The Role of Civil Society and Private Sector Leadership in Strengthening Local Governance

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1. INTRODUCTION
This is a knowledge sharing paper on the “role of civil society and the private sector leadership in strengthening local governance” to be presented at the Ministerial Conference on: Leadership Capacity Building for Decentralised Governance and Poverty Reduction for Sub – Saharan Africa, Kigali, Rwanda. The main objective is to provide leaders and policy makers attending the conference with an analysis and description of a range of Civil Society Organisations and private sector leadership work on local governance, rural/urban development and decentralisation in general.

The paper will explore what is expected to be the role of the civil society and private sector leadership in strengthening governance at the community level. But in doing so, an analysis of decentralisation, the central concept on local governance, and the macro environment for democratization will be provided in order to acknowledge the macro – mental modes that run through all levels of the governance system and affect the performance of the entire system.

The above exploration will lead to an identification of best approaches and strategic actions for promoting the role of civil society and the private sector leadership in strengthening local governance. Some examples of successful cases in Africa or elsewhere will be given to illustrate how the roles of civil society and private sector leadership can be promoted to strengthen local governance.

1.1 Decentralisation and Local Governance

Many decentralization policies and programmes are advocated or justified, at least in part, on the ground that they will increase popular participation in the planning and implementation of development policies and programmes. This leads to a preoccupation with institutional reforms for decentralized/ local governance at the expense of the broader systemic/ structural reforms necessary for a holistic decentralization/ local governance process. As a means to an end, decentralization can address most problems associated with microeconomic stability, poverty, people’s participation, basic social services and good governance. This is true for most African countries, which have introduced decentralization as a policy and institutional objective and, strategy for the realization of their country’s Visions, missions and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The Visions, missions and Strategies are seen as essential for institutionalizing the principle of subsidiarity, as a mechanism and approach for delivering public goods and services to the publics effectively and efficiently, and, more important, as a way of involving people at the community level directly in decision making on local governance and development management issues affecting them.

Defining decentralization, therefore, can be problematic if seen as the opposite of centralization or as an end of condition concept and not a process or a means to
Decentralization must, for all intents and purposes, be seen as a process and not a condition. In terms of decentralization, therefore, the African Countries' experience has shown that, it is necessary to describe processes rather than conditions, operations rather than structures in order to achieve the desired descriptive and prescriptive aims of decentralization.

There is also need to understand what is meant by centralization, decentralization, re-centralization and over-centralization since all these explain complex forms of relationships, which may or may not reinforce the variety of ways in which decentralization might be perceived and understood. As an example of these conceptual relationships, let us look at Zambia. The previous reorganization of local administration widely referred to as “decentralization”, was advocated as a means of achieving “unity based on a frank and positive acceptance of the diversity of peoples.” In such a situation, “re-centralization”, in the sense of a measure to strengthen the nation state, and “decentralization”, to increase regional or local involvement in decision-making, may be achieved, or at least sought, through the same means. However, if centralization is seen as increased control by the center over local activities, there is a degree of incompatibility between centralization and decentralization because increasing central control over local activities may inevitably mean reducing local freedom, initiative and participation in decision-making/ local governance and vice versa. Thus, in this case, decentralization may be a means of reducing central control over local activities and, therefore, a reaction against over-centralization.

Understanding the various ways in which decentralization is defined, and perceived helps in clarifying its various complexities, as a concept, and also opens avenues for its proper application in describing geo-political and socio-economic issues, let alone for purposes of policy analysis and prescription. Anthony Regan argues that it is the case that choices of particular kinds of systems not only are influenced by political considerations but also has political consequences. Therefore, considering classifications together with the aims and critiques of decentralization programmes provides us with a range of insight into any particular decentralization system. The commonest approach is to classify according to the institutional form used and this, invariably, means that there will be little consensus about definitions and aims of decentralization in the official reports or academic literature on the subject.

However, a survey of various literature suggest two main territorial ways of defining decentralization through deconcentration or administrative decentralization, which involves the dispersal of agents of higher levels of government into lower level arenas or the transfer of the workload from central government head offices to locally based central government officials or sub-national units within line ministries or departments and; devolution, which manifests itself in both administrative, fiscal and political types of decentralization. Devolution involves vesting powers for law making or rule-making in locally elected bodies. ‘Devolution is the only form of decentralization
which is built upon democratic values, upon the need for people to be actively involved in their own local governance, directly or through freely chosen representatives.’ (Regan: 1995 277).

Delegation, and divestment, are other forms of decentralization defined in terms of achievement of public sector efficiency, but essentially as one or both aspects of the first two forms. There is, however, no pure form of decentralization. Very often, the practice of decentralization manifests 'hybrid' forms of decentralization and devolution. This is an important indicator of how difficult, or impossible it may become to measure the outcome of one form or the other of deconcentration, let alone, the outcomes of decentralization perse. (Jockely: 7-9)

1.2 Understanding the Political and Democratisation context

Let us delve into the underlying macro sense that democratization, one of the main elements of local governance, in most African countries is not progressing in a clean and predictable manner. Our approaches to democratization, and indeed those of the democracy community at large, are hitting the rocks because countries are reaching the limits of a simplistic ‘transition paradigm’ of democratization. This paradigm, according to people like Thomas Carothers of the Carnegie Endowment, includes the following assumptions:

- That most countries are in some sort of transition to liberal multi – party democracy;
- That countries moving away from authoritarianism tend to follow a three – part process of democratization consisting of opening, breakthrough and consolidation;
- That the establishment of regular, genuine elections will not only give governments democratic legitimacy but foster a longer – term deepening of democratic participation and accountability;
- That a country’s chances of successfully democratising depends primarily on the political intentions and actions of its political elites and leaders without significant influence from the underlying economic, social and institutional legacies, conditions and trends;
- That state building is a secondary challenge to democracy - building and compatible with it.

The above, simplistic, assumptions appear to be the hallmark of the countries’ approaches to democratic governance, democratic participation and local governance. But does empirical evidence support the assumptions?

Out of some 100 or so countries that have managed some sort of democratic experiment in the last two decades, those that have realized the above assumptions are in a minority (by some counts, fewer than one in five of countries – mostly in Eastern Europe – have been doing well in ‘transitioning to democracy’). In the majority of countries, you find rather different things happening. In some, authoritarian practices have resolidified and legitimacy is uncertain with the lines between the state and political party becoming blurred. In
others, you find a feckless form of pluralism at play: quite a lot of freedom, alternation of power via regular elections, but where actual democracy is shallow and the conduct of public affairs is becoming dysfunctional.

The environment we are living in shows that, in a growing number of countries the above assumptions are too simplistic as transition paradigm. In a number of instances it is becoming hard to sustain the arguments that countries are ‘progressing steadily’ towards establishing “viable democratic polities.” Such arguments stick persistently to the ‘the stages of development’ logic touted by generations of developmentalists, despite development being anything but logical. These assumptions are powerful and entrenched, yet how many of our countries subscribe to these rational sequences. The lived experience in many of our polities is not sequential, but simultaneous, with modernity meeting tradition head on in different combinations and producing different outcomes. The transition paradigm downplays or obscures these complexities. What we need is to understand them more. (Hanna) And to understand them there is need for a change in mindsets of the leadership, herein understood to refer to any body, institution or sector that can innovate, champion and transform into action the improved paradigm. We need a new African paradigm, or paradigms, or non – paradigms, for the next generation of governance work. The individual experiences of countries should be the starting point, not the linear assumptions of transitions.

1.3 Public Sector reform

From the above linear assumptions, you can tell the context of local governance that there is need to understand the public sector as a whole. The public sector is commonly described as “the complex array of organizations and institutional arrangements and processes which citizens in any country use to agree on their collective vision, goals and objectives and the rules to observe in the process of attaining these, to enforce the rules or arbitrate and to develop and implement strategies for the attainment of the vision, goals and objectives.” (PSRP, Malawi). By this definition, civil society and the private sector are a part of the public sector. However, in formal functional and structural terms, civil society and private sector have a separate identity removed from government direct control, except by regulatory laws, rules and other means by the government.

The public sector comprises three key and formal elements – the legislature, the Judiciary and the Executive – which are differentiated to varying degrees, from one country to another, in order to ensure checks and balances while bearing in mind the need to avoid organizational paralysis.

These key elements of the public sector can be decentralized for exercise at the sub-national levels, in order to ensure greater access to democracy and a more effective, transparent and accountable governance system. The sub-national exercise of these key elements of the public sector is what amounts to local
governance in its devolution nature. The extent to which civil society and private sector participates in devolution determines the leadership and management role played by them in local governance and development management vide local and central governments leadership and the interactions thereon.

Establishing a relationship between the decentralization reform process and public sector reform on one hand and civil society and private sector on the other is essential because of the synergy in their aims and objectives. All acknowledge that the public sector and sub-national local governments, civil society and private sector constitute the core competence of the nation for formulating, implementing and monitoring national, sectoral and district/ community level policies and actions crucial to poverty reduction, accountability and good governance.

During the last twenty years, most African decentralizing countries have premised their initiatives on strengthening the existing deconcentrated structures of line ministries and departments, less of civil society and private sector, while, at the same time, introducing democratic participatory development systems that eventually have led cautiously to the adoption of devolution processes for effective local governance. Civil society was viewed suspiciously, particularly foreign backed NGOs, while indigenous ones, especially in the governance area, were not allowed to flourish for various reasons. Private sector was understood to be having a profit motive only and less of a possible service delivery partner to the publics.

1.4 Local Governance Context

Local governance is one of the sub – practice areas within the practice area of Democratic Governance. It falls within the functional domain of public sector management. It has direct impact in promoting democratic participation and good governance at sub – national levels, and for the attainment of sustainable human development. Local governance does not refer to local governments and local populations alone. It includes CBO’s, local and international NGOs, central and local governments, community based organizations and agencies, the publics and, the private sector. Therefore, the strengthening of local governance for growth, poverty reduction and good governance at the local level is not only a burden or the preserve of local and central government leadership. Civil society and private sector leadership have a role to play, given their proximity to the people at the grassroots, where also low poverty levels, growth and bad governance are intense.

Local governance has, therefore, become one way of getting required government capacity closer to the people it serves and being directly accountable to for the delivery of public goods and services. It has also become a way of recognizing that governance at the local level will be strong and effective when all leadership and the publics in all sectors and civil society is
mobilized to expend efforts, time and resources for growth and poverty. This means utilizing all available local level civil society and private sector leadership as inclusive partners in fostering good governance and development management. This also means that the mindsets of the leaderships in the public sector and local governments vis-à-vis civil society and the private sector have to change or transformed towards mutual synergy in pursuit of effective local governance and poverty reduction initiatives.

However, there are challenges and issues in harmonizing, institutionalising and integrating the actions of central government leadership, local government leadership with the actions of civil society and private sector leadership to cause improvement in the governance situation at the local/community level of society. At the macro environment, some of these challenges and issues are:

- **How to build mutual trust between central and local governments leadership on one side and civil society and private sector leadership**, given differences in the way they look the countries’ visions and mission statements, let alone their own.

- **How to build the capacity of civil society**, given their fragile, nascent and fragmented nature, unable even to effectively influence the shaping of public opinion, policy and political decision-making. Most indigenous civil society organisations, associations and coalitions are new structures having emerged during the last twelve years ago.

- **How to establish an effective media in whistle blowing on national and local concerns such as corruption in the public and private sector institutions.** The media, though somewhat dynamic, lack professional capacity to address, in a non-partisan way, a wide range of political and developmental issues as a mouthpiece of civil society.

- **How to accelerate the pace of the current slow democratization process leading to adequate political participation.**

- **How to strengthen the capacity of Parliament and Local Governments to effectively legislate, oversee and represent and therefore guarantee a vigorous and effective democratic system.** These state organs are unable to increase their accessibility and responsiveness to all constituencies and wards’ interests.

- **How to strengthen the principle of Separation of Powers** so that the existing dominance of the Executive Branch of Government in terms of decision-making and resource allocation at the expense of the Judiciary, Parliament and Local Governments can be minimised.
How to achieve sustainable financial base for Local Governments. Raising adequate resources to support existing and pipeline governance and development management institutions, structures and systems at all levels of the governance system is a must. The success of Local Governments in providing services to their citizens will depend on the existence of a sound financial base. Civil society and private sector cannot be the substitute.

How to institutionalise social and cultural factors for political and social mobilization. Successful implementation of decentralization policies and programmes largely depends on political will, sustaining social and cultural factors for popular participation and, adequate financial and technical resources. In the case of most African countries, success will depend on sustaining the prevailing political will, technical commitment from professional line agency staff, building a democratic local government culture, the effective management of the process of devolution of functions, and resource mobilization.

How to institutionalize accountability and transparency. There is need to put in place effective mechanisms for ensuring adequate transparency and accountability in the public sector and Local Governments to guarantee effective financial probity and personal integrity and assure accountability on the delivery of public goods and services to the electorates. In local governments, there is need to establish permanent Finance Management and Procurement Committees in order to strengthen the institutional base for enhancing transparency and accountability. This would be additional to the need to further consolidate the systems and mechanisms put in place to enhance transparency and accountability of its institutions and by its officials. This will require concerted efforts by all stakeholders in mobilizing resources for capacity development to instill practices of fiscal discipline, accountability, transparency and integrity in those entrusted with the management of local governments.

How to strengthen observance and enforcement of human rights principles and adherence to the Rule of Law

How to strengthen institutional and human resource capacity in the public sector and local governments to deliver public goods and services. There is need to build capacity for decentralization at all levels of the governance system. The current local governments are nascent having had recent democratically elected local governments and new challenges are emerging in areas of policy, resource mobilization and democracy as a concept. A number of activities are currently under implementation focusing on financial, institutional and human resource development but this falls short of available demand. More resources are required to accelerate and consolidate capacity building programmes. Capacity building is, therefore, critical for the effective implementation of the Decentralized Governance.
How to sustain political and technical support to decentralization. Today, the high degree of political commitment to decentralization, co-exist along side with inevitable conflicting pressures, which may result in delays in the implementation of the decentralization policy and the Local Government Act, and even policy reversals. At the same time, it is imperative that political commitment at all levels is sustained so as to guarantee and sustain the existing political commitment to complete the preparation and successful implementation of devolution plans and the decentralization programme as a whole. The most effective way of minimizing the risks from political pressures is to develop the political capacity, and therefore, the bargaining power, of the Local governments, as well as the level of political awareness in civil society. The focus on popular participation and the expansion of people’s choice through participatory planning and involvement in decision-making has assisted in strengthening such political commitment. Technical and financial support towards advocacy, sensitization and consensus building among all stakeholders will be required to further sustain this commitment,

How to devolve powers and functions to sub-national governments. Most African countries face a lot of political and technical resistance for power loss or unknown reasons despite persistent advocacy from civil society and whistle blowing from the media and, the availability of the decentralization policies and Local Government Acts providing frameworks for the gradual devolution of sectoral functions to Local Governments over a number of years, based on the preparation of individual sectoral devolution plans. Such resistance will have to be overcome through practical commitment to decentralisation.

How to build Democratic Local Governments. The holding of the Local Government elections is not enough for building democratic Local Governments. The main challenges on decentralization arising from the political transformation processes relate to: (a) capacity to provide long-term civic education, primarily because of resource constraints within NGOs and civil society; and (b) capacity to build a democratic culture among the elected members of Local governments to be accountable to the electorate.

How to achieve Local Empowerment and Popular Participation. Securing the active participation of the people of Africa in governance and development is one of the main objectives of decentralization. Although the Policies, Constitutions and the Acts may have established solid background for institutionalizing empowerment and participation, more needs to be done to establish appropriate institutions and procedures for participation. The presence of a vibrant civil society goes a long way in facilitating genuine participation. An effective operationalisation of the Rule of Law goes a long way empowering the publics. But, first people must be assisted and nurtured to overcome their fear of the establishment and to learn to be assertive.
How to achieve Development Partner Coordination and Support for Decentralization. Governments and development partners acknowledge the fact that the devolution process requires effective management, coordination of all stakeholders and, large amount of financial resources. Mobilizing resources for up-scaling the implementation of the decentralization programme and meeting the resource gap is a challenge that can be addressed through building strong partnerships.

2. CIVIL SOCIETY AND PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP: ROLE, APPROACHES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Civil society, in this paper is understood to refer to the wider citizenry and not limited to CBOs, NGOs and Faith organizations. The Private sector, in this understanding, is a part of civil society mostly engaged in businesses and micro and macro – economic issues and is commonly referred to as the engine of country’s growth. Civil society and private sector leadership find their expression within the Executive Branch of government by virtue of their implementation role of the country’s visions, missions, development programmes and governance. CSOs work on decentralisation and local governance just as the public sectors and local governments do. But civil society and private leadership tend to be micro in governance and development approach focusing on implementation and acting as interlocutors of the people at community levels. Their proximity to communities makes them excellent animators, good at the identification of local needs and solutions. That is why their focus is on the following areas of comparative advantages:

- Promotion and strengthening active links between various stakeholders at national and sub – national levels;

- Seeking genuine partnerships with local governments. This however, depends on the openness/transparency of the local government. Such openness/ transparency comes about when civil society actors/organisations are recognized for their positive impact on development at the community level;

- Engaging local government in local analysis, planning and implementation of governance and development projects and programmes, and sharing comparative advantages in leadership, resources and capacities;

- Building social capital by mobilizing citizens full participation in determining local priorities and contributing to their implementation and monitoring;

- Engaging in policy development, both at local and central governments level and private sector; by participation in local and national
consultations, identification of issues and acting as opinion makers. However, this engagement tends to be lopsided when there is no effective feedback loop;

• Capacity development through human resource development, other resources and institutional capacitation in most of the basic social services areas, such as education, health, water, HIV/AIDS, rural infrastructure, etc.;

• Advocating initiatives that are participatory, pro-poor and community level centred, such as promotion of sound / good governance, observance of human rights, rights to development and the rule of law; motivating people to participate in political and electoral processes through civic education, election monitoring, training for effective local leadership in local governments and Parliament and promoting an enabling environment for political and civic engagement and level playing field;

• Monitoring and evaluation of local and central government policy making and implementation with focus on such governance themes of: demand accountability, transparency, corruption, fair economic governance, elections, procurement and sub-contracting; all these leading to improved delivery of public goods and services,

• Promoting political, financial and administrative authority at the local level, ensuring stakeholder participation in more people-centred development processes; and

• Engaging in effective local governance strategies like engaging communities in promoting local self-governance, gender equality, environmental protection, improved infrastructure and services for urban communities and, income generation and other services for the rural poor;

• Coordinating efforts of all non-governmental actors to facilitate harmonized approaches in partnering with the local governments;

• Building public-private-civil society partnerships in service delivery such as HIV/AIDS, urban infrastructure like sewers, rural electrification, roads upgrading and water schemes; these partnerships extend to micro-finance businesses, and ploughing part of companies profits through district development funds for district planning and development generally.

3. CIVIL SOCIETY & PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP APPROACHES EXAMPLES
A. CIVIL SOCIETY

3.1 MALAWI

Institutional Strengthening: In order to enhance its coordination role and making it the decision making body on district level development and improve community decision-making and delivery of services for local development, the composition of the District Development Committees (DDC), hitherto dominated by civil servants, was reviewed. The civil servants (heads of government departments at the district level) were removed from the DDC and they formed a new technical committee called the District Executive Committee (DEC). Civil society and private sector became members of the DEC. This restructuring led to the separation of political decision-making and technical advisory functions of the DDC and the DEC respectively. The DDC is now composed of Traditional Leaders, (the Chiefs and Sub-Chiefs), Members of Parliament and District Political leaders. However, because of fears of politicizing the work of the DDC, the District Commissioner, a civil, continued to chair the DDC, purportedly as a neutral broker and advisor.

The introduction of the DEC was done simultaneously with the establishment of a District Develop Office, headed by a District Development Officer (DDO), to spearhead development in the district. With the above restructuring of the DDC, the DDO became the chairperson of the DEC and Secretary of the DDC.

At the community level, Area Development Committees (ADC) and Village Development Committees (VDC) were established and/or reorganized and strengthened as local participatory structures to promote popular participation at community, village and area levels. Extension staff of ministries/departments, civil society and private sector were reorganized into Area Executive Committees (AEC) to provide technical and advisory services to ADCs and VDCs.

Evidence from the Districts confirm that the introduction of DECs and AECs has assisted in strengthening the capacity of DDCs and ADCs at Village, Area and District levels to undertake informed decisions based on guidance provided by these technical committees. Thus, the restructuring of local participatory structures enhanced community participation.

Development and consolidation of district development planning: In order to allow the districts to prepare and implement their own district development plans that reflect local priorities and to improve development planning, management and monitoring, a District Development Planning System (DDPS) was developed, tested and institutionalized in the districts. The DDPS specifies the roles, responsibilities and functions of each of the committees in the planning framework, which also incorporates the usual
project cycle. It also sets out the systems and procedures and institutions for district planning.

Key outcomes of the DDPS has been the development of district socio-economic profiles that provide detailed situation analysis of a district and key development challenges and development priorities. These profiles guide government, communities and development partners in investment planning and in designing projects and in developing district plans.

**Capacity Development for Local Participatory Structures:** This was aimed at fostering the effective participation of the local people in governance and development activities, through strengthening the mandate of local participatory structures from being passive recipients of central decisions and resources to active demand driven participants. Thus, capacity building, at all levels, is a central issue in the local governance policy process. Capacity building strategies include the following: (i) assessing and reorganizing the existing participatory structures, (ii) training of DDCs, DECs, ADCs, AECs, and VDCs and various project committees in all aspects of popular participation, project management, including finance management, (iii) provision of vehicles, and equipment in the District Development Office for field outreach, monitoring and establishment of data and information banks in districts to facilitate operations, (iv) establishment of a human resources development, within the DDOs office, to manage and coordinate capacity building programmes, (v) recruitment of social planners and economists to provide expertise in the planning of socio-economic development, (vi) implementation of targeted post-graduate training in rural development and human resource management and development to strengthen central and district capacity and, (vii) the implementation of capacity building in public policy analysis.

There is evidence in the districts to confirm that district management teams have acquired the necessary participatory development skills and have improved horizontal communication, one of the ingredients of devolution. There is effective teamwork and ability to work with communities effectively. The level of analytical skills is also high. These outcomes have led to most development partners rushing to invest in the districts because of the capacity available to absorb and sustain increased investment.

**Enhancing capacity for finance mobilization, generation and management:** As part of system development for the DDPS, a District Development Fund (DDF) was established in 1994, as a non-conditional investment fund in the districts, and as an empowering system for promoting local decision making and quickly responding to community generated needs. The DDF system was designed as a “basket fund” for pooling resources together in financing development projects, so as to allow other development partners, including the private sector, to channel their resources, earmarked
for district development, through the DDF. This system was intended to establish funding capacity that would permit districts to gain experiences with the administration and accountability of funds held at district level at the discretion of the District Development Committees and; to ensure that the distribution of resources was not biased towards donor preferences and priorities, but based on an objective allocation criteria of the government.

At the district level, the DDF was controlled by the DDC for the sole purpose of supporting development projects. All decisions concerning its use are made by the DDC, guided by the District Development Planning System and district priorities. This arrangement of managing DDF funds was aimed at fostering: (a) a transparent system of allocation of funds; (b) predictability of amounts available in order to encourage local planning capacities and; (c) greater accountability of local entities to communities they were serving.

3.2 ZIMBABWE & SOUTH AFRICA:

**Civil Society and Private Sector Affirmative Action:** With the growing mutual trust between local and central governments on one hand and civil society and private sector on the other, delivery and provision of basic social services, such as health, HIV/AIDS, training, and technology have become a shared responsibility with the local governments taking more and more regulatory roles while implementation is left to civil society and private sector under agreed arrangements. In Zimbabwe and South Africa Private Sector National Associations have been established to coordinate private sector contribution to community service delivery and provision and, to serve as the mouthpiece and interface with local and central governments. This affirmative action is leading to the provision of quality services and, to some extent, stemming brain drain, save horizontally within the countries.

3.3 KENYA:

**Empowerment through Social Artistry:** Kenya is piloting an inclusive approach to local governance in which traditional methods of governing are meshed with modern ones. Role definition and play is emphasized, structural configurations are redesigned to ensure that all the people – youth, local leaders, women, dancers, men, etc. participate in governance and development roles that they can master. They engage in interactive, experiential right brain activities (artistic, creative, intuitive) and the usual left-brain processes of conceptual, technical and rational thinking. They design and develop new models of doing development, not only in social and economic terms, but also through cultural expressions and symbolic cultural leadership modes, containers utilizing music, art and traditional dance.

This is in realization that the country is facing increasingly new, complicated and difficult situation in this global world, which demands that the country
should do things differently in order to strengthen local governance and development management at the local level. The results are expected to derive from innovative methodologies of social artistry. Capacity building for local governance and development management is, therefore, designed and strengthened through this approach. Civil society is taking the lead in this approach.

3.4 KYRGYSTAN:

**A Transformation from Poverty and Powerlessness to Hope & the Policy Table**: This is a social mobilisation example that can work in any country that is poor and want to self – organize for poverty reduction and self reliance. Please take your time to read it. “The Poverty Reduction Programme (PRP) in Kyrgyzstan commenced in 1998, with the aim to empower men and women for self reliance and advancement. The PRP, supported by UNDP and the World Bank targeted the poorest regions and the villages in the country, where no other external assistance was available.

Teams of well – trained international and national volunteers began their work with Participatory Action Research, through which the communities analysed their situation and causes of poverty, identified the poorest to be targeted first by the programme, and determined concrete actions to address the critical problems they faced, which included: hunger, unemployment, cuts in social assistance, isolation, lack of information, knowledge and means to cope with the new market economy, etc.

A combination of intensive group mobilisation and training over a 3 month period, and cooperation with local governments in providing arable land where needed to prepare the poor women and men for access to formal microfinance. Small Self – Help Groups were formed to promote savings, facilitate access to credit (through the Kyrgyz Agricultural Finance Corporation), but even more, to promote cohesion for collective action and mutual support. Within one year, six – eight groups of five to ten people per village had coalesced into Self – Help Group Associations which promoted inter – group relations and marketing; facilitated partnerships with local authorities and coordinated links with external partners. With access to credit, groups had started individual or joint income generating activities, including agriculture, animal husbandry, trade, etc.

As the immediate needs of the poor were met through improved access to income, they drew their attention to community – wide issues to include: socio – economic infrastructure, service delivery, youth unemployment, corruption, etc. The Self – Help Groups, in collaboration with local authorities, mobilized the rest of their communities to contribute funds and labour to improve water supply and sanitation, rehabilitate schools and health centres, establish village – based flour mills, repair bridges and roads for market access, etc.
The experience gained in designing, implementing and monitoring community projects in a participatory manner enhanced the capacity of Self – Help Group Associations to work as able and valuable partners in local development planning, implementation and monitoring. The voiceless and vulnerable became equal partners in policy and decision making at the local level.

The face of local government in target communities had changed into that of openness, outreach to communities, innovativeness and secure leadership. Linking the PRP with UNDP’s Local Governance Programme further strengthened the capacities of local authorities to govern in a more responsive, transparent and accountable manner.” (Christine Misisi)

**B. PUBLIC – PRIVATE – CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS**

**3.5 NAMIBIA:**

**Namibia National PPPUE Programme:** Seven local authorities are implementing PPP projects on services identified by local government, business and communities as critical for local development including; solid waste management, community tourism and sanitation.

The livelihoods of the urban poor have been improved both through the increased access to solid waste and sanitation services and through increased employment opportunities within the companies providing these services and those engaged in tourism.

Contract Compliance Officers have been engaged by pilot municipalities and trained to empower them to take a leadership and oversight role in PPP projects in the municipalities. This is valuable additional capacity provided to pilot municipalities to assist face basic services provision challenges.

A toolkit containing pro-poor tender documents, a business planning toolkit, a financial planning toolkit, contract options-snap shot, service level agreement checklist, guide for implementation of PPP pilot projects and sample service contracts have been developed and disseminated.

PPP guiding principles and policy guidelines have been developed and adopted by national and local Namibian government and partners from civil society and business sectors. The guides cover the establishment of a range of different partnership types within the Namibian legal and political environment. It is expected that these guidelines will pave the way for national policy on PPP in line with the Government objectives set in its Vision 2030.

Public, Private and Civil Society Actors have received training on various technical aspects of PPP design and implementation and the course has
been adopted by the Polytechnic of Namibia as part of its professional training prospectus.

The Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing has established a PPP function within its Directorate of Decentralisation in order to ensure that the experience and resources from the project are disseminated across the country.

3.6 UGANDA:

Uganda National PPPUE Programme: A full review of all legislation and policies governing PPP has been carried out and a set of revised policies submitted to the Ministry of Local Government for their ratification.

5 solid waste management PPP projects have been implemented in the pilot municipalities. These have reduced waste to landfill to 20% of its previous levels and are collecting user fees of 500 – 600 shillings per month.

1 sanitation (public latrine) project has been implemented in the pilot municipalities.

PPPUE projects have been integrated into Local Authorities’ 3 year Rolling Development Plans and have been allocated funds within these plans.

An external evaluation of the programme has been conducted and has made objective recommendations on the way forward to sustain the gains from the pilot phase.

The implementing partner Living Earth Uganda has built into the pilot to secure additional funding to sustain the programme in the pilot cities.

3.7 MOZAMBIQUE:

Development of a water supply and sanitation model involving the poor communities in the context of a privatized water delivery system: An increased number of poor communities in the two municipalities of Maputo and Matola have access to clean running water. Estimates indicate the more than 7000 people have access to better quality water services in the areas.

The increase in market base of the private water supplier has allowed them to reduce the cost of the water for the poorest community members.

Employment opportunities have been generated for the members of the poor communities allowing them to make profit acting as standpipe managers.
A Technical Working Group has been established involving business, government and community representative that guide the national initiative on the private sector participation in water service provision process.

Guidelines have been developed for the community management of standpipes within the framework of a privatized water supply system.

A regulatory framework for private sector involvement in sanitation has been designed.

Reductions in cost, improvements in regulation and improved communications between partners have reduced the community resistance to private participation and have increased their willingness to pay for the services.

Area-Based Offices for consultation on water affairs have been established along with Consultative Water Committees at community level that will be in charge of the management of the established system in partnership with the water operator, the regulator and the municipal authorities.

3.8 MAURITANIA: Establishment of local solid waste management system using PPP approach. A group named RECOMS (Regroupement des Collecteurs d’Ordures Ménagères de Sebkha) of small private operators was established, which entered into contract with the municipality. The grouping of small scale providers facilitated the development of the partnership by enhancing the operational capacity of the operators and enabling them to compete for a tender for the solid waste service.

A collection system based on direct cost recovery by the municipality has been established with small private companies providing the waste collection service. Households pay a collect fee of 400 MRO a month (about 1.5 $US) to the RECOMS (Regroupement des Collecteurs d’Ordures Ménagères de Sebkha) that has a solid waste collection contract with the municipality.

The small local solid waste operators benefited from sensitization workshops focusing on waste management conditions of health and security, particularly on hazardous waste (biological wastes).

RECOMS members were trained in business management, monitoring and organisational skills.

Municipality staff was trained in negotiation, contract monitoring, mediation and communication.
Communities were trained in management and monitoring, negotiation, mediation and communication methods. Community Based Organizations play a key role in overseeing the quality of services provided by the RECOMS.

The financial and institutional status of the local private sector has been strengthened by their contractual relationship with the municipality enabling them to employ more of the local community. RECOMS annual income is about 1,920,000 MRO (MRO: Mauritanian Ouguiya $1=MRO265) with costs around 1,019,260 MRO. The annual profit is therefore 900,740 MRO ($3,399).

These activities established a sustainable solid waste collection for 500 households in the suburb of Basra.

Larger companies have approached the municipality with interest to participate in an integrated waste management system as secondary hauliers.

Other Mauritanian municipalities have approached the project steering committee to request support in establishing similar systems.

3.9 MALI:


Agreements on environmental management between the State, NGO and Local business (SMEs).

Local elected representatives, private sector actors and local NGOs have developed capacities in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating environment related projects implemented under PPP arrangements that will benefit the urban poor.

3.10 NIGER:

Provision of local energy services in peri-urban areas of Niamey using PPP approach: This initiative has just started its implementation and aims to improve the living conditions of the poor population in peri-urban areas of Niamey (capital city of Niger) through the provision of sustainable and affordable solar energy services.

The project complements the national programme for poverty reduction supported by various partners and has secured contribution from various partners including the private sector who will provide the technology and equipment.

The project is intended to provide sustainable sources of energy to health services, schools, training institutions and will remove the existing burden
placed on women by providing them with more free time to dedicate to income generation activities and education.

The PPPUE contribution to the project represents 30% of the funding with the rest being provided by the Municipality of Niamey, the private sector and the national programme on poverty.

Partners involved in this pilot phase have expressed interest to replicate it in a broader scale and beyond Niger at the completion of the pilot and following successful evaluation. *(The PPP examples are by courtesy of the PPPUE Unit of the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa)*

4. OTHER IMPORTANT LEADERSHIP APPROACHES TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE:

4.1 Political commitment:

Today, most decentralizing African countries show a shared understanding of the governance and development values of decentralization at all levels of the governance system, although the depth of understanding varies with the exposure to civic education on decentralization. Governments, political parties, civil society and the private sectors have considered decentralization as a key milestone to consolidating the young democracies and governance, in general, and in particular, for promoting popular participation at district and community levels in decision making and development. The entrenchment of the provisions of decentralisation and local governments in national mega-policies, such as the Constitution, visions and strategies such as the Poverty Reduction strategies, confirm the existence of high degree of political, civil society and private sector commitment to decentralized governance. At the implementation strategy level, the focus on popular participation, creation of local governments, with strengthened autonomous resource base, improving strategic leadership capacity, and the expansion of people’s choice through participatory planning and involvement in decision-making, is an indication that such capacity development areas are critical inputs in strengthening leadership and political commitment. However, leadership for implementation is inadequate and wanting, why? Has the linear transition paradigm above outlived its usefulness?

4.2 Civil society empowerment:

Many governments in Africa have recognized that, a viable, strong and informed civil society is central to the process of consolidating democracy and achieving good governance objectives. Thus they have allowed for the unhindered establishment of civil society organizations based on common interest, independent of the state, through which people can organize themselves, relate to one another and act as interlocutors of people. A number of indigenous civil society organizations have been established and
began to work to influence public decisions that affect the interests of their members and people at large, particularly with regard to development priorities, human rights issues, elections, the delivery of services and accountability for the use of public resources. The state’s performance is expected to improve considerably if civil society is able to hold public office holders accountable and transparent in their actions.

In the formulation of national decentralization policies inclusive processes of consultations, and in some cases feedback, have been used to bring on board civil society. Efforts have been made to promote conducive governance environment by opening dialogue and process consultation with civil society, who have felt adequately involved and empowered to participate in and contribute to improved national dialogue on policy, and discourse with decision makers. What next? Need for demand action.

4.3 Enhancement of people's participation and choice:

Most decentralisation and local governance policies advocate full people’s participation and choice in the entire policy process as a way of achieving national commitment to decentralization and, ensuring that decisions on people’s affairs is properly anchored and sanctioned. Recognizing that the basis and substance of decentralization lies in the way people, the principal beneficiaries perceive, it is important to design the core elements of the policy that will stand the test of time and people.

So, the design of the Decentralization Policies tend to be strongly premised on achieving greater participation of individuals and communities in local policy and decision-making affecting their needs and priorities, hence the focus on capacity building of Local Government Staff and Councillors by deepening their training, focusing on participatory development and decision making and, civic education for communities in the districts. There are some cases, for example in Ethiopia, where civil society has taken the lead in providing training for local government personnel on various issues. They have for example, more access to information and knowledge of MDGs, PRSPs, project planning and monitoring skills. This has allowed for better and enhanced horizontal knowledge sharing and decision-making in the districts, providing, in the process, avenues for inter-district collaboration and sharing of experiences.

Through capacity building in participatory planning and development, people in villages and Wards in most districts are now able to plan, formulate and implement their own development and governance activities with the help of civil society as their immediate leaders in skills and social mobilisation. Villages produce their own development plans, which are synthesised and aggregated into district plans. Local governments are funded on the basis of their district plans. Tanzania, which has a policy and legal framework for local
governments up to the grassroots, is an example of a system of local governance and development management where role definition for all local governance partners has been clarified. However, the available legal instruments in a number of Africa countries do not recognize local plans and their implementation has not reached a stage to allow measurement of their effectiveness in promoting and sustaining effective local governance and development management.

**Policy analytic capacity:** A major policy change process, such as decentralization, in an environment of highly centralized institutional forms and mind-sets, requires strong, determined and broadened capacity, which cannot be found in local and central government alone, but to include civil society and private sector leadership. Public policy analytical capacity for policy formulation and implementation, including for monitoring and evaluation, has been very low at the time most African governments decided to decentralize. The available capacity was overstretched and could not be assumed to be able to deal effectively with sudden and unanticipated changes in the policy environment. Yet, the transition from centralised single party governance systems to multi-party systems of government had created the required enabling environment to undertake serious institutional and societal transformation strategies, decentralization and local governance being one of the major ones.

**Conflicting political pressures:** Decentralised Governance is a highly political process with high demands and expectations. There are therefore conflicting pressures, which in some cases have delayed the implementation of the policies.

5. **LESSIONS LEARNT:**

Africa decentralizing countries have gone through various stages of policy analysis, which provide a variety of lessons learned. One of the major lessons is that decentralization is no different from other public policies in stimulating resistance to change and evaluation. Any change of government at the center could threaten the whole policy process, especially if political groups used to maintaining support through patronage return to power and seek to reinstate local government positions as part of the currency of patronage.

The other lesson concerns the institutional and management arrangements put in place for the implementation of decentralization in a number of African countries. These are multi – sectoral and multi – institutional in nature so as to acknowledge the plurality of interests and the need for forums for continuous consensus building around the aims and objectives of decentralization. These institutional forms normally create conducive environment for open consultations on issues that affect the nation. They must be encouraged.
Finally, multiple processes are required to guarantee success in the policy formulation process. A combination of factors ranging from the political commitment to entrench of multi-party democracy, the adoption of new enabling laws that provide comprehensive Bill of Rights, and the establishment of local governments, create an enabling environment for the implementation of devolution in countries. Local governments, in partnership with other local bodies, like civil society and private sector, are seen as potential viable institutional forms for the cost effective provision of local public goods and services and, for the promotion of a democratic culture at the local level.

The following are some of the specific lessons on the role of civil society and private sector leadership in strengthening local governance:

- The capacity of the poor to participate in local governance and wider development action is enhanced, once the immediate needs of food, shelter and water are met.

- Local governance policy processes influences policy decisions and actions. The quality of any decision and actions of such decisions is heavily determined by the inputs that go into making such decisions. These inputs fall broadly into individual, institutional, financial, time and societal factors conducive to guaranteeing an orderly process of policy formulation. Like in a relay race, each stage of the local governance policy process is equally important in ensuring success in building leadership capacity for local governance.

- Just like central and local governments, the policy process benefits from management. The success of the policy process depends very much on how it is managed. Strategic leadership is required for championing particular processes of local governance as has been shown throughout this paper.

- Shared values and standards strengthen the process, mutual trust, resolve and commitment to local governance.

- Mobilizing communities must go hand in hand with capacity development and support for local governance. Stimulating good governance at the local level without a well-prepared local government can significantly weaken the latter, causing conflict and disharmony.

- Commitment by Government and stakeholders at all levels to decentralization is a prerequisite for success.
• Existence or development of an enabling legal framework for decentralization reinforces the local governance policy process. If the formulation of the enabling Act has been consultative with appropriate feedback mechanisms the final product will be acceptable to and supported by the government, opposition political parties, development partners, private sector and civil society. This augurs well for attaining the required broad-based commitment to and participation in mainstreaming local governance.

• Sustainable change requires continuous consensus building. To achieve and sustain the desired consensus regarding the aims and objectives of decentralization; the current wave of decentralization requires a continuous process of getting all stakeholders to a common understanding of the nature, scope and extent of the decentralization policies and the Local Government Acts. Even with clear stated aims and objectives, the pros and cons of decentralization vary considerably at individual, group, community, district, and national levels. Living in diversity and varied expectations and yet sharing a common vision, values and perceptions about the eventual outcome of the local governance policy process is absolutely necessary.

• Micro financing through a formal institution helps to ensure quality and sustainability such that at a critical time when part of the loan is withdrawn due to the Government’s breach of a wider loan agreement, civil society and private sector can continue to lend to the poor with their own resources.

• Nurturing of groups and associations is critical to strengthening representative Civil Society networks that cannot be easily ignored by governments. Associations own investment of human and financial resource in these processes is key.

• Capital formation through mobilisation of savings enhances a community organisation’s power to realize its full potential. Savings, however small, are a first step towards self-reliance.

• Managing competing interests requires strong institutional leadership. Related to consensus building is the issue of managing competing social, political and administrative aims of a national programmed process such as decentralization. Advocating or championing the cause of transparency and accountability, people’s participation and choice, and innovations in Local Governance is one thing. Achieving strong institutional leadership, ownership and commitment to such changes across the different societal strata can more often than not be a tall order. A number of lessons have been learnt with regard to institutional leadership. First, the policy process can help to
demonstrate that management considerations such as incremental policymaking and programming, flexibility in response and, phased implementation, while assessing the elements of absorptive capacity, strengthen the decentralization process. Second, government leadership is essential to provide guidance on the course of action for enhancing government-donor-civil society cooperation and collaboration in promoting and supporting the decentralization process. Such leadership would strengthen country-defined prioritization; minimize possibilities for donor-driven policy perspectives, which normally reinforce their bases, as expected, in policy prescriptions. Third, civil society passiveness in the whole process can also affect country driven activities through in action. The contrary can also happen.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP IN STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE.

This paper concludes with a Section on recommendations, both broad and specific, intended to generate a way forward on the role of civil society and private sector leadership in strengthening local governance. The recommendations will focus on the synergy that must be built and nurtured between central and local governments leadership on one hand and civil society and private sector leadership on the other to advance the cause of decentralized governance. Below is an outline of the recommendations:

- Central and local governments have the mandate for formal leadership and coordination of local governance policy processes and implementation and this augurs well for it is a prerequisite for proper direction and success. However, civil society and private sector leadership, though not formal, is pronounced during implementation of local governance policies, processes and accountability activities. The two sides of leadership need to work together and support each other to attain the aims, objectives and outcomes of local governance. Therefore, it is recommended that continuous tailored leadership capacity building consisting of change of mindset, transformational techniques and political and technical leadership be provided.

- For strong policy and strategic management of the decentralization process, it is recommended that priority attention be given always, at the design stage, to strengthening government institutional leadership.

- It is further recommended that emerging mutual trust between central and local governments on one hand and, civil society and private sector on the other hand be reinforced by formalized consultative and feedback mechanisms.
- It is recommended that the development of Local/District and National Associations to coordinate civil society and private sector projects and activities and to act as the synergy and mouthpiece with government on local governance and development management be formally encouraged as an aspect of building sustainable partnerships.

- It is recommended that building meaningful partnerships between all stakeholders, NGOs, CBOs, local and central government, the private sector and international development partners is essential for advancing PRSPs and MDGs.

- Public – Private – Civil Society Partnerships should be strengthened, particularly in urban centres as alternative of organizing service delivery, engaging the community in business and building their skills.

- In the rural areas, Governments are encouraged to allow, under specific tax rebate arrangements, rural based companies to plough back some of their profits, through the government established District Development Funds/Local Development Funds, for basic social services and rural infrastructure.

- Capacity building for local governments must go hand in hand with social mobilisation of communities on local governance and development to avoid knowledge gaps between the two sides.

- Given the above lessons, it is recommended that risk analysis should be undertaken, at design stage of leadership capacity development, so that various options to securing government and stakeholder commitment to local governance are assessed and selected options translate in the cost-effective provision of capacity development assistance.

- It is recommended that any decentralization process should pay attention to the establishment of a regulatory framework, possibly in a country’s Constitution, for effecting decentralized governance.

- It is recommended that major reform programmes, such as decentralization, should be designed with strong programme approach instruments to enhance policy dialogue and advocacy, synergy and resource mobilization, both through parallel funding and cost sharing. This would minimize discreet interventions clouding out strategic outputs and outcomes of projects and maximize project management.

- It is recommended that local governance leadership programmes be context driven and respond to the peculiarities of the countries undertaking them and applying relevant global approaches.
It is recommended that civil society should spearhead best practices of good/local governance, transparency and accountability using social artistry, tradition and values on local and central levels.

There is need to reach across all sectors of society using innovative ways to advance local governance, development agenda and to increase awareness of and advocacy for MDGs.

It is recommended that the traditionally voiceless segments of society, such as youths, children women ethnic minorities and the poorest of the poor, should be seen and enabled to be the primary targets and agents of change.

Lastly, a paradigm shift is needed that provide the enabling environment whereby local communities are empowered to lead the local governance and development management process and policy makers become humble and learn to listen to all and respect diversity and dialogue.