

Govt, CSOs should join hands on social accountability monitoring

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FINDINGS have shown that the collaboration between the government and civil society organisations (CSOs) was crucial in enhancing social accountability monitoring (SAM) development at regional and local levels in Tanzania. That cooperation was also crucial in monitoring governance and accountability.

The CSOs have a strong role to play in the decision-making processes and in relaying the view "from the field" to the institutional actors, who are often not aware of the realities at the grass root level.

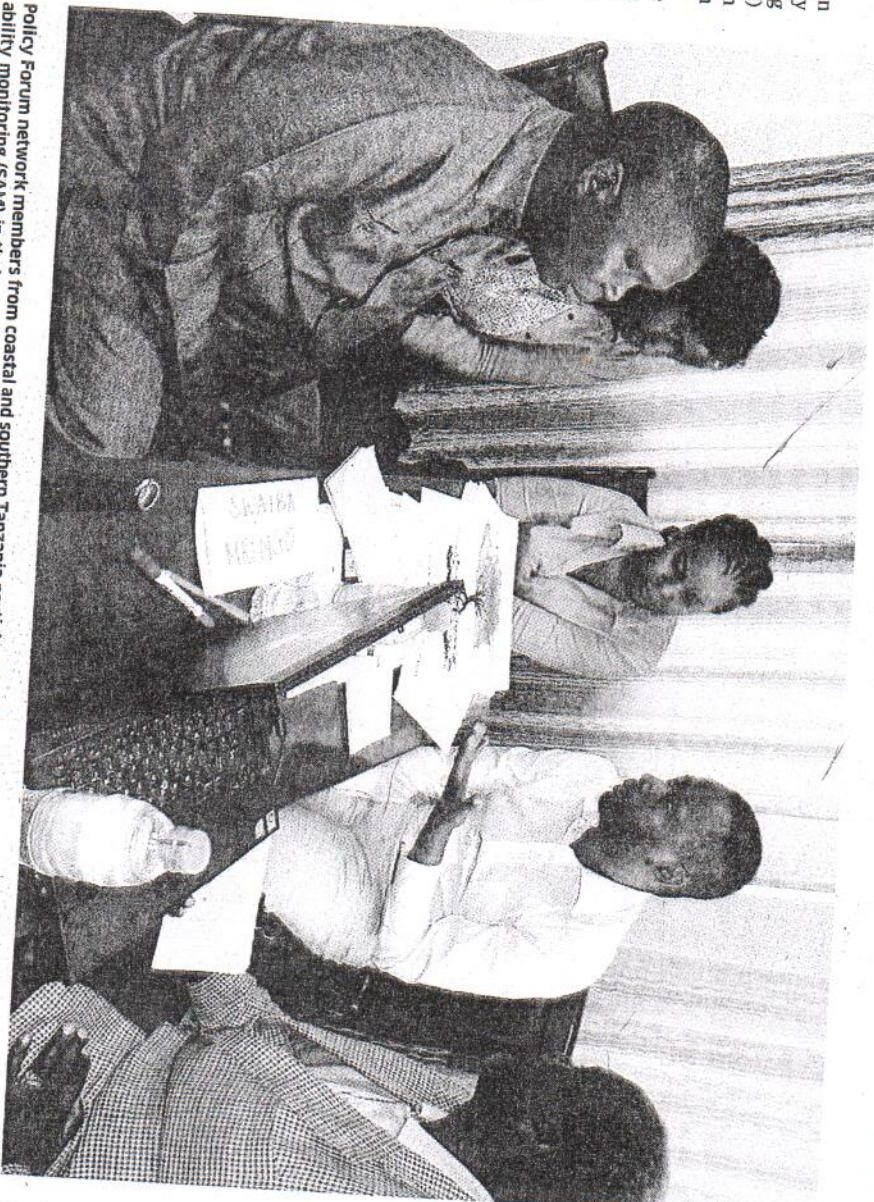
From the experience through the implementations of SAM in local government authorities (LGAs), it has been observed that there have been poor implementation of community projects entrusted under district councils. In all projects where either partially or not implemented at all.

However, in order to go in line with the current trend, Policy Forum network has been working hard to frame its future efforts on SAM based on the lessons learned in the previous years of implementation in Tanzania.

Speaking in his opening speech to participants from coastal and southern Tanzania attending a two-day zonal learning session that took place from the September 20 to 21 in Morogoro, Policy Forum's coordinator Semkase Kilonzo said the Forum had organised that meeting among others, to reflect and share lessons and experiences emerging from the implementation of SAM and other accountability works in coastal and southern Tanzania.

Kilonzo added that the meeting would also complement the ongoing country capacity enhancement efforts towards social accountability practitioners. And using the shared experience at the ground level to inform engagements related to policy processes at the national level.

Our new strategic plan focuses more on monitoring evaluation and learning (MEL) to capture the dynamics, causal mechanisms,



Policy Forum network members from coastal and southern Tanzania participating in a group discussion on how to implement social accountability monitoring (SAM) in their areas during a two-day zonal learning session that took place in Morogoro last week. Photo/Courtesy of Policy Forum.

reasons underlying and positive or negative changes, tacit knowledge and the contexts or operating environment in which SAM can be most impactful and to share these lessons with practitioners in the country and beyond," he said.

Kilonzo noted that, Policy Forum has planned to conduct two zonal reflection

meetings in 2017, which among other things would focus on capturing and reflecting on the most important lessons as far as the social accountability monitoring practice in the country was concerned for the purpose of using them to advance their work.

Through that meeting, participants had opportunities to make documentation of lessons learned, reflected on the challenges faced, as well as results of the previous SAM learning by engaging with the civil society in policy and budget advocacy issues.

Further, they looked into insights of what worked and did not work as far as social

accountability and other advocacy initiatives were concerned.

For her part, Programme Officer at the Embassy of Switzerland Jacqueline Gatera Ngoma commended Policy Forum's efforts in convening and enhancing the very-much needed learning around SAM.

"We understand the various challenges that face our planning, budgeting and execution processes and we commend Policy Forum to have spearheaded SAM trainings and implementation in Tanzania," she said.

Ngoma added: "CSOs are a bridge between the government and citizens and they need to really work out that bridging function for mutual benefits." But to achieve this, she urged the government to recognise CSOs (especially those engaged in social accountability initiatives) as partners in development and give them full cooperation. Action Aid Tanzania, National Project Manager-PSA Project, Samweli Mikwarwe said the meeting was important because it enabled them to reflect on how the social accountability practices has been carried out.

He therefore urged citizens to hold their government into account on all matters concerning social accountability monitoring and information essential for their wellbeing.

Meanwhile, the facilitator of the meeting, who is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of Dar es Salaam, Moses Mizzava, said SAM could only survive if people have patriotism, have a sense of ownership commitment and the availability of human and financial resources.

Divisional Officer in Mtwara Town Council Francis Mkuti commended SAM programme, saying it has helped among others, to create good relationships between the citizens and the government. It has also enabled both the government and its citizens to trust each other.

He has said if the Policy Forum wanted to succeed on its day-to-day activities it needed to work closely with the government during budget preparations.

Mkuti urged the Policy Forum if possible to fully participate in government budget preparation and grab opportunities readily available in all district councils across the country.

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