BUILDING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ZAMBIA IN THE THIRD REPUBLIC: AN ASSESSMENT

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1. Abstract

In this article the author examines efforts at building the institutional capacity of local authorities in Zambia in the Third Republic. Noting that the current institutional capabilities of local authorities are very limited, the author discusses some of the factors accounting for this.

The author observes that, despite official pronouncements by the new government regarding its commitment to improve the capacity of district councils, its local government reform programme has been considerably delayed and is indeed now in danger of being derailed through lack of resources. There also appeared to be a problem of political will regarding the implementation of the reform programme, and as of 1995, government had failed to put in place even those aspects of the programme which did not require much funding, such as the definition and assignment of responsibilities in the Ministry of Local Government and Housing for managing the various parts of the programme and the formulation and implementation of financing, staffing and training policies that were a key part of the reform package.
2. Introduction

Capacity-building in the case of Zambian local government is of paramount importance in the Third Republic given the continuing institutional decay of local authorities. The process of institutional decline in Zambian local government began in earnest in the mid-1970s and worsened in the 1980s. The introduction of the one-party state in Zambia in 1972 and the beginning of the country's economic crisis in 1974 (following the fall of copper prices and increases in oil prices) marked the genesis of institutional decay in Zambian local government.

On December 13, 1972, Zambia was proclaimed a one-party state (ushering in the Second Republic), thereby granting the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP) constitutional paramountcy over the administrative machinery, including local government. Following the introduction of the one-party system, party membership and loyalty became very important considerations in appointments to senior local government positions, resulting in the appointment of ill-qualified and incompetent staff to key local government positions. The supremacy of the party over the administrative machinery also opened avenues for rampant political interference in council operations and financial mismanagement. This led to a decline in the capacity of councils to provide essential services to the communities they served.

The period 1974-75 marks the formal genesis of the country's prolonged process of economic decline. In 1974 copper prices dropped from a peak of 93.23 cents per pound during the previous year to 56.10 cents. This drop reduced export earnings by more than 40%. The slump in copper prices coincided with sharply rising oil prices in 1973 and 1974. It should, however, be noted that the causes of the crisis were complex and in Zambia's case included other factors (notably the ongoing economic consequences of the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence as well as the government's own economic policies). The decline in the national economic performance reduced the funding available for public expenditure, including local government. This contributed to the decline in the capacity of local authorities to provide services.

The decline in the institutional capacity of local authorities in Zambia was further worsened in the 1980s by the imposition of inappropriate local government structures under the 1980 Act. For instance, the merging of the local party structure with the local council opened avenues for rampant financial mismanagement and diversion of council resources to party activities; it also institutionalised political interference in the day-to-day operations of local authorities.

We should, however, point out that, the problems that have afflicted local government in Zambia since the mid-1970s were far from novel in the context of the mid-1970s, 1980s and 1990s; indeed some of the problems, such as the appointment of ill-qualified staff and political interference in council operations, had been in existence since the introduction of the 1965 Local Government Act shortly after independence. But, the introduction of the one-party system in 1972, the setting-in of the economic crisis in the mid-1970s and the imposition of inappropriate local government structures under the 1980 Act led to an intensification of many of these constraints.
3. **Theoretical Framework**

In this article, capacity refers to the ability of local authorities to deliver services to their communities. Capacity building, therefore, refers to the process of improving the capabilities of local authorities to undertake the range of community functions for which they are responsible. In general terms, institutional capacity-building connotes programmes of:

“sustainable, constructive, change in organisations which are designed to make them better at doing what they already do, and more efficient; or which are designed to change the character of institutions by modifying their goals and strategies, cultures, ways of functioning, management styles and so on (Blunt and Collins, 1994, p.115). “

Institutional capacity-building is also given clear summary statement by Austin, who defines it as:

“a process which facilitates and assists change in organisations through structural reform of systems, staff development, strategic planning, and style (culture: the way things are done in an organisation), in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency with which that organisation fulfils its responsibilities (1994, p.8).”

The purpose of capacity building is to bring about organisational change with the object of improving an institution's ability to make effective use of the human and financial resources available (Catlett and Schuftan, 1994; Israel, 1987). Indeed, as Eade (1997) observed, the purpose of capacity-building is to build strong, effective and accountable institutions of government. Effective institutional capacity-building must focus on a number of imperatives which need to be addressed if an organisation is to be effective. These imperatives include:

“articulated mission, goals, strategies and main functions; functional alignment...methods of coordination and control adapted to the circumstances of the organisation; the delegation of sufficient authority...clearly defined roles and relationships; the institutionalisation of planning and communication at all levels; strong connections between performance and reward; credible transformational leadership capable of setting directives, motivating and inspiring employees and colleagues, and creating an organisation culture which places high value on productivity, quality, customer service and integrity (Blunt and Collins, 1994, p.115).”

Most of the imperatives that need to be addressed in order for institutional capacity-building to be effective tie with the characteristics of a bureaucratic organisation which according to Max Weber ensure the efficient operation of modern organisations. According to Max Weber, a bureaucratic organisation is ideally characterised by, inter alia:

1. fixed official jurisdictional areas;
2. written records;
3. thorough expert training of official bearers;
4. full working capacity of the official (Scott, 1981; Hummel, 1987).
Observance of the bureaucratic characteristics is vital to the success of any major institutional capacity-building programme. For instance, if jurisdictional areas are not allocated to officials for managing the various components of a capacity-building programme, it is unlikely that such a programme would be managed efficiently and effectively. Similarly, in a situation where capacity-building responsibilities are not given full working capacity - that is regarded as secondary activities - it is unlikely that the discharge of such responsibilities would be efficient and effective. Written records make visible what officials are ordered to do and actually do (Hummel, 1987). Where you have written records, capacity-building activities are at least potentially open to supervision from above - the hierarchy - and ultimately from outside - the public. Without written records, capacity-building activities would be difficult to inspect and analyse for the purpose of future correction and control.

As Eade (1997, p.3) observed, capacity-building cannot be seen or undertaken in isolation. It is deeply embedded in the social, economic, and political environment. Understanding this environment is critical in order to appreciate the nature of the lack of capacity. Also, if there is lack of understanding of the environment within which a capacity-building programme is to be implemented, it is unlikely that the programme would produce any tangible results. Further, as Eade (1997) observed, capacity-building is a continuous process and there are no magic wands. For instance, a one-off workshop will not on its own eliminate institutional weaknesses. Furthermore, capacity-building is a complex and multifaced process. Therefore, an effective capacity-building programme should tackle the various factors that account for institutional weaknesses and not focus only on single issues. Indeed, as argued by the Community Development Resource Association (CDRA):

“It does not help to train individuals when organisational vision is unclear, organisational culture is unhelpful and structure is confusing or obtuse. It does not help to develop information management systems when the basic organisational attitude is one which rejects learning through monitoring and evaluation in favour of frantic activity» (CDRA, 1995, p.9).”

It should also be noted here that the role of the ministry responsible for local government is of vital importance to the capacity-building of local authorities. The Ministry of Local Government represents the interests of local authorities in the government and is responsible for all legislation relating to them. The Ministry of Local Government exercises vast powers of control and supervision over local authorities and has general duty of guidance. In this connection, the success of institutional capacity-building at local levels will therefore depend on the strength and competence of the Ministry of Local Government to support local authorities and help create greater administrative capacity at those levels (Mukwena, 1998).

4. The Third Republic

This article assesses efforts at institutional capacity building in Zambian local government in the Third Republic. The Third Republic was ushered in December 1990 when multiparty politics were re-introduced in the country. The Third Republic took-off in earnest in November 1991, following the first general elections held under the new system on 31 October 1991. The Local Government Act of 1991 under which local government operates in Zambia had been enacted during the democratic formation process, and took effect in December 1991. Elections under this Act were held in November 1992, almost a year after its commencement.
5. Institutional Capacity of Local Councils

The current institutional capabilities of local authorities in Zambia are very limited. Indeed even if funding for the various services councils are expected to provide became available immediately, it is very unlikely that these funds could be applied to the tasks of service provision in a cost-effective manner. As Tordoff and Young (1994, p.290) observe, "at the present time, the local authorities face what amounts to a crisis of capacity in the delivery of services".

There are many factors accounting for this situation, and clearly if this variety of constraints is not taken into account in institutional capacity building efforts, these latter will be likely to fall short of their objectives. As earlier pointed out in this article, effective institutional capacity-building measures should tackle the various factors accounting for institutional weaknesses. Dominating the list of constraints accounting for the crisis of capacity in Zambian local government are inadequate funding, serious staffing problems and a significant gap in the equipment available to councils to perform even basic services. To this list, one can also include unclear objectives and inappropriate systems and structures as fundamental weaknesses hampering the performance of Zambian local government (LOGOSP, 1994a). As earlier pointed in the discussion, effective institutional capacity-building should focus on, among other concerns, clear organisational objectives, appropriate systems and structures.

6. Government Efforts at Capacity Building

In line with the 1991 Act, important steps were taken early in the life of the new government to rationalise the administrative set-up of local authorities. Under Statutory Instrument No. 53 of 1992, the commercial and industrial and social departments of district councils were abolished, and their staff were incorporated into the finance and administration departments respectively. In the case of municipal and city councils, only the commercial and industrial department was abolished (its employees being absorbed into finance department), while the social department was split into two - (a) social and housing and (b) public health. As a result of these changes district councils have emerged with just three departments (administration, finance and works), while municipal and city councils had six (administration, finance, engineering, housing and social services, legal services, and public health).

The above administrative rationalisation was on balance a progressive measure, especially for district councils, since it has in their case entailed a reduction of council departments to a more manageable number, and resolved the problem of overlap of functions which had existed among departments under the previous system - notably between the commercial and industrial and the finance departments. This rationalisation was also 'progressive' in showing appreciation for the fact that local authorities are not homogeneous, and differ, for example, in terms of size, the nature of their operations and whether they are rural or urban.

In another bid to revitalise the administrative capacity of local authorities, the Minister of Local Government and Housing amended the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Amendment) Act (Cap 484 of the Laws of Zambia) by the introduction of the Local Authorities
Superannuation Fund (Amendment) Act No. 27 of 1991. Under this Act, councils were mandated to retire employees who had a period of twenty-two years service in local government. The aims and objectives of this Act were to ensure that: (a) councils retained young, energetic and professionally qualified personnel; (b) all excess staff were laid off; © councils had manageable numbers of employees whom they would be able to pay adequately (Zambia, 1993a, p.2).

As a result of the above Act, local authorities were able to eliminate much of the considerable overmanning which had formerly existed in the lower grades of their staff complements (Tordoff and Mukwena, 1995, p.24). However, due to lack of funds to pay out retirement and retrenchment packages, several councils had to halt the weeding out of excess staff (Zambia, 1993b, p.26). The government had signally failed to give sufficient attention to the financial implications of Act No. 27 of 1991 for councils. Furthermore, whereas some local authorities - especially those along the so-called Line of Rail running through the more prosperous districts in the centre of the country and those with environments that were more attractive in terms of their amenities - were able to rejuvenate their administrative systems through an infusion of new and younger professionals, the more remote district councils were unable to derive similar benefits from the Act. In fact, some rural councils failed to fill some key positions manned by staff who were retired and ended up having to re-engage some of them on contract terms. Clearly, the government had overlooked the fact that due to differential advantages among local authorities in terms of geographical location, some councils were going to be less beneficially affected by the Act than others, and had taken no action to ensure that important staffing gaps resulting from the loss of key personnel under the programme could be dealt with quickly. The lesson to be learnt here is that when designing institutional capacity-building programmes one should take into account the environment within which the programmes are to be implemented.

Although the 1991 Local Government Act reduced political controls over the executive officers of local authorities and hence lessened the problems of political interference in the day-to-day running of council affairs, the continued membership of local MPs on councils threatened to partly frustrate efforts at institutional capacity-building at this level. Already some MPs (especially when these happened also to be ministers) had been too readily inclined to seek to dominate council proceedings as well as council officials, and had taken a leading role in, for example, deciding whom the council should employ at senior levels.

Another political development which threatened to undermine the role of local government was the creation of constituency funds for development projects in parliamentary constituencies (Tordoff and Mukwena, 1995); under this initiative, the government was to allocate development funds on an annual basis to all constituencies.¹ Properly channelled and controlled, these additional funds would have been undoubtedly beneficial to the local authorities.

¹ In 1994 an MMD backbencher had introduced a private members' bill to amend the Local Government Act of 1991 in order to introduce constituency development committees (CDCs), under the chairmanship of local MPs, which would have powers over the local authorities to decide how the discretionary funds of local authorities should be spent. This bill received much support in Parliament, but was dropped following intensive lobbying by the Ministry of Local Government and Housing and the National Commission for Development Planning. Nevertheless, the principle of discretionary finance for small capital development projects, to be financed by the DDCC, has remained intact (Tordoff and Mukwena, 1995).
and the communities which they served. The danger was that, for personal and political reasons, MPs might seek to divert funds to projects which would further their political careers to the detriment of other, more useful projects.

It should also be noted here that the capacity of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing to promote the role of local government has been limited. Yet, as we have already pointed out, the role of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing in the development of local authorities is of vital importance.

The weaknesses at Ministry level which adversely affected the performance of local authorities in the Third Republic were not new; they have included:

1. the shortage of skilled and professionally qualified manpower in the Ministry (Zambia, 1994);
2. the lack of planning capacity at the Ministry headquarters (Zambia, 1994);
3. the failure by the Ministry to provide councils with policy guidance and support, to set strategic planning objectives, and to develop an effective strategy for decentralisation (Tordoff and Mukwena, 1995);
4. the failure by the Ministry to provide councils with the financial resources which they desperately needed to fulfill their essential functions - a failure which was largely to be attributed to the severe economic difficulties facing the country (Tordoff and Mukwena, 1995);
5. the lack of a coherent policy for solving the financial problems which councils were facing as a result of the country's economic crisis (Zambia/ODA, 1995).

To facilitate the role of the Ministry in guiding and monitoring the operations of local authorities and helping them acquire institutional capacity, the 1991 Act provided for the appointment of a provincial local government officer (PLGO) for each province (Zambia, 1991, p.351). To underscore the importance of the role of the PLGO's office in the development of local government, the Ministry sought to appoint staff of sound quality and experience to these positions. The qualifications required for appointment to the position of PLGO were a bachelors degree or membership (at the level of fellow or associate) of the Institute of Local Government Administrators of Zambia (ILGAZ) (Ministry of Local Government and Housing, 1994).

The PLGO was to be the representative of the Minister in the province, and within the province for which he was appointed he was expected:

1. discharge such functions of the Minister under Statutory Functions Act and this Act as may be delegated to him; and
2. discharge other functions as may be conferred upon him by or under any written law (Zambia, 1991, p.351).

The responsibilities of the PLGO included, among others, the following:

1. Provision of support and professional advice to District Councils generally including organisation and management of training workshops where necessary and when resources occur;
2. Monitoring on behalf of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, the general activities of Local Authorities, including development, finance, management and providing of services;
3. Provision of financial, technical and management advice to District Councils where possible;
4. Auditing on behalf of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, all District Councils in the province and ensuring that their activities are properly conducted and are in accordance with Statutory requirements, regulations and directions, and with sound management principles and practice, and take such action as may be necessary on the basis of such audit and other reports;
5. Co-ordinate, monitor and assist the decentralisation of functions to District Councils;
6. Co-ordinate and support technical assistance (as opposed to capital support) given to District Councils in the province by Donor Agencies ... (Provincial Local Government Officer, Southern Province, 1994, pp.1-2).

Generally, PLGOs have not been able to effectively discharge the above functions due to several constraints. These constraints included lack of funds and transport and the shortage of professionally qualified support staff (especially in the audit section) (Provincial Local Government Officer, 1995; Senior Local Government Auditor, 1995). One other weakness in the PLGOs 's offices was that the only finance staff available were local government auditors. These officers were involved in many aspects of financial administration and advice to the councils, in addition to having an audit function (Zambia/ODA, 1995); not only was their independence at some risk of being compromised by their other work but the latter inevitably limited the time available for the former (Zambia/ODA, 1995). As earlier pointed out in the discussion, an effective capacity-building programme should aim at tackling the multiplicity of constraints accounting for institutional weaknesses. Clearly, the appointment of PLGOs was not going to have any impact on the capacity-building of local authorities as long as the government did not provide the PLGOs with adequate funds, transport and qualified support staff.

7. **Public Sector Reform Programme (PSRP)**

With the advent of the Third Republic came an urgent need for the government to seek to put in place a reform agenda to meet the strong popular aspirations for change that had brought an end to the former single-party regime. Thus, from 10th to 14th February, 1992, the government convened a week-long workshop of senior public servants and donors in Livingstone, where extensive discussion and analysis took place on how to decrease the cost and improve the productivity of government in Zambia. From the workshop came a comprehensive draft plan for reforming the public service.

A second workshop for senior public servants entitled "Managing Change in the Public Service" was convened in Ndola in July, 1992, where the draft public service reform plan was further discussed and refined (Zambia, 1992). The Ndola Report formed the basis of the Public Service Reform Programme proposal submitted to the Secretary to the Cabinet in September, 1992 (Zambia, 1992). This proposal, after undergoing some modifications and consolidation (Zambia, 1992), was approved by the Cabinet, and on 8 March 1993, the Secretary to the Cabinet issued a press release, and subsequently a public service-wide circular (Zambia, 1993d), announcing that Government had passed the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP). The
PSRP was launched on 2 November 1993 (Zambia, 1993d).

The goal of the PSRP is to improve the quality, delivery, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of public services to the people of Zambia. Its specific objectives were:

1. To improve Government capacity to analyse and implement national policies, and perform its appropriate functions;
2. To effectively manage public expenditure to meet fiscal stabilisation objectives;
3. To make the public service more efficient and responsive to the needs of the country's population.

In line with these goals, the PSRP had three main components centering on a restructuring of the public service, management and human resources improvement, and decentralisation and strengthening of local government (Zambia, 1993d).

With regard to the third component of the PSRP, during 1992 and 1993 the British Overseas Development Administration provided funding and technical assistance towards the formulation of a plan for decentralisation, which formed the basis for the development of this component (ODA/Zambia, 1994). The local government component of the PSRP which emerged from this exercise was to incorporate a potentially ambitious set of proposals. These were:

1. Structural changes in the Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH) intended to allow greater autonomy in local government and a supportive rather than a directive role for the Ministry;
2. The introduction of better management systems at Ministry headquarters, at provincial level, and in the local authorities;
3. The re-introduction of the pre-1980 provincial and district government system whose responsibilities would include the role of coordinating the functioning of all agencies of government at both provincial and district levels (with the key difference in the latter case being that district secretaries rather than district governors would be overseers of all line departments);
4. The introduction of mechanisms to facilitate the deconcentration of certain functions to the provinces, the devolution of selected functions to local authorities (as their management capacities improved), and community participation at field level in order to enhance democratic governance in the districts;
5. The introduction of national, provincial and district institutions to improve the co-ordination of development and programme planning, implementation and monitoring, and to improve sensitivity to local needs and opportunities; and
6. The introduction of measures to ensure that local government would be properly financed (Zambia, 1993d, pp.24-25).

The overall intention of this component of the PSRP was to make the operations of local government more efficient, cost effective and responsive to the needs of local communities in the delivery of a markedly improved quality services and development (Zambia, 1993d). But its objectives included efforts at the national level to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing to provide support to local authorities in the spheres of policy formation, implementation, co-ordination and evaluation through better human resources
management and training and improved organisational management and to achieve the better co-
ordination of development activities at provincial and district levels through the establishment of
a National Development Co-ordination Committee (Zambia, 1993d, pp.25-26).

There were also a number of specific objectives at provincial level. The first set of these
objectives included efforts to improve the co-ordination of strategic planning, project
implementation and monitoring. It was envisaged that the foregoing would be undertaken through
provincial development co-ordinating committees (PDCCs) under the overall direction of the
provincial permanent secretary. The second set of objectives included efforts to improve the
training of provincial personnel in order to enhance provincial administrative performance and to
strengthen the post of provincial local government officer as a means of better co-ordinating the
Ministry's responsibilities (e.g., local authority audits, the approval of council budgets, and the
audit of hiring and firing of staff), and of undertaking necessary action for capacity building and
support for local authorities (Zambia, 1993d, p.26).

At the district level, the objectives of the third component were to institutionalize
strategic and development planning and improve co-ordination between ministries, departments
and local authorities at the district level through the district development co-ordinating
committees (DDCCs); to train and develop district personnel to enhance management and
administrative performance, especially in planning, finance, human resources and the
organisational management in local authorities; to protect the ideals of, and institutionalize, good
governance and local participation in decision making and implementation; and to introduce
machinery for financing local government that would help develop a sound local revenue base
(Zambia, 1993d, p.26).

8. Implementing the Public Sector Reform Programme

Upon receiving written authority from the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Local
Government and Housing was, funds permitting, expected to move ahead with all due energy
with its own structural re-organisation. This entailed reorganising the Ministry into four separate
departments each under a director who was to work to the permanent secretary (Tordoff and
Mukwena, 1995; Zambia, 1994). These departments were to be: Local Government (to include
administration and finance), Infrastructure and Support Services, Physical Planning and Housing,
and Human Resources and Administration (Zambia, 1994).

The main objective of the Department of Local Government was to be to develop the
capacity of local authorities in the fields of local government administration, finance, audit, and a
range of legal matters pertaining to local government. The Department of Infrastructure and
Support Services was expected to concentrate on building the capacity of local authorities in the
area of infrastructural development - i.e., roads, water, sewerage and solid waste. It was to liaise
with the National Commission for Development Planning (NCDP) and co-ordinate, monitor and
evaluate donor-funded local authority projects. The Department of Human Resources and
Administration was to be responsible for human resource development and training, while the
Department of Physical Planning and Housing was to be concerned with physical planning and
the development of local authority capacity in the housing sector (Tordoff and Mukwena, 1995;
Zambia, 1994).
The envisaged reorganisation of the Ministry clearly had the potential for greatly contributing to the Ministry's effectiveness. However, this reorganisation was to experience a considerable delay in getting underway. In the first place, over two years elapsed before the Ministry received authority to implement the reorganised structure drawn up early in 1993 (Tordoff and Mukwena, 1995); this authority was only obtained from the Cabinet Office in April 1995 (Commissioner of Town and Country Planning, 1995), while treasury approval for reorganisation was only given three months later in July (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Housing, 1995). Yet even though this latter approval had been granted, there remained the likelihood that the general lack of funds available through the Ministry of Finance would hamper the implementation of the Ministry's restructuring, and indeed the entire local government reform programme. It should be noted here that at the PSRP launch meeting in November 1993, the government endorsed a detailed timetable for the implementation of the PSRP that included implementation of the restructuring of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing by April 1994, a fully staffed Department of Local Government by September 1994, and a new financing system for local government and an employment and training policy by the end of 1994 (LOGOSP, 1994b; ODA/Zambia, 1994). None of these goals were achieved.

Regarding the introduction of better management systems, the Ministry at least had a head-start. Manuals on various aspects of management in districts and local authorities had been developed by the British ODA-funded District Support Programmes in Northern and Central Provinces (which operated between 1981 and 1993). These manuals were to form the basis of the programme of management improvement and training for local authorities. They also included guidelines and model institutional structures for co-ordinated planning, implementation and monitoring at provincial and district levels, and suggested methods and arrangements for ensuring community participation in local and district government. The proposed set of manuals was to cover the following: (a) Decentralised planning (Zambia, 1993e); (b) Project implementation; © Personnel management; (d) Monitoring council performance; (e) Participatory planning; (f) Budget management; (g) Accounting; (h) Stores management; (l) Inventories and maintenance; and (j) Transport management.

These manuals were seen as guides as to best practice, reflecting what had worked successfully under the District Support Programmes. The manuals were intended to be flexible, recognising that there needed to be substantial room for local variations in the application of the recommended models (LOGOSP, 1994b).

The effective implementation of the better management systems and procedures contained in these manuals remained dependent on the success of the restructuring of the Ministry. In its present form, the Ministry had limited capacity to spearhead the introduction of better management systems and procedures, although ideally it should be expected to take the lead in the current local government reforms. As Tordoff and Mukwena (1995, p.39) observe, "while LOGOSP and international donors can provide some of the support necessary to make implementation of MLGH's ambitious reform programme successful, the main responsibility continues to lie with the MLGH itself". This also important for the sustainability of any improvements that would arise from the reform programme.

Within the context of the third component of the PSRP, and in order to improve the co-ordination of development activities and provide for an effective framework to manage and
report on development programmes at both district and provincial levels, Cabinet Office released a circular on 3 January 1995 establishing with immediate effect the following technical committees:

1. a district development co-ordinating committee (DDCC) in each district;
2. a provincial development co-ordinating committee (PDCC) in each province; and
3. a national development co-ordinating committee (NDCC) at the centre (Zambia, 1995).

As already pointed out, the idea of such co-ordinating committees was directly based on lessons gained from the ODA-funded District Support Programmes. The shaping of ideas regarding the potential roles the DDCCs could play also benefitted from the earlier experiences with the District Development Committees (DDCs) of the pre-1980 period. The DDCC was to be a technical advisory committee whose functions would be to provide a forum for dialogue and co-ordination on development issues between the local authority, line departments, donors and NGOs in each district; to receive up-to-date financial reports on capital projects dependent upon discretionary finance from district councils' finance departments; to monitor and co-ordinate sub-district community participatory planning activities and ensure that reports from these bodies reached the councils; and lastly to prepare consolidated reports on implementation progress for the council with copies to the appropriate PDCC and to relevant national institutions such as the Ministry of Local Government and Housing (Zambia, 1995).

The membership of each DDCC was to include the town/council secretary, all council chief officers, all district heads of government departments, other relevant government department officers, health board representatives, donor/NGO representatives and a provincial planning unit representative (Zambia, 1995). The DDCC was to be chaired by the council secretary (or town clerk in the case of municipal and city councils). The DDCC was to report to the council and the PDCC through its chairman, with the council providing the DDCC with its secretariat. It was enabled to set up sub-committees to undertake specific tasks on its behalf, including the handling of special programmes (Zambia, 1995).

The PDCC was also intended as a technical advisory committee whose overall aim would be to co-ordinate the planning and implementation of development programmes in the province, ensuring that district and local authorities' decisions were properly incorporated into provincial plans (Zambia, 1995). The membership of each PDCC was to include all provincial heads of government departments/agencies and representatives of NGOs and donors with projects in the

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2 The District Support Programmes in Northern and Central Provinces had also experimented with developing better methods for ensuring improved community participation in planning, particularly in the use of rapid rural appraisal techniques by sub-district staff in Kabwe Rural District. It was hoped that the lessons from this experience would be used in the post-1991 reforms (LOGOSP, 1994a).
province. It was to be chaired by the provincial permanent secretary, with the provincial local government officer as vice-chairman and the chief regional planner as its secretary (Zambia, 1995).

Although the establishment of the DDCCs and PDCCs offered the prospect of a commitment to improve co-ordination at the district and provincial levels, it appeared more likely that, due to lack of executive authority, these new co-ordinating committees, like the Provincial Development Committees (PDCs) and DDCs of the pre-1980 era, would find it difficult to achieve effective co-ordination among the various agencies within their respective fields of competence. This fear was not unfounded, as already in the case of the Northern Province, the various public agencies whose operations fell within the area of responsibility of the PDCC and various DDCCs considered reporting to these committees as optional and not mandatory (Lunoe, Imbwae, Aasen and Mukwena, 1995). It was also likely to be difficult for the council secretary/town clerk as DDCC Chairman to provide the required leadership for this body since his role lacked legal backing. Although there was clearly a need to strengthen the PDCCs and DDCCs through the enactment of a law that would give formal legal standing to their responsibilities and powers, the government remained of the view that there was no need for legislation and that the cabinet circular that established the PDCCs and DDCCs was sufficient (Lunoe, Imbwae, Aasen and Mukwena, 1995). The issue of providing adequate authority to those charged with the coordination responsibility needs to be seriously addressed as it is one of the key elements in ensuring effective coordination. Without adequate authority, it will be difficult for those charged with the coordination function to undertake that responsibility.

Lack of basic equipment on the part of local authorities and government departments was also likely to be a major inhibition to the effective operations of DDCCs. Already in the case of Northern Province, the operations of DDCCs were being hampered by the "inability by members to prepare reports and minutes due to lack of equipment (e.g., duplicators, photocopiers, etc) and a critical shortage of necessary stationery" (Lunoe, Imbwae, Aasen and Mukwena, 1995, p.35). In the case of the DDCCs there was also the problem of the relatively poor calibre of many heads of government departments at district level. The DDCC's role in monitoring and co-ordinating sub-district community participatory planning activities was left in question by the absence of any institutional framework below the district level.

Having appreciated that the capabilities of councillors would be a crucial pre-requisite for their effectiveness in representing their voters and understanding the operations and procedures of councils on which they served, the government initiated a series of workshops and seminars for councillors and also local authority officials. Funded by the ODA, these seminars covered good governance, accountability and other relevant topics (Zambia, 1993c).

A functional analysis of the roles of local and district government was completed in June 1993 by Tordoff and Young (Tordoff and Young, 1993). The study was of vital importance in that clarification of functions and functional realignment are among the key factors to effective institutional capacity-building. The object of this study was to produce recommendations to assist the Ministry in drafting proposals carrying forward plans for the further devolution of functions to local government in Zambia. The authors concluded that, given the limited capacity of most local authorities, "it would seem sensible for institutional strengthening at the base of the system to concentrate, in the short term, on those functions which are essential to the well-being of local government, leaving councils to perform other functions as institutional capacity improves and
additional funds become available" (1994, p.290). In other words, it was suggested that a staged process of devolution be adopted, with responsibilities transferred to local authorities as they acquired the capacity to manage these functions. According to Tordoff and Young, the essential local government services to be provided were: housing, water supplies, roads, sanitation and drainage, fire services, and town and country planning. Next on the list was public health (for which the Ministry of Health was then mainly responsible), followed by services of lesser priority including public amenities, community development, land allocation and registration and, more arguably, education (for which responsibility had largely remained with the Ministry of Education). Finally, there are services which could be regarded as of secondary significance, such as commercial and manufacturing ventures (1993, p.13).

Another ODA-funded study on the finance of local government in Zambia was completed in September 1994. The main conclusions of the report by Peter Tyrie and his team were that:

1. All councils required recurrent support;
2. Urban councils required more support than rural councils, proportionately to their population, because despite having a larger resource base they also supplied services to a much greater percentage of their populations;
3. Councils should be able to provide certain services on a cost recovery basis;
4. Grants from central government should be made for specific services and not be simply provided in the form of a general grant (Tyrie, 1994; Zambia/ODA, 1995).

According to Tyrie, all local authorities would require increased financial support from central government. Even if local authorities improved their levels of revenue collection, it was doubtful whether many could approach self-sufficiency, particularly those in rural areas where the local revenue base is not sufficient to finance the services which should be provided. But following his discussions with council officers, Tyrie came to the conclusion that certain services, especially in the case of urban councils, should be self-financing. The services identified in this regard included (a) housing; (b) site and service facilities; (c) water; (d) sewerage; (e) cesspit emptying; (f) refuse collection; (g) markets; (h) kiosks; and (i) civic estates. The feasibility of introducing a cost recovery principle would, however, depend on local political commitment, improved management of fees collection and affordability on the part of the local community. Local authorities would need to conduct detailed socio-economic studies to assess the affordability of the various services to be provided on cost-recovery basis in various localities and amongst different income groups (Tyrie 1994, pp.13-14).

According to Tyrie's findings, "most grants given to local authorities in recent years have been non-matching grants (for no specific service), and their quantities have not been pre-determined by any link to a specific share of sales or any other tax" (1994, p.E). Further, there appeared to be no formula in use at the Ministry of Local Government for determining the distribution of grants to local authorities. Since a general non-matching grant carried no prescription on how it would be spent, it was, in Tyrie's view, the least stimulative of local grants and could result in local government underutilising its own resources. The combination of giving non-matching grants, and at the same time failing to define the method by which grants were divided between local authorities, had contributed to a number of management inefficiencies:
1. councils were unable to be certain in advance how much grant funding they could expect to receive, undercutting the budgeting process at a key point;
2. grants were being effectively given to cover wages or wage anomalies which would only have the result of encouraging the maintenance of bloated staff establishments;
3. councils were able to use grants to meet the costs of providing a range of services for which cost recovery arrangements needed to be introduced;
4. without clearly fixed guidelines, the system of grant distribution was open to abuse; and
5. the delivery of grants would continue to councils even if they failed to provide an acceptable level of service (1994, p.30).

In view of the above, Tyrie (1994) recommended that grant distribution should in future be made for specific services and that a definite formula be used in dividing grants between local authorities. In working out the formula for grant distribution, the government would need, of course, to take into account a variety of factors, including the size of the district, the density and nature of its population, the balance between the urban and rural population, the level of per capita income, the distance from service centres, the collection efficiency, and the service delivery performance (Tyrie, 1994, p.31).

9. **Local Government Support Project (LOGOSP)**

Other than the British Overseas Development Administration, there are other Western donor agencies which have been active in supporting the third component of the PSRP. For example, the Netherlands government has been helping strengthen the planning capacity of Senanga District Council in Western Province and the German Technical Aid to Zambia programme has invested resources in improving the planning capacity of the new Siavonga District Council in Southern Province. Reference should also be made to the United Nations Development Programme support for the implementation of decentralisation in the Eastern Province (Zambia, 1993c). Except for the ODA-funded Local Government Support Project, the other donor projects aimed at strengthening local government do not cover the whole country and are, therefore, limited in scope. In this section we will, therefore, only examine the contributions of LOGOSP.

Before the launching of LOGOSP, ODA had funded a modest Interim Local Government Project (ILGP), which commenced in June 1993. The ILGP aimed at helping the government to launch its strategy for the local government component of the PSRP. Two advisors at the Ministry of Local Government and Housing and two local consultants in Northern and Central Provinces were appointed to carry out this work. The ILGP came to an end in March 1994 (LOGOSP 1994b; ODA/Zambia, 1994).

LOGOSP was an institutional development project that was designed to support Zambia's Public Service Reform Programme through capacity-building activities in local government throughout the country. The project commenced on 1st August 1994, and was scheduled to continue until March 1997 (LOGOSP, 1994b; Zambia/ODA, 1994; Zambia/ODA, 1995); the project came to a close at the end of 1997. The total British Overseas Development Administration funding for LOGOSP was £5,300,000 at the project's start (LOGOSP, 1994a). LOGOSP was to cover all the then sixty-one councils in Zambia. Recognising the fact that the
needs and capacities of the different councils vary widely, LOGOSP expected the members of the project team to tailor the project approach accordingly (LOGOSP, 1994b).

LOGOSP had two major components - a general Management Strengthening Component, which was to build on the work of the earlier ODA-supported district development projects in Central and Northern Provinces, and a Financial Management Strengthening Component, which extended to the district level the work of ODA's Finance Training Team Project that has been assisting accounting and audit units in provincial headquarters as well as the central ministries.

The general Management Strengthening Component sought to strengthen the management of council business, including efforts to more effectively institutionalise the respective roles of councillors and officers, to create appropriate systems for accountability and to set actual work programmes for council departments. It was also concerned with human resource management, and was aimed at insuring the introduction of appropriate systems for recruitment, posting, promotion, discipline and training of personnel. A third area of concern was the fostering of a capacity for decentralised planning geared to the introduction of a nation-wide system of district development co-ordinating committees; included here was the promotion of community participation in the preparation of the district plan. The component also included a stress on the improvement of project implementation by introducing improvements in councils' technical capacity to identify, appraise, plan and implement small capital projects and an emphasis also on the strengthening of procedures for monitoring of council performance in service delivery (LOGOSP, 1994a). For its part, the Financial Management Strengthening Component was focussed on helping to establish a workable financing system for local government, including the strengthening of procedures for collecting rates, personal levy, user charges and license fees and introducing improvements to the budget planning, implementation and monitoring process (and not least to a range of core operational functions such as payment voucher preparation, maintenance of cash books, reconciliation of bank accounts, maintenance of ledgers, management of imprest, loans and advances, accountable documents, and records of debtors and creditors). In line with such objectives, it was also concerned with enhancing the financial reporting process (including the preparation of annual accounts) and with helping to develop basic management information systems to make available to managers information on the costs of providing services to enable them set priorities and consider cost recovery measures. Clearly also important was the enhancing of the management of council commercial ventures by establishing accounting procedures so that managers would know whether the enterprises were operating profitably. In these ways, the component was intended to strengthen internal audit systems within district councils and help to rebuild the external audit system for local government (LOGOSP, 1994b).

The inputs supplied through LOGOSP were to be provided at both the central level and the nine provincial local government offices. Within the Ministry, LOGOSP was to provide a team leader, a finance co-ordinator, a planning co-ordinator, a human resource development co-ordinator and three senior finance advisors. These senior consultants (who were all non-Zambians) were answerable, through the team leader, to the permanent secretary. It was expected that these consultants would work closely with the director of the new Local Government Department, and with specialist finance, planning and human resource development officers within the Ministry (Zambia/ODA, 1994). The role of the senior consultants based at the Ministry was to provide support to Ministry staff in order to strengthen the Ministry's capacity to perform
its functions in support of local government, particularly with regard to the objectives of the Public Service Reform Programme. The input of these senior consultants entailed the provision of advice on technical and policy issues, assistance in the organising of national level consultative workshops on policy issues of current concern, and the provision of workshops and on-the-job training for the skills development of the Ministry's staff. The team of senior consultants was also to provide technical supervision of (and support for) the local consultants stationed in the provinces (Zambia/ODA, 1994).

In each province LOGOSP provided a provincial management training advisor and a provincial finance trainer. These consultants, who were Zambians, worked with the provincial local government officer (PLGO) and his local government and local government audit teams. Through the PLGO, these consultants also provided training directly to local authority staff; a pilot appointment involving the recruitment of a senior retired Zambian local government official as district liaison adviser in the District Support Programme in Northern Province had provided a model for the Local Government Support Project's provincial management training adviser posts (LOGOSP, 1994b; ODA/Zambia, 1994). The pairs of management/finance trainers stationed in each province were responsible for strengthening the capacity of the PLGO's office to provide advice and support to local authorities, and also for helping local authority staff to improve their capacity to plan, implement and monitor the efficient delivery of services and development programmes. The input of these local consultants consisted of the delivery of wide ranging, on-the-job advice to the PLGO and his staff on local government issues, short workshops for the PLGO, his staff and other relevant provincial officers on the Third Component of the PSRP, and workshops and on-the-job follow-up training for staff in each local authority on technical aspects of reform programme implementation, including new management methods (Zambia/ODA, 1994). The key to the LOGOSP approach was the recognition that the responsibility for training and capacity building rested with the PLGOs, and should remain with them after the project period (Zambia/ODA, 1994). This was seen as very important for the sustainability of the capacity-building programme.

The starting point for LOGOSP's approach to institutional strengthening was the 'process' philosophy. This approach took as its starting point the assumption that what was more crucial in effective capacity building in local government was the process of creating the new systems to be implemented and not the implementation of new systems per se. The argument was that by avoiding imposition from outside, the 'ownership' of change would be enhanced and the prospects for the sustainability of that change greatly improved.

LOGOSP's intention was that the Provincial Management Training Advisers (PMTAs) and Provincial Financial Training Advisers (PFTAs) would work as 'process consultants' at district level, helping local government staff as they struggled with the real problems of service delivery. At the provincial level, the project was aimed at developing the role of the PLGOs to fulfill a wide range of key functions within the Zambian government system by the end of the project (LOGOSP, 1994a).

LOGOSP staff were well aware that by moving from a district-based to a nationally-focussed approach, some of the beneficial impact of the 'process philosophy' would inevitably be lost. However, it was felt that this disadvantage might in the longer term be compensated by the project's aim to combine the advantages of a 'process' approach at district level with the best
features of a centrally-driven approach. As a LOGOSP report observed, though intensive district-level projects could undoubtedly create islands of excellence, particularly in the case of relatively small councils, the resource inputs on the scale required to cover all sixty-one authorities in the short term would very likely prove to be unavailable (LOGOSP, 1994a). Moreover, without buttressing by an effective organised support structure at the centre the benefits might prove difficult to sustain after the withdrawal of technical support (LOGOSP, 1994a). And indeed, there was some evidence of the success of training-and-systems-based institutional change in the Zambian context, when driven by a strong commitment from the centre. LOGOSP itself could cite the examples of the ODA-supported Finance Training Project, which had produced significant improvements in accounting operations in most ministries, and the centrally driven health reforms which seem to have generated an apparently considerable momentum for change among district-level health staff (LOGOSP, 1994a).

On the other hand, the fact remains that at face value LOGOSP's role might well have appeared inconsistent with the 'process' philosophy. The dissemination around the country of already prepared manuals, guidelines and systems was by its nature a top-down rather than bottom-up initiative, and there was therefore a danger that local government officers were implementing their recommendations because they were being told to do so rather than because they saw these new approaches as useful in dealing with development problems in their own districts or with the execution of their duties as local government officers. For their part LOGOSP staff believed that the dangers here were probably more potential than actual. In the first place, the materials and systems already developed had been developed through an extended process of learning and adaptation at the level for which they were designed; they were now being made available to the rest of the local government system rather than being imposed on it. Moreover, the reforms were designed to give local government more rather than less freedom to operate. In addition, introduction of initiatives in the area of participatory planning was intended to ensure that local authority coordinated development and service provision was made sensitive to the requirements of local communities, and in this sense local authorities would themselves become more fully sensitised to the process of local development. In any case, the implementation of reform policy was from the outset intended to be iterative; since current initiatives were based on experience at district and sub-district level, there were considerable additional lessons to be learned as they were implemented elsewhere. Other districts, provinces and donors would have new ideas and innovations, which could then be incorporated in system design. And although systems in technical fields like accounts would necessarily have to be implemented more systematically and rigidly for them to work, these should be seen as enabling measures; no development process would work without improved accountability. Lastly, of course, the revision of the Ministry's role under the PSRP from that of director to one of supporter, adviser, coordinator and reviser of policy was consistent with this flexible approach to implementation (ODA/Zambia, 1994, p.24).

Soon after the launch of LOGOSP a number of fundamental issues emerged which needed resolving at the early stage if the project was to achieve its objectives. The failure to restructure and to define clear responsibilities for managing the various parts of the third component of the PSRP was undoubtedly constraining LOGOSP in its programme of support to the Ministry (Zambia/ODA, 1995). At the third meeting of the LOGOSP Project Steering Committee (PSC) in November 1994, it was agreed that officers would be told their responsibilities with respect to the PSRP in writing, and that a committee involving these officers
and LOGOSP's senior advisers would begin meeting twice monthly to manage the third component's implementation (Zambia/ODA, 1995). But this was not to be the case. As pointed out earlier in this discussion, if jurisdictional areas are not allocated to officials for managing the various components of a capacity-building programme, it is unlikely that such a programme would be managed efficiently and effectively.

Since the commencement of LOGOSP on 1st August 1994, some senior posts in the Ministry had become vacant, notably the Deputy Permanent Secretary (Finance), the Assistant Controller of Audit and the Chief Administrative Officer, who had the responsibility for Human Resource Development in local government (Zambia/ODA, Tordoff and Mukwena, 1995). These vacancies were not filled pending the introduction of the new structure. The vacuum created by vacancies involving the posts of Deputy Permanent Secretary (Finance) and Chief Administrative Officer made it difficult for the Finance and Human Resource Development Coordinators to work with Ministry staff. The only point of contact for these coordinators was the Deputy Permanent Secretary (Administration), but he had not previously been directly responsible for these functions (Zambia/ODA, 1995). Thus, the LOGOSP experts could not be effective in their capacity-building responsibilities.

The planning function within the Ministry was also a problematic area, with two officers - the Assistant Director Infrastructure and Development (ADID) and the Commissioner for Town and Country Planning (CT and CP) - sharing this key responsibility. Yet the actual division of responsibility between them remained unclear, which made it difficult for the LOGOSP Planning Co-ordinator to advise, and for the Ministry to formulate and implement a consistent planning policy (Zambia/ODA, 1995). The new structure approved for the Ministry did not solve this problem as the planning responsibility would seemingly continue to be shared between two officers - that is, the Directors of Infrastructure and Support Services and Physical Planning and Housing. This failure to clarify the planning function responsibility at the ministry headquarters will no doubt negatively affect the efforts at improving the planning function in the local authorities.

It was agreed even in LOGOSP circles that it would make sense to keep old posts vacant until the new Ministry structure was introduced; the delay in restructuring the Ministry has meant that the above mentioned posts continued to be unfilled. Yet these vacancies in key positions meant that the responsibility for managing various components of the reform programme was shifted virtually on a daily basis, depending upon staff availability. Partly as a result of these problems, the Ministry fell well behind the schedule agreed with Cabinet Office at the beginning of 1994 for implementation of the PSRP's third component. Reports by the Ministry to the Technical Committee responsible for PSRP implementation, as well as its third component sub-committee, were intermittent, and often apparently hurriedly prepared (Zambia/ODA, 1995). This situation was by no means surprising. As we pointed out at the outset, one of the necessary conditions for success in strengthening institutional capacity is that responsibility for managing the various components of a capacity-building programme needs to be allocated to designated officials and not shifted on a daily basis.

With regard to local government training, LOGOSP remained (rightly) concerned that institutional weaknesses at the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) and the Chalimbana Local Government Training Institute (CLGTI) would, if not resolved, prevent the
establishment of effective professional courses (LOGOSP, 1994a). Both NIPA and the Chalimbana Institute faced great difficulties in attracting and retaining suitably qualified and experienced staff, a problem largely attributable to unattractive conditions of service. The two training centres had also been inadequately funded by the government over a lengthy period.

The longer term success of efforts at local government strengthening was also likely to depend on improvements to the terms and conditions of local government staff. This would depend in turn on government commitment to working out better salaries, salary structures and conditions of service for the whole public service. In other words, as we earlier noted, capacity-building cannot be undertaken in isolation; its long term success depends on several factors such as, in the Zambian case, the need to improve the poor conditions of service obtaining in the local government service. Indeed, to achieve lasting improvements, an effective institutional capacity-building programme should ensure that there is strong connection between the performance of local government staff and the rewards given to them. This will help ensure that there is a motivated workforce to enable local authorities to efficiently and effectively deliver services to their communities. Improved conditions of service will also help local authorities attract and retain qualified and competent staff.

10. Conclusion

As has been observed in this article, the institutional capacity of local authorities to provide services has been at the best very modest in the Third Republic. Indeed, the institutional capabilities of most local authorities remains limited to the extent that even if funding for the various services councils were expected to provide became available immediately, it is very unlikely that these funds would be spent in a cost effective manner. Furthermore, as we have also shown in this article, the Ministry of Local Government has also not been in a position to diligently supervise or even to consistently monitor the activities of district councils. This weakness has resulted, among other things, in the failure to curb a high level of misappropriation of funds and other malpractices in some district authorities.

Admittedly, the central government has, in certain cases, made some effort to reduce a number of important constraints that have contributed to the weakening of the capacity of local authorities. For instance, by recognising that rural and urban district councils are markedly different, the government has in the Third Republic provided for organisational structures which differ between the two types of local authorities. In other cases, however, central initiatives aimed at revitalising the capacity of local authorities have not benefited all councils because government has overlooked the fact that due to differences among local authorities, some councils were going to be negatively affected by the measures it was introducing. This was the case with regard to the amendment of the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund Act, whose object was to ensure that councils laid off all excess and longer serving staff and replaced them with younger and professionally better qualified staff. As we have earlier observed, due to the remoteness of some districts and general lack of facilities, their councils have not been able to derive many benefits from this measure.

As we have shown in this article, donor agencies, notably the British ODA, have assumed an important role in institutional capacity-building of local government. However, while the donor agencies can provide some of the support necessary to make the implementation of
capacity-building programmes successful, the main responsibility for such efforts continues to lie with the Ministry of Local Government and Housing. If the Ministry does not take a leading role in promoting the introduction of capacity-building programmes, it is very unlikely that the benefits of donor funded projects will be sustained after the donor agencies bring their support to an end.

If local government performance was to be enhanced in the Third Republic, it was necessary that the government should, as a matter of urgency, speed up the implementation of the proposed local government reforms under the PSRP. As we have noted in this article, the implementation of the local government reform programme had been considerably delayed and indeed was in danger of being derailed by the limited resources at the disposal of the Ministry of Finance. This fear was not unfounded, as it was disclosed by a Ministry of Finance spokesman in January 1996 that "the [entire] Public Sector Reform Programme might take longer than expected to put in place because of lack of funds" (The Post, 12 January 1996).

The proposed local government reforms clearly had the potential for improving the performance of a vital sector of the Zambian political system which had responsibility for delivering a range of key services to local communities. The reforms could be seen as progressive to the extent that they recognised the fact that the centre (i.e., the Ministry of Local Government) had a crucial role to play in building the capacity of local authorities and, therefore, itself also required strengthening. Thus, the government could be commended for introducing a reform package which incorporated major structural reforms at Ministry level. As already observed earlier, the success of institutional capacity building at local levels would necessarily depend in significant measure on the strength and competence of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing to provide administrative and technical support to local authorities and indeed carry forward programmes aimed at enhancing the capacities of local authorities.
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