffing of a unit in government charged with managing the PRS process;
- ➢ Supporting poverty diagnostic and participatory work drawing on local institutions as key stakeholders in the process;
- ➢ Supporting improvements in public expenditure management;
- ➢ Supporting the creation of sustainable information systems; and
- ➢ Encouraging the donor community to adopt a coherent/ joined-up approach to the PRS process.

*The document below is an attachment to this briefing note and provides a strategic framework designed to help DFID country teams think through their engagement strategy with the PRS process in specific contexts. Each section of the framework contains broad guidance based on experience to date with PRSPs in conflict-affected countries plus checklists of key issues and questions for teams to consider as part of their analysis:*

- Hilker, L. M. et al., 'Strategic Framework for Engagement in National PRSs in Conflict-Affected Countries', Attachment to Briefing Note 6, PRSP Monitoring & Synthesis Project, Overseas Development Institute, London
http://www.prspsynthesis.org/brief6_SF.doc

- World Bank, 2005, 'Toward a Conflict Sensitive Poverty Reduction Strategy: Lessons from a Retrospective Analysis', World Bank, Washington DC
http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/TowardaConflictSensitivePovertyReductionStrategyLessonsfromaRetrospectiveAnalysis/$FILE/Toward+A+Conflict+Sensitive+PRSP+FINAL+2005.pdf

This report aims to determine how the causes and consequences of violent conflict can best be addressed within a country's poverty reduction program. It is based on a retrospective analysis of the PRS experience in nine conflict affected countries - Bosnia-Herzegovina (BIH), Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Georgia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. The report highlights the following challenges for institutional arrangements:

> *Devolutionary arrangements:* Governments may be willing to design devolutionary institutional structures for the PRSP. However, given their lack of experience with devolution and inclusiveness, they may be less willing and able to transfer power and resources during PRS preparation and implementation as this could undermine their influence and dissatisfy constituencies.

> *Centralisation of power:* The government has to overcome its natural tendency to centralise power and instead involve a range of state and non-state stakeholders in the PRS process.

> *Battles for control of the PRS:* To be effective, the PRS has to be a collaborative effort. However, economic ministries tend to struggle for control of its preparation and implementation. Ministries must develop an understanding of their respective roles so that they do not undermine each other.

The report also highlights some trends from the case studies:

> Some governments placed a high premium on developing institutional arrangements that considered conflict issues (ethnic or religious divisions, regional imbalances) by designing structures that either consciously ignored conflict factors or purposefully took them into account.

> Other governments made limited efforts to consider conflict issues, reinforcing beliefs that the establishment of pluralistic values was not a priority for the government.

> In many cases, the PRS has resulted in enhanced cooperation among sectors and ministries.

> Parallel peacebuilding processes in-country have influenced and been influenced by the PRS framework.

The report highlights the Nepal PRSP, which places strong emphasis on the monitoring of activities and impacts, and regular reporting on these to the government and other stakeholders. While progress is expected to be slow because of capacity constraints, Nepal's National Planning Commission has already been given the new supervisory responsibility of verifying the accuracy of line ministry reports and further devolution to enhance community management of facilities is expected.

The following documents are referred to in some of the papers above. They do not appear to be publicly available but may be accessible from within DFID:

- Bradbury, M., 2002, 'A Review of the DfID Commissioned Study of PRSPs in Conflict-Affected Countries', Department for International Development, London

- Keen, D., 2002, 'A Review of the DfID Commissioned Study of PRSPs in Conflict-Affected Countries', Department for International Development, London

***Examples***

- Motebi, F. G., Stone, S. and Thin, N., 2001, 'Institutionalising the PRSP Approach in Rwanda', Strategic Partnership with Africa, Washington DC
  http://www.odi.org.uk/pppg/cape/publications/fgm_prsp_ch8.pdf

In section 4 'The potential for insitutionalisation', the authors argue that "the prospects for the PRS process in Rwanda to institutionalise poverty reduction policies, programmes, practices, and monitoring systems are inextricably interlinked with the national unity and reconciliation process and the decentralisation process. Success in any one will depend on institutionalisation of the others. These in turn depend on the success of participation by stakeholders in the PRS process and how this will translate into lasting institutional

arrangements. In Rwanda these prospects need to be set in the context of the political traditions of the country and how these are intended to change in the future and bring about a new democratic system of governance' (p.18). The report highlights how the poverty reduction strategy in Rwanda will be intimately connected with financial and political decentralisation. Box 3 (p.21) contains a presentation of central and local government structures and roles.

Section 5 'Information, knowledge management and the PRSP' highlights that in Rwanda, the key challenge is to develop an effective system for coordinating and analysing the available information. In Rwanda, a Poverty Observatory has been established as the main agency responsible for coordinating and disseminating understanding about anti-poverty strategies, as well as the main national poverty monitoring office. The author reports considerable debate about the Poverty Observatory's mandate, given its limited capacity and the pre-existing information management structures and systems that already exist. At the time this paper was written, the Observatory still needed to work out clear divisions of responsibility with the Statistics Department within the Ministry of Finance and with the information systems within the key line ministries. The Observatory's specific tasks included:

> reporting quarterly and annually (to the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning and to various monitoring organs of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility Committee) on poverty and human development indicators;
> conducting specific poverty studies when needed;
> analysing the impacts of policies, programmes, and projects; and
> identifying the anti-poverty budget and assessing the quality and impact of these expenditures on poverty.

- Government of Sierra Leone, 2005, 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: A National Programme for Food Security, Job Creation and Good Governance 2005-2007' http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05191.pdf

Chapter Eight of this paper, 'Monitoring and Evaluation' (pp.122-134), outlines the institutional framework for the monitoring of Sierra Leone's PRS. It envisages that the lead agency for PRS monitoring will be the PRS Secretariat which will have two sub-units - one with responsibility for PRS implementation and monitoring and evaluation and the other, the existing Development Assistance Coordination Office (DACO), with responsibility for donor liaison, aid flows and the Sierra Leone Information System (SLIS). The Secretariat will be located in the Office of the Vice-President for an initial one year period, during which time functional reviews will be undertaken of Ministries of Development and Economic Planning, Finance. Following these reviews, a decision will be taken as to the most appropriate institutional location of the PRS Secretariat. The PRSP emphasises that the institutional framework supporting the monitoring should involve many agencies both within the public sector (line ministries, commissions, local councils, etc) and externally (NGOs, community based organisations (CBOs), and CSOs). The author urges caution and realism about the severe capacity constraints that currently exist within line ministries, and proposes that monitoring should be driven, at least initially, by a relatively limited number of agencies and individuals. These should be led by the PRS Secretariat and include representatives from the various ministries. The author also argues that while there is widespread general interest in the PRS monitoring process, it is unlikely that many organisations will be able to make available the necessary time and resources for the various tasks which have to be undertaken. Much of the routine workload will therefore fall to a monitoring team to be established as part of the PRS Secretariat, which will take the lead responsibility for coordination of all PRS monitoring activities.

- Government of the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina et al., 2004, 'Implementation, Monitoring And Evaluation Mechanism Of The BiH Medium-Term Development Strategy – PRSP', Section IV.1 in 'BIH Medium Term Development Strategy – PRSP 2004-2007'

http://www.dep.gov.ba/dwnld/english/pdf/IV.1%20Implementation,%20Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.pdf
This chapter provides an outline of the implementation and monitoring mechanisms for Bosnia Herzegovina's (BiH) PRSP. One of these mechanisms is the newly established Office for Coordination of Economic Research and Monitoring of the Implementation of the BiH Medium-Term Development Strategy (the Office), which will function as part of the Office of the Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers. The main tasks of the Office include:

- ➢ coordinating future socio-economic research related to economic development and European integrations,
- ➢ monitoring implementation of the action plans which will guide implementation of the PRSP and other strategic documents.

The strategy highlights that the implementation mechanisms for the PRSP will retain the same elements that were utilised in its preparation. Strategic decisions will be made within the framework of the Coordination Board of Economic Development and EU integrations, which is chaired by the Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers and consists of entity prime ministers, finance ministers at the state and entity level, the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers for Economic Matters, Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations and the Head of the Directorate of European Integrations. On the technical level the work will be carried out by the working groups that were established during the preparation of the PRSP, and which consist of representatives of the state and entity governments. The Office will also lead the process of consultations, and involvement of the NGOs and other civil society actors in implementation of the PRSP. NGOs will also continue to participate in the work of the PRSP implementation working groups. The funding for supporting NGOs in the implementation of specific PRSP-related projects is already planned for in the Office's budget.

- Booth, D., 2005, 'Poverty Monitoring Systems: An Analysis of Institutional Arrangements in Tanzania', Overseas Development Institute, London
  http://www.tzonline.org/pdf/povertymonitoringsystems05.pdf

Annex 2 of this report provides an overview of the institutional framework for poverty monitoring in Tanzania. This section highlights that there is agreement that a national poverty monitoring steering committee, which is inclusive in its membership and representation and which will provide general guidance to the system, is needed. However, there is also a need for smaller technical working groups including:

- ➢ Surveys and censuses – chaired by the National Bureau of Statistics and focused on producing and implementing a multi-year household survey programme.
- ➢ Routine data systems – coordinated by the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government, to coordinate the enhancement of existing routine data systems, promote coherence among these systems and the relevance of these systems at local government level.
- ➢ Research and analysis – led by the President's Office – Planning and Privatization, in close collaboration with Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), to set priorities for research and analysis (including PPAs) and to propose funding mechanisms for these.
- ➢ Dissemination, sensitization and advocacy – coordinated by the Vice President's Office to coordinate a programme of dissemination of data and information generated by the poverty monitoring system and to raise awareness on trends in poverty.

### *Accountability*

- Eberlei, W., 2007, 'Accountability in Poverty Reduction Strategies: The Role of Empowerment and Participation', World Bank, Washington DC

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1164107274725/3182370-1164201144397/Accountability_in_Poverty_Reduction_Strategies.pdf

This paper is based on a desk review of 15 PRS countries and argues that there are a number of constraints which impede meaningful participation in PRSP processes. However, there are exceptions to the rule - examples of `good practices' which demonstrate that meaningful participation in PRS processes is possible and has been strengthened over the last years. Based on these findings, the author highlights four core challenges for ensuring stakeholder participation:

> The principle of country ownership, which includes domestic accountability has so far been realised in only a few countries. Governments in many PRS countries are still concerned primarily with meeting the conditions imposed by donors and/or the interests of the non-poor elite. These are major impediments to meaningful participation.

> The government's development orientation — including openness for poverty reduction politics and societal participation — cannot be assumed automatically. There is considerable evidence that politics in a number of the poorest countries is still permeated by `neopatrimonial' practices.

> The relationship between a society and its political system as well as the role of civil society in this interplay is poorly understood in many PRS processes, and the necessary conditions to enable stakeholders' participation have not been realized in many countries. The framework of 'institutionalized participation' might help to match realistic roles to current conditions.

> `Powerlessness' is a form of poverty and a major cause of poverty. The distribution of power is therefore a highly relevant topic for poverty reduction debates. The findings of the study highlight the urgent need for `empowerment initiatives' as well as a discussion of the underlying issues.

The paper concludes with strategic recommendations to strengthen domestic accountability, institutionalised participation and empowerment. Ultimately, "a breakthrough in the fight against poverty needs a coalition of stakeholders in the civil societies and political forces in the legislative bodies of PRS countries, unfolding `communicative power' to point `administrative power' in the pro-poor direction."

- 'Participation in Monitoring and Evaluation of PRSPs: A Document Review of Trends and Approaches Emerging from 21 Full PRSPs', World Bank, Washington DC
  http://www.ideas-int.org/Documents/DraftPMEPRSPReviewMarch03.pdf

This paper is based on a desk review of existing documents and aims to offer a preliminary stocktake of how participation in monitoring and evaluation (PME) is envisaged in PRSP processes, and to outline patterns and trends for the integration of PME in the design of PRSPs. The study's main finding is that while all PRSPs mention PME as a desirable feature of the process, the level of operationalisation is low. Four additional main findings are reported:

> the most common instrument for poverty monitoring were PPAs, which were found useful not just for overall poverty monitoring but also for monitoring impact and explaining causalities;

> at the intention level, participation in implementation monitoring is mentioned more often than participation in poverty monitoring. The main instruments for the former are citizen report cards, social audits and public expenditure tracking surveys with citizen involvement;

> in general, more emphasis is given to participation in the supply side of the monitoring and evaluation (ME) system, while participation in the demand side of the system, i.e. public information, review and joint decision making, often appears vague or neglected;

> multi-stakeholder participation in defining and setting up the ME system has so far received only limited attention and is, in the positive cases, mainly approached through stakeholder committees at various decision-making levels.

- Swiss Coalition of Development Organizations, 2003, 'Civil Society and Monitoring the PRSP in Burkina Faso: Achievements, Lessons Learned and Perspectives', Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Berne
  http://www.prsp-watch.de/laenderprofile/burkinafaso/T_EgDyCo.pdf

This study aimed to highlight potential entry points for donor support in strengthening CSOs in the monitoring process of Burkina Faso's poverty reduction strategy. The paper includes an assessment of the roles, activities, and strategies of CSOs in monitoring the PRSP as well as an analysis of their capacities. The study finds that the current role of CSOs in the monitoring process has been marginal with only a few members of selected CSOs participating in sectoral groups of the formal monitoring system. There are several reasons for this: lack of capacity at all levels; difficulties in acquiring data; the association of monitoring activities with the formal monitoring system and lack of alternatives outside the formal system. In addition, monitoring is not a priority for many CSOs. Suggestions from CSOs to improve monitoring of the PRSP implementation include earlier involvement in the design of the system; greater openness and transparency in the management of the monitoring process; a substantial and clearly defined role for the civil society; and adequate resources to carry out the mandate.

- Draman, R. and Langdon, S., 2005, 'PRSPs in Africa: Parliaments and Economic Policy Performance', GTZ, Eschborn
  http://www.parlcent.ca/africa/papers/GTZ%20Final%20Publication_EN.pdf

Reporting on a review of four countries Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (Ghana, Niger, Tanzania and Malawi) this paper looks at the emerging strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of national PRSPs. It also aims to identify possible roles that parliaments can play to improve PRSP performance. The review found that in all four Parliaments, key oversight committees were working to see that Parliament played a major role in monitoring processes, and were demanding more detailed involvement of key committee members in technical and implementation levels of monitoring work. Some key examples include:

  - In Niger, there have been calls for the establishment of an independent "observatoire" able to report to the National Assembly. The Special Committee on Poverty Reduction has also undertaken field visits to all eight regions to monitor directly PRSP performance, and is planning further outreach examinations.
  - In Ghana, oversight committees have been committed to holding community-based hearings on the PRSP in poorer parts of the country. The Committee on Women and Gender has already undertaken such monitoring; and the Poverty Reduction Committee is making similar plans.
  - In Malawi, the Budget and Finance Committee has worked closely with the Malawi Economic Justice Network to give them a platform to report their monitoring results.
  - In Tanzania, the Vice President's Office (VPO) is developing a detailed PRSP monitoring framework; and the Environment and Poverty Reduction Committee has persuaded them to include a prominent place for parliamentary committees.

- Draman, R., 2007, 'Legislating Poverty in Africa: What Role Have Parliamentarians Been Playing in PRSP Implementation and Policy?', Parliamentary Centre of Canada, Ottawa
  http://sdnhq.undp.org/governance/parls/docs/PC-WBI%20PRSP%20REPORT.doc

This report presents the findings of a study on the role of Parliaments in seven countries – Ghana, Niger, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Senegal and Zambia. The study shows that, in Senegal, when offered the opportunity to engage on PRSP issues, parliamentarians have been both willing and available to take part. However, institutional barriers have made the participation of MPs in the formal process difficult. This is in part due to the decision of the Executive to involve parliamentarians only in certain decision-making activities; as well as the decision to limit involvement of MPs to the Finance Commission and any communication on PRSP to be between the Ministry of Finance and the President of the Assembly. Such

measures make it difficult for ordinary parliamentarians to have access to information and decision-making roles in the PRSP process. Some of the recommendations to improve the role of Senegalese MPs in the PRSP process include:

- ➢ Parliament should be represented on technical committees involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the PRSP.
- ➢ The Minister of Finance and the President of the National Assembly should designate a focal point from each institution to facilitate information flow and dialogue on PRSP issues.
- ➢ The Finance Commission should ensure wider dissemination of the results of its participation and input in the PRSP process, i.e. amongst the chairs of commissions.
- ➢ Training programs for both parliamentarians and staff in PRSP monitoring should be provided and Parliament should identify this as a priority need to potential donors.
- ➢ Commission chairpersons from the National Assembly should organise consultations with civil society and experts to acquire up to date information and reports that could assist with the evaluation and monitoring of PRSP programs.
- ➢ Political will and commitment are necessary to implement policies that promote accountability, participation and transparency in the use of public funds. Mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure proper management of funds. Parliamentarians can play a key role in pushing for those mechanisms to be put in place.
- ➢ A 2004 assessment by the Parliamentary Centre revealed that while relationships between Parliament and civil society seemed to be getting better, engagement between parliamentarians and their constituents was quite limited while. Increasing public awareness In addition, MPs capacity to work and dialogue with constituents should be strengthened on the role of parliamentarians should be emphasised.

- Wilhelm, V. and Krause, P., 2007, 'Minding the Gaps: Integrating Poverty Reduction Strategies and Budgets for Domestic Accountability', World Bank, Washington DC http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPRS1/Resources/383606-1106667815039/MindingTheGaps4-9.pdf

This study examines the challenges have arisen in countries where efforts have been made to integrate poverty reduction strategies (PRSs) with national budgets. It argues that both PRSs and national budgets offer scope for enhanced domestic accountability, but that fractures in planning and budgeting systems can pose obstacles for donors and national governments. The study suggests that systems for monitoring government performance in implementing budgets could provide a solid basis for reporting on a critical part of PRS implementation. It outlines three essential building blocks for the integration of PRS and budget reporting:

- ➢ regular reporting from various government implementing institutions;
- ➢ more advanced sectoral monitoring and reporting processes; and
- ➢ regular surveys and statistics on poverty outcomes.

The study also outlines the following four lessons from the experiences of the country case studies:

- ➢ focus on strengthening and harmonising existing processes and adopting a step by step approach to reform;
- ➢ build support from within, through high-level ownership of policies, a challenge to the executive, and clear roles for sectoral ministries;
- ➢ develop incentives for integration, and target reporting to decision making processes; and
- ➢ keep it simple - comparatively simple budget reforms can significantly improve the budget's responsiveness to policies.

**6. Additional information**

**Author**

This query response was prepared by **Seema Khan**: seema@gsdrc.org

**Websites visited**

Asian Development Bank, Eldis, Google, Google Scholar, GSDRC, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Overseas Development Institute, Institute of Development Studies, Ingenta journals, Parliamentary Centre Canada, Mande.co.uk

**Need help finding consultants?**

If you need to commission more in-depth research, or need help finding and contracting consultants for additional work, please contact us again at consultants@gsdrc.org (further details at: http://www.gsdrc.org/go.cfm?path=/go/helpdesk/find-a-consultant&).