

# Strengthening Parliamentary Involvement in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process and the Millennium Development Goals



## Parliamentary-Civic Collaboration for Monitoring Poverty Reduction Initiatives



Parliaments and Poverty  
Series  
Toolkit No. 2

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**PARLIAMENTARY-CIVIC  
COLLABORATION FOR MONITORING  
POVERTY REDUCTION INITIATIVES**

*Strengthening Parliamentary Involvement in the Millennium Development  
Goals and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process*

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The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. They are on the ground in 166 countries, working with people on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and its wide range of partners. UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy provides technical leadership and policy guidance in priority areas of development, including democratic governance.

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The handbook emerged from pilot activities designed to strengthen the capacity of legislatures and civil society to participate in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process (PRSP), a process that is intended to be country-owned and participatory, including civic and legislative involvement in planning and monitoring phases. In practice however, legislative involvement in PRSP mechanisms varies widely from country to country. To strengthen legislative involvement, UNDP partnered with NDI in 2001 and 2002 to conduct capacity-building activities with members of parliament and PRSP commissions in Malawi, Niger and Nigeria. Based on the experience with these three PRSP pilot programs, and drawing on their experience in democratic development programming with legislatures around the world, NDI developed, in partnership with UNDP, a series of handbooks that are intended to provide resources for MPs, parliamentary staff, civic leaders, social networks and the international community on legislative involvement in poverty reduction. The series includes:

- *Legislative-Executive Communication on Poverty Reduction Strategies;*
- *Legislative Public Outreach on Poverty Issues; and*
- *Parliamentary-Civic Collaboration for Monitoring Poverty Reduction Initiatives.*

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## QUICK REFERENCE FOR ACRONYMS IN TEXT

<b>Budget Input</b>	Resources assigned to specific projects through the budget process; state expenditure for a specific program or purpose.
<b>Budget Output</b>	Results of state expenditures, including the delivery of goods or services, or other evidence that expended funds have secured demonstrable results.
<b>CAS</b>	<b>Country Assistance Strategy.</b> This document describes the World Bank's assistance strategy for a country, indicating the level and composition of assistance to be provided based on assessments and the country's portfolio performance. While key elements are discussed with the government, it is not a negotiated document.
<b>CSO</b>	<b>Civil Society Organization.</b>
<b>HIPC</b>	<b>Heavily Indebted Poor Country.</b> The HIPC Initiative is an agreement among official creditors designed to help the poorest, most heavily indebted countries escape from unsustainable debt.
<b>IDA</b>	<b>International Development Association.</b> IDA, in the World Bank Group, helps the world's poorest countries reduce poverty by providing "credits," which are loans at zero interest with a 10-year grace period and maturities of 35 to 40 years.
<b>IFIs</b>	<b>International Financial Institutions.</b> The term includes the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Inter-American Development Bank
<b>IMF</b>	<b>International Monetary Fund.</b>
<b>I-PRSP</b>	<b>Interim PRSP.</b> The interim report is submitted by countries to satisfy eligibility requirements while a full PRSP is still under development. Interim PRSPs must include an assessment of existing poverty reduction strategies and specify a road map for the production of a full PRSP in a timely fashion.
<b>MDGs</b>	<b>Millennium Development Goals.</b> The United Nations' agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives, as agreed on by UN member states at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. For each goal one or more targets have been set, most for 2015, using 1990 as a benchmark. The strategy includes guidance for incorporating the MDGs into national priorities, achieving targets and emphasizing good governance.
<b>MP</b>	<b>Member of Parliament.</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-Governmental Organization.</b>
<b>PRSP</b>	<b>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.</b> Originally introduced by the IFIs in September 1999, poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) are country-drafted, strategic economic documents intended to establish a multi-year framework for national poverty reduction. PRSPs provide the basis for assistance from the Bank and the Fund as well as debt relief under the HIPC Initiative. PRSPs are intended to be country-driven, comprehensive in scope, partnership-oriented and participatory. A country only needs to write a PRSP every three years, but changes can be made to the content of a PRSP through annual progress reports.

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## INTRODUCTION

# Global Initiatives for Poverty Reduction: the Context for Parliamentary-Civic Collaboration

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Poverty reduction is one of the greatest challenges for elected officials in many countries. Consequently, several global initiatives have been created to complement different aspects of national economic growth strategies. While a national project or policy may be formally considered to be part of one initiative, it is likely to have an impact on national progress across multiple objectives. Legislators hoping to contribute to national poverty reduction efforts by investigating and highlighting the results of various anti-poverty initiatives may, therefore, find it useful to first review how some of the global initiatives interrelate.

### THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), were developed by the UN member states at the turn of the millennium and serve as broad, mutually agreed upon development objectives. They seek to:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- Achieve universal primary education;
- Promote gender equality and empower women;
- Reduce child mortality;
- Improve maternal health;
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;

- Ensure environmental sustainability; and
- Develop a global partnership for development.

These goals shape the content and process of national and international development programs and projects by focusing global efforts on eight specific objectives, establishing a universal time line, and providing technical targets towards which national progress may be measured. (Find more details regarding the MDGs in Appendix I.)

### Roadmaps and Blueprints

If MDGs are the final destination in a global pursuit of economic and human development, then the international community and developing countries have together created a series of roadmaps in the hopes of attaining poverty reduction goals. Originally introduced by the international financial institutions (IFIs) in September 1999, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are country-owned, strategic economic documents intended to establish a multi-year framework for national poverty reduction. PRSPs serve as the basis for IFI debt relief and concessional lending in roughly 70 countries. Through the development of its own unique PRSP, each country identifies specific objectives and targets within its own economic, social, political and geographic context, and then puts forward a plan for pursuing those objectives.

The PRSP sets development priorities and creates a blueprint for allocating sufficient resources to effect concrete, measurable reductions of poverty. The PRSP is now also a required step for countries receiving assistance through the Heavily Indebted Poor Country initiative (HIPC), the International Development Association (IDA), or the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility of the IMF. (See Appendix II for more details on the PRSP cycle.)

Although the specifics of each PRSP will vary by country, PRSP processes involve four main phases, which often overlap:

- Poverty diagnosis;
- Poverty policy formulation;
- Poverty policy implementation; and
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Although there is a clear role for legislators at each stage of this process, this handbook focuses specifically on monitoring the implementation of

**PRSPs SET CLEAR NATIONAL TARGETS FOR ACHIEVING MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

While this handbook focuses on monitoring the implementation and impact of PRSP projects, tracking other poverty reduction initiatives or goals often relies on similar information or data. By design, the PRSP is required to elaborate criteria by which implementation may be monitored and evaluated: measurable outputs of goods and services to be provided at specified times and points of delivery; access to these goods and services by specified numbers and types of communities, households, and individuals; and measurable improvements in the lives of poor citizens and vulnerable groups. Because PRSPs typically describe specific targets and clear timeframes, monitoring the success of their implementation is often easier than tracking other national policies that may lack measurable targets. However, MPs may find that while PRSP implementation may be most useful for informing policy, it may be more effective to speak in terms of national progress toward the MDGs when speaking to the general public.

the PRSP: has the strategy been implemented as planned? If not, why not? Was it successful in achieving national priorities? What might improve the initiatives?

**PARLIAMENTARY MONITORING OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

When Members of Parliament (MPs) vote on and pass the national budget, they allocate or approve funds for individual ministries to use in pursuit of education, health, infrastructure and other goals. If legislators want to know whether poverty alleviation funds are being expended efficiently and effectively, monitoring progress toward MDG and PRSP targets is a tangible way of holding implementing bodies accountable for the programs they undertake. Whether tracking the MDGs, the PRSP or both simultaneously, parliaments may wish to monitor:

- **Actual spending on MDG or PRSP priorities**, by tracking resource allocation at the ministerial level to determine whether government is expending resources as promised; or
- **Results achieved by these expenditures**, which may include surveying community-level service providers regarding the receipt of materials purchased or distributed through national poverty reduction initiatives (health supplies, textbooks, etc.), or surveying specific segments of the population regarding receipt or quality of services available (vaccinations, primary school lessons, etc.).

**THE BENEFITS OF PARLIAMENTARY-CIVIC COORDINATION FOR MDG OR PRSP MONITORING**

Parliamentary-civic collaboration on monitoring can be extraordinarily useful for both parties. Parliaments can provide civil society organizations (CSOs) with access to channels of political communication and decision-making, even where political processes are not fully transparent. CSOs can provide parliaments with additional capacity to conduct monitoring—both

**REASONS WHY PRSP MONITORING MAY BE OF INTEREST TO PARLIAMENTS**

- The outcome of anti-poverty programs directly affects the lives of MPs' constituents—reducing poverty can be one of the most politically important issues in a country.
- As the branch of government responsible for exercising oversight over executive implementation of policies and government programs, parliaments need information regarding the outcomes of various anti-poverty initiatives.
- Parliament may already be involved in related budget and poverty reduction issues through such other planning mechanisms such as the country's MTEF, or through regional economic or issue forums (SADC, NEPAD, APEC, CIS, etc.) PRSP monitoring complements these engagements by providing hard data about implementation of poverty reduction programs.
- In countries where legislatures have limited access to statistics or information from the executive branch, it may be possible to leverage international donor concerns regarding the transparency and accountability of the PRSP process to support a more active role for parliament.

in terms of a network of members that may exist across the country, as well as expertise on specific sectoral issues. Individual MPs may also find that collaboration with CSOs can be an important way of responding to the needs of broad issue constituencies and building an individual political base.

**Leveraging International Attention**

Governments in PRSP countries often feel pressure to complete and implement their PRSP strategy in order to qualify for concessional lending or debt relief. There is also often heightened international attention focused on these country's poverty reduction programs. This creates a potential source of leverage for MPs and CSOs in their effort to play a greater role in the development of national public policy. Establishing a place for themselves in the development of their country's PRSP also helps

build legitimacy and public support for the parliament.

International attention may also protect monitors from obstacles typically encountered by civil society and parliaments seeking a greater role in the policy making process, including resistance by the executive branch. In extreme cases, an executive may refuse to recognize civil society or the constitutional authority of the parliament, or may support intimidation or other acts intended to discourage participation. However, the participatory aspects of the PRSP process itself requires a civil society engagement. In many cases, the international development community will have been working closely with pro-poor organizations in civil society for some time already. The credibility of monitors is enhanced by international recognition, enabling legislative and civic monitors to set a precedent for policy influence through the PRSP process.

**OPTIONS FOR PARLIAMENTARY-CIVIC COLLABORATION**

Legislators who have been central to early stages of formulating the PRSP are likely to have already had substantive interactions with civic organizations regarding poverty reduction policy. Parliament and civil society may have already agreed upon uses of resources that both regard as top priorities. If so, legislators and civic organizations are likely to have common interests in monitoring the particular uses of these resources, and a predisposition to collaborate.

If, however, parliament and civic organizations have not been constructively engaged, there may not be explicit consensus between them on priorities for poverty reduction. There are still a number of options. These include:

- Legislators and civic organizations identify common priority categories (such as health or water access) and conduct individual projects on parallel tracks. The two groups share



findings and recommendations and coordinate strategies for advocating or publicizing recommendations.

- Civil society organizations monitor sectors that have previously been labeled “priorities” by parliamentary actors or groups, and invite individual MPs to be part of their monitoring project. These MPs may lend status or expertise to the project, or serve as a channel to share information with relevant parliamentary committees (this is particularly

useful if civic-government relations have been tense or distrustful).

- Civic groups organize and monitor but coordinate with relevant parliamentary bodies (committees, caucuses, etc.) to publicize findings and influence PRSP activities.
- Legislators review government-sponsored monitoring projects through hearings or special investigations, and enlist civil society’s assistance with publicizing results.

## SECTION TWO

# Assessing the Potential for Collaboration and Identifying Partners

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Even where parliament has been excluded from most PRSP processes, members of parliament often have greater access to information about the budget and progress toward MDGS than do most CSOs. When complemented by a coordinated monitoring effort in collaboration with CSOs, this can provide a factual basis for MPs (or party groupings) to draw on in considering specific policies or legislation. Potential actors in monitoring national development efforts include:

- Individual MPs;
- Parliamentary committees (finance, budget, agriculture, health, education, etc.);
- Ad-hoc commissions established to address the PRSP and associated issues;
- Representatives from specific geographic regions;
- Legislative caucuses;
- CSOs;
- Issue advocates; and/or
- Coalitions or networks of service providers.

### **PARLIAMENTARY INVOLVEMENT**

Some MPs may wish to be personally involved in every aspect of a PRSP monitoring exercise. In most cases, however, time constraints will cause MPs to delegate a majority of the day-to-day activity or investigation to parliamentary staff or to CSO partners. In these situations, whether legis-

lators turn to committee, caucus, personal or general parliamentary staff for support in a monitoring initiative, MPs must trust and be willing to put their name behind staff efforts on their behalf. Over time, a single active MP may be able to mobilize and formalize the involvement of party, regional, or other groups within parliament to generate interest in the results of the monitoring exercise.

However, groups within parliament (committees, commissions, political party groups, informal networks or regional groups) are often better positioned to pursue monitoring exercises on behalf of the legislature than a few interested individual MPs. These groups are more likely than individual members to have access to the technical and human resources needed to support a viable monitoring initiative. Parliamentary committees or party groups are also more likely to be able to draw on the results of monitoring for committee reports, public hearings, pressure on leadership, interaction with the media, etc.

Committees are the most common mechanism for monitoring the budget process. In many countries the PRSP is broad enough that nearly all parliamentary committees have some relationship to poverty reduction. Accordingly, a variety of parliamentary committees could be involved in MDG or PRSP monitoring efforts: budget and finance, education, health, agriculture, labor, etc.

When contemplating parliamentary monitoring of poverty reduction initiatives, MPs should consider:

- Whether they want to undertake a MDG or PRSP monitoring exercise of their own or request updates from the government’s ongoing monitoring activities;
- The level of monitoring that resources permit;
- Whether they want to pursue collaboration with CSOs to maximize resources and impact;
- If partnering with CSOs makes sense, with which group should parliament collaborate, in light of logistical and political issues that could affect (or be affected by) such a partnership;
- Where there have been issues of mistrust between civil society and parliament, how this relationship can be improved; and
- Who among the parliamentary leadership needs to be included in (or apprised of) monitoring intentions or plans.

### Structuring Parliament’s Involvement

Parliaments around the world have differing levels of authority, financial resources, staff and technical support. Consequently, it is important to assess each parliamentary initiative individually to make the best use of a parliament’s strengths. Such an assessment will also help to identify where the legislature may benefit from external technical or financial support. For example:

- *How thoroughly do parliamentary committees review legislation before it is considered in plenary sessions? Do they ever propose their own legislation?* A monitoring plan should be organized so that it takes advantage of a role that the legislature is comfortable playing. If the parliament is typically not able to introduce its own legislation, then it may be helpful to consider how additional information or expertise from CSOs could assist with committee review of the executive’s proposed bills. If the legislature plays a greater role with

POSSIBLE COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS			
PARTNERS	ADVANTAGES	CHALLENGES	MAY BE MOST USEFUL WHEN...
One CSO; One MP	Increases CSO credibility, as well as legislative and media access	Less credibility for the project compared with broader initiatives	MPs who champion specific issues seek information or there is limited institutional support in the parliament
One CSO; Parliamentary Committee(s)	Ease of coordination with one CSO allows for structured multi-party involvement	Committee(s) may appear biased toward one CSO	A single issue-specific CSO has collected, or plans to collect, information relevant to a certain committee(s)
Multiple CSOs; One MP	CSOs’ resources have larger civic or geographic reach	Limited access to legislature; may be viewed as politically biased	MPs pursuing specific policy/ reform seek a variety of information or data to support legislation or oversight
Multiple CSOs; Parliamentary Committee(s)	Most legislative and civic or geographic reach, expertise, support and resources	Can be difficult to coordinate so many actors	Both parliament and civil society are well developed; CSOs are sufficiently specialized to provide relevant information and expertise to respective issue committees

respect to oversight rather than legislation, the monitoring plan can be tailored accordingly.

- *Generally speaking, what is the result of a committee hearing or official meeting convened for the purpose of considering legislation? (A committee report making recommendations to parliament in full? Suggested amendments to legislation?) Are there any examples of government modifying a policy in response to concerns raised by parliament? If committees feel that previous hearings have not had the impact or government response that they had hoped, collaboration with civil society may be structured to encourage greater media coverage or public attention to the issue at hand.*
- *When parliamentary committees hold hearings or official meetings, who is typically invited to testify or present remarks? Civic leaders, government officials, civil servants? Where the legislative-civic relationship has been tense, it may, for example, be easier to gradually introduce CSO leaders into public hearings than to have a full panel with civic leaders only.*
- *What has the relationship between parliament and civil society been to date? Is there already frequent interaction? If interaction has been limited, or relationships tense, coordinating a monitoring effort between parliamentary and civic actors will benefit from more detailed planning and some early trust-building activities.*
- *What is the relationship between the money committees (finance, budget, public accounts or appropriations) and the sectoral committees? In some systems, sectoral committees play an active role with respect to appropriations issues in their sectoral areas. If this is the case, sectoral committees may be a more logical target audience for the findings of sector-specific monitoring*

efforts. If not, it may make sense to have a greater role for the money committees in a monitoring activity.

- *Do parliamentary committees have full-time staff? Do party caucuses? Do members? If so, are they reachable by phone or e-mail? Do they have access to information technology? Technically and politically savvy staff can have a substantial effect on which group within parliament is best positioned to utilize or apply the information yielded by a monitoring effort.*
- *If an individual MP is involved in monitoring efforts, what specific resources or skills does s/he bring to the project? The legal, economic or business experience of an MP may be of particular use, depending on the sector to be monitored.*

Although these issues need to be considered, if collaboration between parliament and civic society groups is well managed and well structured, monitoring can make sense even with limited parliamentary resources. One of the purposes of this handbook is to provide information in structuring PRSP monitoring to be successful even in environments with very limited capacity.

#### **CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT**

In considering collaboration with civic organizations, it is important to assess the range of groups and choose partners whose aims, experience and resources are most appropriate. Effective cooperation is typically based on complementary interests, approaches or resources.

#### **Surveying Civic Groups**

A collaborative effort will require a survey of civic organizations' interests and capacities for monitoring. Some parliaments have found the following process helpful:

- Identify the universe of civic organizations that may have an interest in monitoring budget ex-

penditures or outputs. These may be issue-based organizations, service networks, membership-based CSOs, national clubs or commercial networks, etc.

- Organize a meeting of interested civil society groups. An initial meeting may include all interested organizations irrespective of their field of expertise, or individual meetings may be scheduled specific to each sector.
- Over the course of the meetings, determine levels of interest, commitment and capacity of each organization. Potentially interested organizations should discuss not only their collective reasons for wanting to monitor poverty reduction initiatives, but also how they will be able to contribute to such an effort. MPs should bear in mind that civic organizations have the right to determine their own interest and capacity for monitoring poverty reduction programs and may or may not conclude that they wish to participate.

Whatever approach is used for such initial planning meetings, it is important that the process be transparent and inclusive. To make communication as easy as possible over time, it may make sense to gather, at the meeting, a list of current contact information, including all available methods of communication (e.g., address, phone, e-mail, fax, cell phone, etc.). Where possible, an Internet listserv may make communication even easier.

### Selecting Viable Civic Partners

When considering which CSOs will make the most appropriate partner for monitoring efforts, a number of factors should be considered, most importantly:

*The original purpose of the organization.* A range of organizations may be interested in monitoring: professional networks of service providers (such as health workers or farmers unions), specific-issue advocacy groups or think tanks, and religious or

other social networks. Each of these bring very different skill sets.

- Does the CSO have political affiliations? Relationships between political parties and civic groups may range from formal endorsement, affiliation or support, to informal ideological similarity, shared membership or periodic issue-based collaboration. While there is space for politically affiliated CSOs to collaborate with elected officials on monitoring such projects, if a project is being portrayed as independent, it is important that organizers consider the partisanship of their CSO partners.
- Is the organization part of a network with other organizations with relevant fields of expertise (e.g., rural agriculture, education, or health care)? If so, does that network have a secretariat? Does it have funding available for communications? Research? Educational outreach? Advocacy?
- Organizers should remember that groups that are focused on field work may not be

#### REASONS WHY CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS MAY BE INTERESTED IN MONITORING

- PRSP monitoring presents an opportunity for civil society to enhance their impact on national policy.
- Better policies in an organization's area of interest can improve living conditions of their beneficiaries or constituents.
- In many cases, organizations that provide services in the field are uniquely positioned to collect data related to service access or delivery. The international donor community may be able to support expansion of an organization's mission and capacity for this purpose.
- Organizations providing services in the field are also well positioned to catalyze grassroots civic awareness and to increase dialogue with elected representatives who can contribute to PRSP monitoring.

familiar with the PRSP or its details. To the extent this is the case, it may be necessary to provide some form of briefing or background information to these groups.

*The structure of the organizations or civic groups involved.* The structure, infrastructure, and technical capacity of the organization will have a tremendous impact on the nature and volume of work it is best equipped to conduct.

- Does the organization have a central office in the capital city and smaller branches or clubs around the country? Are activities planned and coordinated by the central office, or do activities at the grassroots level merely receive support from headquarters?
- How large is the organization? How many members does it have? Where are they based? Are they concentrated in a single city or region, or dispersed across the country? Are the members interested in participating in a monitoring project?
- Does the organization have human and material resources to dedicate to monitoring? Is the organization already committed to a large activity? Have they managed nationwide projects before? Can staff members be reached by telephone or e-mail? Could the organization make at least one staff member available as a liaison?

*The organization's previous experience.* Groups which have undertaken nation-wide programs or surveys before (such as election monitoring organizations) are likely to be much more adept at coordinating large data-collection projects. Organizations familiar with poverty reduction issues or policies may have already established a recognized and respected participatory role in the legislative process or relationships with key members of parliament, ministry officials and civil servants. They may be also be positioned to

contribute to official discourse related to the formation of public policy.

- Has the organization ever conveyed its views on policy issues to parliament or the executive branch in a formal setting (e.g., parliamentary committee meeting or public forum at which government representatives are present)?
- Has anyone from the organization ever initiated informal conversations with members of parliament, government officials or civil servants about public policy under consideration?

In many cases, civil society organizations have relatively less experience with the legislative process and coordinating activities with other civic organizations. For these groups, more time will be needed to develop relationships with the people who will become their partners – in parliament, the executive branch and elsewhere.

#### **SECURING FUNDING FOR MONITORING EFFORTS**

Like any other project, monitoring efforts require funding. Even where parliamentarians are relying on staff whose salaries are already covered by the parliamentary budget—or NGOs are relying on volunteer monitors—minor costs (communication, transportation, office supplies and equipment, etc.), as well as unforeseen costs, can add up. Before beginning a monitoring project, groups should be sure they have enough resources to cover such basic costs. In many cases, funds may be available through World Bank trust funds, international development organizations or agencies (USAID, DFID, UNDP or other bi-laterals), or from foundations (the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, the National Endowment for Democracy, The Westminster Foundation, etc.). Embassy staff or international NGOs with offices in-country may be able to suggest appropriate places to seek modest funding to support monitoring the implementation and impact of anti-poverty initiatives. While a majority of donors may be the most familiar with the PRSP and Millennium Development Goals, international interest in monitoring development projects may extend to bilateral assistance projects as well.

## SECTION THREE

# Building Legislative-Civic Relationships

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Where interaction between elected officials and civic activists has been antagonistic, laying the groundwork for a collaborative relationship can be the first challenge. Mutual trust must be established. Initiating a dialogue can be as simple as arranging preliminary meetings between civil society representatives and individual interested members of parliament to discuss ideas and priorities.

These preliminary meetings are a time to gather information regarding possible areas of collaboration from each other.

- What policy priorities have parliamentary committees or caucuses established for the coming year?
- What issue expertise do interested civic groups bring to the table?
- Are parliamentary committees planning oversight activities specific to the PRSP or other poverty related policies and programs?
- Why do civic groups want to monitor pursuit of poverty goals? To verify implementation or determine impact?
- When would legislative bodies be most able to apply the conclusions of a monitoring project?
- Are the civic groups interested in monitoring already engaged in other large projects?

- Are there national poverty reduction programs that may be divisive due to political, geographic or ethnic diversity or which are about to be debated within the legislature?
- Do the civic groups interested in monitoring have affiliations with political parties or actors?

### **PRIORITIES AS THE BASIS FOR COLLABORATION**

Identifying common priorities may be one of the most effective ways of building a complementary legislative-civic partnership. In some cases, a natural disaster, specific political promise or extensive media coverage of a particular issue can make common concerns mutually obvious. In other cases, the new chair of a parliamentary committee may have established priority issues for the coming year, or civic groups may be interested in monitoring programs based on a very specific issue interest (HIV/AIDS, education, gender equality, etc.). Where neither group has a specific issue in mind, but is concerned that the country's poverty reduction resources are used as effectively as possible, both parliamentary and civic actors may decide to measure progress toward one of the Millennium Development Goals or choose to identify easily monitored priorities in the PRSP document itself.

In any case, it is critical to recognize that a national plan to "reduce poverty" is by necessity a multi-faceted program; an effective monitoring

plan selects from among those components a single priority issue—or a very limited number of specific issues on which to focus.

Once priorities and perspective have been discussed, the parties will also want to share information on the following:

- What information about implementation of national development projects is already available (through existing civic or government efforts)?
- How much information would need to be collected to pursue the objectives discussed by meeting participants?

- Is the needed information realistically available (are there clear points from which to gather the information)? Once gathered, would it be considered reliable information?

Awareness of other parties’ plans regarding PRSP monitoring—even before the details of those efforts have been established—allows both civil society and MPs to avoid duplicating each other’s work unnecessarily, and to begin identifying opportunities to complement each other’s efforts.

**PAIRING PARLIAMENTARY AND CIVIC MONITORING EFFORTS TO MAXIMIZE EFFECTIVENESS**

	PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES	CIVIC ACTIVITIES
WHERE CONSENSUS ON PRIORITIES ALREADY EXISTS	Sectoral committee oversight of: public funds allocated; oversight of selected priority sectors; trends in allocations or expenditures	Civic survey of the amount of designated priority resources received at points of service delivery ( <i>i.e.</i> , are the allocated resources being used to actually deliver services?)
	Parliamentary or committee inquiry into results of initiatives in specific sectors; investigation into quality or impact of specific programs	Civic-led survey of the quantitative or qualitative changes in lives of poor and vulnerable groups achieved by provision of goods and services
	Oversight of absolute allocations to top priorities and distribution of these resources to points of service delivery	Civic-led effort to track the number and types of communities, households, or individuals accessing goods and services
WHERE PRIORITIES ARE NOT IDENTICAL	Budget and Finance or Public Accounts Committee review of executive implementation of national budget	Sector-specific civic monitoring initiatives aggregated and compiled to contribute to broader committee investigations of overall budget expenditure
	Poverty Reduction or Human Development Committee investigation of national initiatives to address poverty priorities as outlined in the PRSP	Civic monitors synthesize and present findings concisely so that they may become part of the public record through hearings or committee reports
	Parliamentary review or investigation of the regional impact of decentralization legislation or centrally coordinated and funded programs	Civic-led efforts to track the results of specific government initiatives in various geographic locations can demonstrate the variety of needs and ways in which programs are or are not effectively tailored to local needs



## SECTION FOUR

# Creating and Maintaining Monitoring Strategies

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Even after monitoring priorities have been identified, selecting a specific initiative to monitor can be challenging. In addition to the breadth of sectors (*e.g.*, labor, agriculture, social services), implementation typically requires activity at many levels (national, regional and community). Legislators and civic organizations must therefore make clear choices about which of the myriad components to track. Without this discipline, findings are likely to be shallow or diffuse, and will have little impact.

A successful monitoring project hinges on the selection of a measurable data set that is relevant in answering a specific policy question and can be gathered effectively by trained individuals. For example, if legislative and civic leaders have

determined that universal primary education is a joint priority, each actor must still decide how best to monitor progress towards this goal. If the parliamentary actors in question are a caucus of MPs from a particular region, they may know that schools cannot accept more students without funding for more teachers. Should they look at the level of funds allocated to hiring new teachers or at the number of new teachers hired? Should they focus exclusively on their own region? A particular grade level or type of teacher? These are the kinds of questions that must be asked before a monitoring project can begin.

### **PARLIAMENTARY TRACKING OF POVERTY REDUCTION INPUTS**

Parliamentary committees or groups monitoring the PRSP often tend to focus on poverty reduction inputs (allocation or expenditure of resources in pursuit of poverty reduction). To track such inputs, a parliamentary committee would generally identify specific budget line item(s) to trace through expenditure channels. If, for example, it is determined that funds for building school facilities is an adequate proxy for increased primary education, the committee will want to identify the specific budget line items funding school facilities. For this example, will the data sought by the committee be found only in the Ministry of Education's budget? Might school facilities be built by an-

#### **MONITORING AT ALL LEVELS: NATIONAL AND LOCAL**

As has been noted elsewhere, legislative-civic collaboration on monitoring initiatives need not be nationwide in scope. Cooperation with a single, small advocacy or citizen group at a local or regional level may also reveal key information regarding the implementation of poverty reduction initiatives in a constituency or district. Because smaller-scale collaboration follows many of the same steps and faces many of the same challenges as national efforts, the following few sections have been written to address the issues which arise when facilitating national level coordination. With some adjustment for local specifics, much of this text may be useful for MPs involved in more local or municipal efforts.

other ministry (Rural Development) using funds allocated through community action projects? Is it necessary to track both budget line items? Defining the parameters of the committee's effort (which projects will be included, which line ministries or departments allocate resources to those projects, what aspects of a project besides sector and budget might be critical for disaggregating data, etc), may require coordination with other committees or ministries, but must be done early in the planning process to build an effective monitoring project.

While the budget committee may have the greatest opportunity to review and debate the content of the proposed budget, all MPs have a right to access and review the budget prior to the plenary vote on the proposed national budget. Parliamentary review of the budget before its passage is an excellent opportunity to measure the ministerial or agency budget allocations against MDG targets or national priorities established in the PRSP, a first step in monitoring the use of poverty reduction resources. Parliamentary committees can further exercise oversight of expenditure

MONITORING AND THE STAGES OF THE BUDGET PROCESS	
ONE: BUDGET FORMULATION	TWO: BUDGET ENACTMENT
<p>The drafting of an annual national budget rests solely with the executive branch, typically the Ministry of Finance or Economy, with input from other line ministries. While it is an executive prerogative, this document is not created from scratch; much of it is developed by making adjustments to the previous year's expenditure based on anticipated changes or new policies or targets.</p> <p><b>Results of monitoring efforts can be brought to bear by:</b> sharing the findings of a monitoring effort with ministries, with special emphasis on conclusions and consequent recommended changes to the previous year's budget allocation.</p>	<p>The budget as proposed by the executive is debated (sometimes amended) and approved by the legislative body. The degree of latitude that a parliament will have to alter the proposed budget varies. In some cases, the parliament as a whole can return the budget for revisions but make no amendments of their own; in others, amendment can be made as long as there is no overall negative fiscal impact.</p> <p><b>Results of monitoring efforts can be brought to bear by:</b> integrating findings and recommendations of a monitoring project into floor or committee debate.</p> <p><b>Monitoring projects may have origins in:</b> concerns raised during budget debates in plenary or committee.</p>
THREE: BUDGET EXECUTION	FOUR: BUDGET AUDITING AND ASSESSMENT
<p>The budget is implemented by various ministries, agencies and offices. While some discrepancy between budgeted and actual expenditure is inevitable (due to economic conditions, policy changes, price fluctuations, etc.) wide variations may mean that PRSP or MDG targets will not be met.</p> <p><b>Civic monitoring initiatives focus on this stage:</b> Because governments vary greatly in how they regulate or monitor spending, civic initiatives may help to evaluate whether money allocated to specific initiatives actually reaches its intended destination or has the intended effects.</p>	<p>In PRSP countries, the auditing and assessment phase of the budget cycle often means the executive will report, not only to the legislature but also to IFIs, regarding the results of the PRSP by submitting an Annual Progress Report to the IFIs.</p> <p><b>Parliamentary oversight:</b> may focus on areas where executive reporting has either highlighted discrepancies or left unanswered questions.</p> <p><b>Results of civic monitoring initiatives:</b> complement the government's own monitoring of poverty reduction inputs by ensuring that these inputs have been properly used and achieve the desired results.</p>

on poverty priorities by reviewing the budgets of the respective ministries and comparing internal ministerial allocations of budget line items to MDG targets or initiatives identified as top priority in the PRSP. Although this information is less readily available than the national budget, most parliaments have the authority to request such information from ministries or executive agencies, particularly auditing or accounting bodies.

#### **IDENTIFYING OR ENCOURAGING COMPLEMENTARY CIVIC INITIATIVES**

While committees often focus on tracking the allocation of budget inputs, successful complementary civic initiatives will generally select a very specific budget output to monitor (*i.e.*, they must identify a very specific anticipated result of spending allocated money as prescribed by policy). A civic organization may know it wishes to monitor primary school enrollment, but must still choose whether to look at enrollment in rural or urban schools. A monitoring project might be further refined to survey the proportions of children enrolled in rural schools between the ages of 6 and 12. If the civic group is less specific than that, it would be difficult to interpret the information they collect.

Whether or not parliamentary committees have undertaken complementary budget investigations, sectoral committees examining the impact of poverty reduction initiatives may find it useful to be briefed by civic groups undertaking the following types of monitoring projects:

- Where the PRSP has asserted that reducing infant mortality and death-in-childbirth in rural areas is a priority, and where the Ministry of Health's annual budget shows a 25 percent increase in funds for rural health workers, a CSO might monitor the number of midwives or neo- and post-natal health care workers in specific rural areas over the course of the year. This could further be linked to data on infant mortality to examine the relation-

ship between increased health care personnel and infant mortality.

- If a PRSP identifies transportation between urban centers and regions producing agricultural staples as an obstacle to improved food availability in urban areas, and IFIs provide funding to build a skeletal highway system, monitors could track the proportion of farms or farming collectives using those roads to sell food outside of their (defined) immediate area.
- Where a country's PRSP makes a commitment to de-stigmatize HIV-AIDS through a nationwide public education campaign, and the national budget commits funds to "AIDS awareness," monitoring groups may track the number of citizens seeking consultation, testing or treatment in urban health clinics.

#### **COORDINATION ON MONITORING DESIGN**

During the planning process, independent groups seeking to monitor poverty reduction initiatives will need to resolve a number of questions regarding their work. Where legislators and civic groups choose to collaborate or coordinate closely, they may wish to discuss these decisions in some detail, as mutual understanding of the technical decisions made in the early stages lends credibility in the long run. MPs who have been asked to support the findings of a civic monitoring effort may also wish to be briefed (or have their staff briefed) on these decisions.

#### **How Much Data Needs to be Collected?**

*Parliament:* After parliamentary committees monitoring poverty reduction inputs have clearly defined the inputs they wish to track, they should next consider what information must be collected. A thorough data set may include information about budget allocations at numerous levels within a given ministry. This may include detailed information from a ministry in how money in a budget line item has been further allocated and expended.

In addition to government budget documents, other sources of information may be helpful.

- Government audit agencies: Offices of the Auditor General and Inspectors General within a particular ministry;
- Documentation from the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) processes: The MTEF process makes budgetary information publicly available at several points in the planning process (for further information, see Appendix II); and
- Reports and assessments previously submitted to, or completed by, the international development community. UNDP country offices often have statistical information regarding national progress toward MDGs.

CSOs: For point-of-service monitors, in order for the data to be representative of what is actually

occurring across a country, groups must gather statistically robust information. A robust survey is reliable (has standardized collection or evaluation mechanisms), valid (measured in specific, defined and objective terms) and drawn from an appropriate sample.

Multiple factors influence the necessary data set, each of which may be corrected for in a variety of ways. CSOs with limited monitoring and statistical expertise may want to discuss options with a trained statistician (see box at right). (For greater detail regarding statistical principles and monitoring, see Appendix IV.)

#### Who Will Collect the Data? How? When?

*Parliament:* For parliamentary groups tracking budget allocations to priority poverty expenditures, parliamentary staff will likely be responsible for a portion of the research. Consequently,

#### PLANNING AND DECISIONS ABOUT KEY COORDINATION POINTS

By the end of the planning process, the monitoring plan should answer the following questions:

- ✓ What kind of information do monitoring groups expect the PRSP monitoring exercise to produce?
- ✓ How will that information be used?
- ✓ What questions do monitoring groups want to ask?
- ✓ Where will they get that information? To whom will they ask those questions?
- ✓ If data collection includes a review of government data, what is the availability of that data? Are there known reporting schedules, implementation timelines, etc.?
- ✓ How many people can contribute time to data collection, analysis, or other aspects of the exercise? Where are these people based and what expertise do they have?
- ✓ Can monitoring groups confirm that the data being sought will be available at the right time?
- ✓ If data collection involves sampling, what is the intended sample? What will be the sample size? What will be the geographic coverage? How do groups plan to sample? Will it be random? If not, why not?
- ✓ What plans exist for data entry and analysis?
- ✓ What plans exist for the preparation of their final report/findings?
- ✓ What is the schedule for data collections?
- ✓ When will findings be shared with parliament and other groups that are collaborating in the effort?
- ✓ When will monitoring groups produce their findings in a final format?
- ✓ Budget for the PRSP monitoring? Is there a plan to seek additional funding?

the design of the tracking effort must take into account the number of staff available to conduct research and the existing responsibilities of those staff members. If the parliament has a regular calendar, it may be wise to plan for staff to gather poverty expenditure information from the relevant ministries and external agencies during the recess periods, when other responsibilities are at a minimum. During the planning phase, one should also consider how best to train staff to ensure accurate information is collected.

*CSOs:* For civic groups monitoring poverty expenditure outputs, data can be collected through individual service provider or beneficiary interviews, group interviews or focus groups. When selecting a research method, planners should bear in mind that not only will civic monitors have limited time per individual interview or focus group, but also that monitors are asking interview participants to share their own time as well. Project coordinators must consider the training that will be necessary to ensure volunteer monitors are able to gather the information within identical parameters, and what steps must be taken to ensure that all volunteers can receive appropriate training. (For more information on relevant survey mechanisms see Appendix IV; for additional tips on recruiting and training volunteers, see Appendix V.)

#### **Who Will Enter and Aggregate the Data? When?**

In an effort to maintain a commonly agreed upon schedule, each group engaged in a collaborative monitoring effort must consider timetables for data gathering and entry as realistically as possible. Coordinators of the monitoring initiative will also want to consider the most appropriate means of training individuals in data entry and aggregation to ensure reliability of the data. Data will generally be entered and analyzed centrally using computer software. Individuals involved in this task should be proficient in basic software capabilities and have accurate data-entry skills.

#### **LOCATING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON STATISTICAL ISSUES**

Deciding how much (and where) data must be collected in order for the monitoring effort to capture what is actually occurring is a somewhat technical process and many first-time monitoring groups may require assistance. Potential technical partners or resources include:

- Domestic statisticians (they may be recruited from universities, election monitoring organizations, public opinion research firms, government agencies, economic consulting groups or organizations).
- In-country offices of international development organizations. These organizations have an interest in determining whether MDG or PRSP projects produce positive results, and may have extensive resources for monitoring impact.
- International NGOs (particularly those interested in democracy, transparency, sustainable development, and economic justice). Organizations like NDI and the International Budget Project [www.internationalbudget.org](http://www.internationalbudget.org) may have training materials and resource people available to work with groups interested in monitoring the impact of pro-poor budget allocations.

#### **Who Will Take the Lead in Analyzing the Data? When?**

If parliamentary and civic groups are closely coordinating monitoring efforts, this will require careful planning and communication. Where multiple people are asked to endorse or support a conclusion, communication is necessary to ensure that all parties are informed about the methods of analysis and have sufficient opportunities to participate in discussing the meaning of the data.

#### **Who Will Take the Lead in Compiling a Report? When?**

Although the content of the report will be discussed, debated and delineated by those analyzing the information and those leading the monitoring initiative, someone must also be responsible for generating the report. To reflect the findings and goals of the various organizations and

individuals involved in the project, the report will likely go through several rounds of revision and refinement. MPs delegating this task to individual staff should be prepared to stand by the work of the staff member. As a result, assignment of responsibility for drafting the report should be carefully considered.

### **FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION**

Once collaborating groups establish a plan for a monitoring project, they must also consider how best to present the project to their audience, which may include the ministries and the international development community. External communication has two major points: notifying relevant parties of the monitoring project and making effective use of the findings to advocate for specific pro-poor policies.

### **Introducing the Monitoring Exercise**

In many places, monitors will encounter skepticism from the individuals with whom they most need to interact. Ministerial or agency staff may question whether they are obligated to share what may seem to be “internal” information. Citizen interviewees may be concerned that they cannot offer opinions on the quality of government services without negative repercussions. In both cases, a plan to introduce the monitoring project—in terms that are both clear and relevant to the specific audience—may help to avoid such obstacles.

Strategic introductions can be particularly helpful when focused on the people who will be approached for data, their supervisors or other relevant government officials, politicians, etc. It also may be a good idea to alert senior officials at the ministry of finance and/or other ministries of the planned monitoring activity in advance, and on paper. In some cases, the minister of finance or a deputy may formally endorse the monitoring efforts in writing, which can then be used by monitors to introduce their efforts to bureaucrats or

### **TIMING AND OTHER MONITORING INITIATIVES**

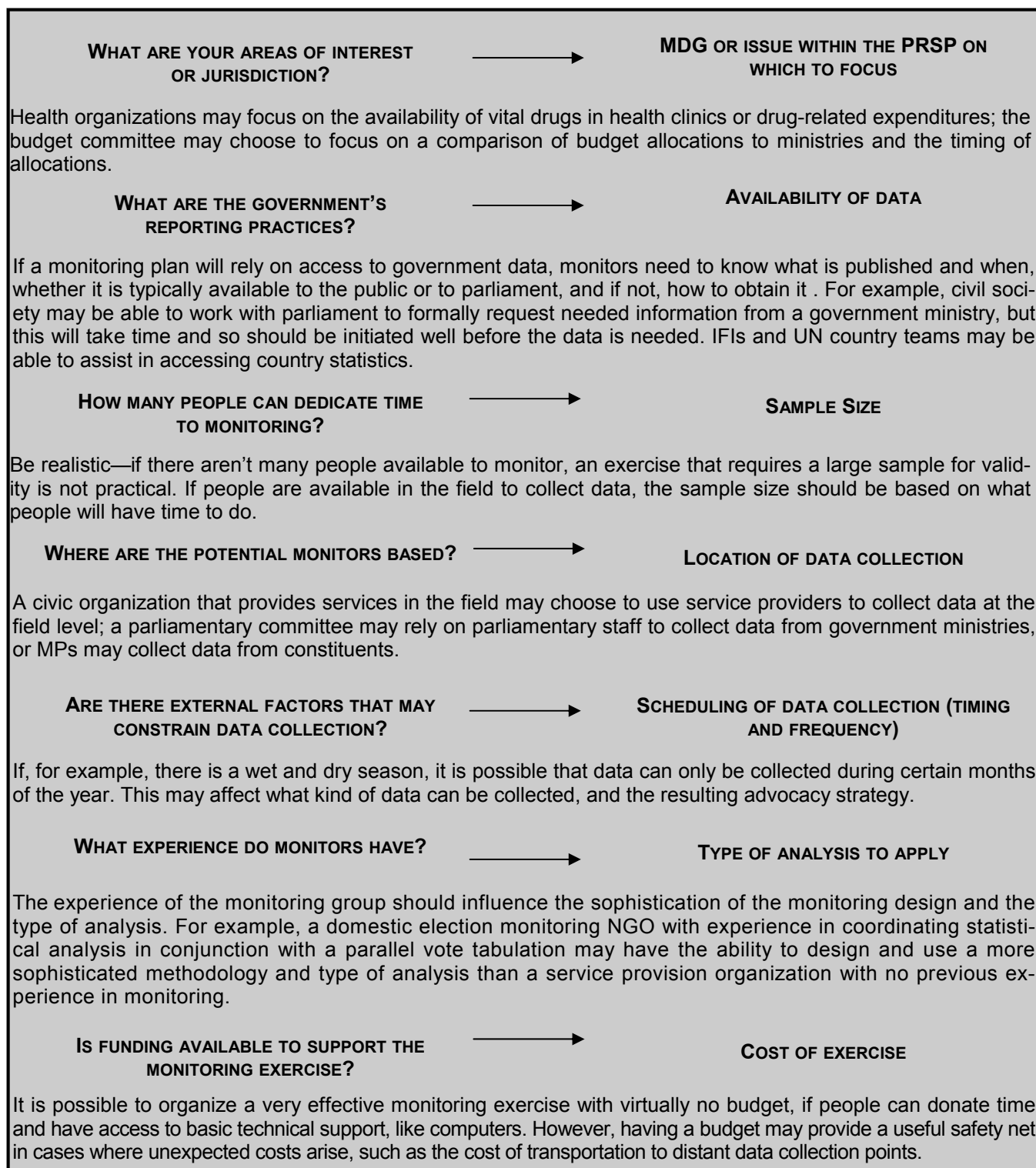
As part of PRSP implementation or pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals, most national governments have designed and are utilizing plans to monitor the impact of national initiatives. Many of these are coordinated by the government itself, with technical assistance from the international development community. Consequently, civic-parliamentary monitoring initiatives may be structured to complement already ongoing efforts, or may be leveraged as a means of double checking executive expenditure or policy impact. In either case, MPs and civic leaders should consider how their efforts will interact with other monitoring initiatives before they begin, and may wish to time the release of findings accordingly. Information on government or civic monitoring projects is often available from the World Bank, UNDP, and the national PRSP commission (typically comprising ministerial appointees).

citizens (see Appendix VII). At the very least, providing public officials such information in advance protects the groups conducting monitoring from any later claims that the government was unaware or had not been properly notified of the monitoring activities.

### **Planning an Effective Advocacy Strategy**

Typically, parliamentarians or civic activists take on monitoring projects because they are concerned about some specific aspect of poverty reduction or quality of life. For example, an MP from a very arid region may work with the agricultural committee to determine whether certain crop expansion programs are effective without complimentary irrigation programs; or teachers’ unions may monitor textbook distribution so that they can request a wider distribution zone or a different variety of books. Monitoring is often designed to provide information useful in policy formulation or in lobbying for specific policy reforms. This requires an advocacy strategy—a plan for publicizing the findings of the monitoring exercise and using them as a tool to influence policy according to the goals of the monitoring group.

**FIGURE I**  
**DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PLANNING A MONITORING EXERCISE**



An effective advocacy strategy is rooted in a monitoring group's early recognition of a number of factors and a conscious tailoring of activities to match them:

- **Target Audience.** To whom will the ultimate message be communicated? Potential audiences include: government, the media, the public (rural and/or urban populations), parliament, civic organizations not directly involved in monitoring, and the international development community or media.
- **Delivery Mechanism.** What are the best means of communicating a message to that audience? Potential delivery mechanisms include: final report/summary of findings, press releases, press conferences (individual or

joint with partners), radio announcements/interviews, public information flyers translated into regional languages and public or private meetings.

- **Scheduling.** How can media and other activities be scheduled to attract the most (favorable) attention to that message? Would using different methods of message delivery at different times attract repeat or continuing coverage? How can scheduling between civil society and MPs be coordinated? Will the release of the information be in time to affect changes in a PRSP made in the context of a country's Annual Progress Report?

These questions should be considered by all parties, together, before initiating monitoring efforts.



## SECTION FIVE

# Maintaining a Positive Relationship Through the Monitoring Process

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Whenever multiple groups are involved in a monitoring project, maintaining a constructive partnership throughout the course of the monitoring project requires active relationship management. The process of identifying joint priorities, areas of common interest or complementary capacities between legislative and civic groups should have helped to strengthen the partnership. However, at each stage in the monitoring process, there are additional considerations and activities that may help project coordinators to maintain a constructive dynamic among the partners.

### COORDINATING BEFORE IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT

**Selecting the monitors:** For both parliamentary and civic efforts, monitors should be selected with specific skills in mind. For parliamentary efforts, a monitoring team should work comfortably together, have a balanced skill set, be willing to engage civic actors where appropriate and have sufficient time to devote to the undertaking. If relying on civic volunteers to gather information around the country, bear in mind the other commitments (*e.g.*, work, family, crops) that these monitors may have.

**Establishing information standards:** Above all, monitors must be able to gather and record data using a uniform standard. For example, if monitors in Region A understand 15 percent to be “an

average amount” while monitors in Region B categorize it as “not enough,” the fact that two different groups conducted the research may cause findings to erroneously reflect a shortage in Region B. While training monitors to consistently apply a universal standard is important for the validity of any monitoring effort, it is especially critical where the success of a joint project depends on the ability of separate groups to compare data or information.

**Orienting and training monitors or staff:** In addition to applying uniform information standards, parliamentary-civic coordination can be improved by arranging a time for groups of monitors to meet before data collection begins to discuss shared objectives and activities. While it is not always necessary for parliamentary staff and civic monitors to interact with each other directly, respective project coordinators should ensure that all individuals gathering data understand how their work fits into the larger monitoring project.

**Distributing materials:** Even where some actors will not make use of monitoring materials, sharing basic items such as instruction sheets, survey forms or letters of introduction can help to build a shared understanding and trust between legislative and civic groups who have not previously collaborated.

**MANAGING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MONITORING GROUPS**

Where MPs are coordinating closely with civic groups, communication will likely flow more smoothly if both groups appoint a specific individual as the main point-of-contact. Ideally, this individual:

- Is easily reachable: does not travel frequently and can be reached quickly by phone;
- Is a skilled and diplomatic communicator;
- Is not the project's main coordinator: parliamentary chairs and NGOs' executive directors are typically already so busy that they cannot be made responsible for maintaining open lines of communication with an outside group; and
- Is informed about the entire project, and can easily keep track of changes in schedule or activity.

**COORDINATING DURING DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection is, in many ways, the first tangible aspect of monitoring for parliamentary or civic actors. However, it may also be a lengthy and time consuming phase in the monitoring project, during which maintaining the momentum of a partnership becomes more challenging. Individual monitors may interact less at this point as each group involved in the project pursues individual initiatives. Despite this, certain steps or actions can help to maintain the momentum needed for ongoing coordination.

**Appoint coordinators:** Remaining on schedule is a constant challenge for monitoring groups, but can be facilitated by appointing a coordinator for the data-collection. Legislators working closely with civic groups may ask them to appoint an individual based at the organization's headquarters who would be able to contact monitors working around the country with relative ease. Coordinators will need to communicate with monitors frequently before, during and after the scheduled data collection period to confirm activity, identify obstacles as they arise and ensure that collected information is delivered to an agreed-upon central location for data entry and analysis. This

coordinator may also serve as a point of contact for partner groups who wish to know how monitoring activities are proceeding.

**Plan to address obstacles immediately:** As with any complex activity involving multiple individuals and groups, monitoring projects are likely to encounter a variety of challenges or obstacles. Examples of these obstacles may include such things as an unanticipated workload for staff assigned to collect ministerial budget data; an extraordinary parliamentary session; turn-over in the CSO personnel working on the monitoring project or reticence on the part of individuals originally scheduled to be interviewed. Monitoring groups who have anticipated a need to make mid-point corrections—and have an already identified decision-making chain of command—are much more likely to resolve such problems and remain on schedule. While the solution to any situation will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis, advance planning makes adjustments easier. For example:

- Unavailability of staff members or individual volunteers assigned to collect a specific set of data. This may be anticipated by identifying alternate staff or volunteers to be included if necessary.
- Inaccessibility of information at certain locations or from specific individuals. This may be anticipated by identifying alternative locations to maintain sample size. It also makes sense to consider alternate means for accessing information (freedom of information laws, constitutional provisions, or international development program requirements might assist staff with securing needed data).
- Unexpected events, such as delays in ministerial record keeping, natural disasters and closure of service locations. This may be resolved by defining clear responsibilities and chains of command for responding to sudden developments.

### COORDINATING DURING DATA AGGREGATION AND CROSS-TABULATION

Once monitors have collected the necessary data, it must be entered into a single database or information tracking system and aggregated so that totals may be summed, comparisons made and conclusions drawn. Although this is a simple administrative effort, attention to certain details can strengthen partners' faith in each other's findings.

Before anyone can weigh the collected information for meaningful conclusions, it will need to be sorted, totaled and, in some cases, cross-tabulated. This can be done by time period, geographic region, gender, age, line item, or other category that may reveal conclusions about the allocation of poverty funds, implementation of anti-poverty initiatives or the impact of such programs.

For example, legislative groups tracking education spending may track allocations by recipient district (rural and urban classifications, geographic region, size of district population or territory), and by purpose of the allocation (staffing, infrastructure, materials). Civic groups monitoring education initiatives may tabulate findings by the same district and purpose division, but also by school size. Perhaps the data also asked individuals to assign a numeric ranking to the perceived quality of service (*i.e.*, from areas that report extreme dissatisfaction with programs or failure to receive promised resources). The data may also be tabulated on the basis of this quality ranking. If groups have undertaken the project because they believe resources have been allocated unfairly, they will also wish to aggregate by whichever factor they believe is skewing the allocation of resources (proximity to the capital, political affiliation, rural/urban divide, etc.). Decisions about which categories to select or cross-tabulate will depend in part on the purpose of the monitoring project. Where groups plan to work together to analyze the data, asking all groups to suggest ways of aggregating the data from the

### LOCATING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND STRENGTHENING CREDIBILITY

For the most part, aggregating data is simply a matter of electronic sorting, and can be done on a standard spreadsheet program. If groups are seeking technical assistance, many NGOs, economists and businesses conduct impact or market analysis and should have staff qualified to advise in this area. When it is time to evaluate the data, groups may consider engaging academic or professional colleagues for quality control. Inviting academic or other professional researchers to review the findings of the project is one way to ensure accuracy and build additional credibility.

outset is likely to ease the analysis process itself and reduce tension over the use of the results.

### LEVERAGING A COLLECTIVE GROUP FOR THOROUGH ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

In general any individual or group who will be expected to endorse the final product of a monitoring effort should be invited to participate in the actual data analysis. Obviously, a number of people who collected and aggregated the data will need to participate as well.

**Maintain an inclusive analysis process:** In many senses, data analysis can be conducive to group work. A group of people with a range of relevant expertise can provide a wealth of background information, current context and insight into what well-aggregated data may reveal. Even where interaction between MPs and civic groups has been limited or antagonistic, inclusion of both actors allows the analysis to benefit from both legislative and civic perspectives. This can make the final analysis more credible to government and international audiences. In cases where interpretation of statistical data is new to a group, larger conversations may also trigger observations that would be missed by individual analysts.

It may take several sessions for the groups to discuss the data thoroughly and refine their conclusions. A first meeting may involve general brain-

storming, the second a more methodical survey of the results and what they mean, and the third a final assessment, with time to discuss conclusions. If difficult personalities are to be involved, it may be useful to appoint a facilitator and establish ground rules prior to beginning the discussion.

**Ensure buy-in and coordinate report conclusions:** An inclusive analysis process helps ensure buy-in and support from all parties. Since the final report of the partners' findings will reflect these discussions, assigning a detailed notetaker is useful. After agreeing on the results of the monitoring effort, the participants should also discuss their "message." If they had to sum up their findings in two or three sentences, what would they say?

In addition to informing the final report, the notes from these discussions may be used to create an advocacy strategy. Finalizing a communications strategy as soon as groups know what they want to say with their data may maintain focus and momentum and keep partners from getting ahead of each other.

Even where parliamentary and civic monitoring groups have decided to conduct independent or less coordinated efforts, this stage in the monitoring effort provides an opportunity for interested MPs and civil society to check in with each other. They may wish to consider ways to avoid contradicting each other or to acknowledge each other's efforts and contributions. Coordinated reports are one way to send a clear signal that parliament and civil society see their constituencies as overlapping, are knowledgeable and supportive of the other's work and will stand together on this issue.

**Draft the report with partnership in mind:** For groups that have discussed and agreed upon conclusions, drafting the final report can be relatively simple. Notes from the data analysis meetings should provide a fairly detailed outline from which to work. An effective report will specify:

- The purpose of the monitoring project: what did the group seek to determine?
- The methodology used: how did the group collect, assemble and analyze the data? If there were information standards, what were they?
- Limitations: were there any recurring challenges that may have affected the data or conclusions (*i.e.*, no data was available for certain locations, months, etc.)?
- Conclusions: what did the group find?
- Recommendations: does the group believe that the information suggests certain actions or policy changes?

Perhaps most importantly, effective reports employ a neutral writing style. Using inflammatory language suggests bias and will compromise the overall credibility of effort. Where parliamentary and civic groups are coordinat-

#### MANAGING POLITICAL IMPACT THROUGH INCLUSION

Even the most diplomatically phrased report will include potentially controversial findings—some of which may be cause for political pressure on the government or a specific ministry. This is one reason for keeping the analysis phase transparent and inclusive. For example, if the data indicates that health clinics in the southern part of the country are receiving relatively fewer medical supplies than those in the north, the minister of health may be called upon to justify this allocation to the cabinet, legislature, or public. He or she is unlikely to be particularly pleased with this finding, no matter how accurate it may be or how diplomatically it is presented. If people who have previously committed to endorse the monitoring effort have doubt as to the credibility of the project, they may decide it is not in their interest to risk the integrity of their organization or their political reputation by associating themselves with it. The way to ensure the greatest support for the final product is to fully include as many people in as much of the process as possible. Even where some individuals choose not to participate, extending the invitation helps to foster partnership over the long-term.

ing closely, inflammatory or subjective language may also prevent certain portions of the partnership from supporting the conclusions publicly.

#### **PUBLICIZING FINDINGS WITH POLITICAL SAVVY**

Anticipating political response to publicly released conclusions can pose a particular challenge for legislative or civic monitoring groups. Although nothing can (or should) eliminate a disagreement or defensive response to the group's findings, several steps can be taken to mediate the intensity of these reactions and their public ramifications.

It is at this stage that a parliamentary-civic partnership may be most fruitful. With closer access to policymakers (through institutional or political party channels), MPs are better able to solicit official feedback before the report's release. Conversely, participation from nonpartisan CSOs may make the content of a potentially controversial report more palatable, as their efforts are less likely to have been initiated with partisan goals.

**Confirm support and permission to use names:** Once the report has been drafted, confirm the support of those who were directly or indirectly involved in the monitoring exercise, and obtain clear approval to use their name or the name or their organization as supporting the final conclusions. The use of a name ties the reputation and integrity of that name to the monitoring effort. This is a risk many parties are willing to take and their risk lends credibility to the report. However, failure to get clear and direct authorization to use names in the report can completely undermine the credibility of the monitoring effort.

Obtaining this permission can be accomplished by providing the final draft to the appropriate group or individual and asking them if they wish to be listed in support of the findings. Their approval should be with the understanding that

there may be further technical changes (last-minute typos, etc.), but with no alteration in the main findings. It should be clearly conveyed to any recipients of this request that the report should not be shared publicly at this time, particularly not with the press. Follow-up contacts (*e.g.*, calls, e-mails or personal visits) may be needed to obtain approval.

#### **Solicit government feedback before release:**

Before making the project's conclusions public, it may be wise to make a copy of the final draft available to those government officials who are responsible for the programs dealt with in the report. Sharing conclusions with the government prior to making them public serves two purposes. First, it is a professional courtesy to allow the officials responsible for programs being monitored to review the findings before they become publicly available. Second, it also provides a safeguard for those involved in the monitoring effort. By allowing government officials to check the accuracy of the final draft and respond in writing before distribution, parliamentary or civic groups can gauge the likely political response to the exercise. If government officials choose not to answer, they cannot claim that they were never given the option to respond. To avoid confusion

#### **A NOTE ABOUT TIMING**

Monitoring initiatives should consider the political calendar when creating a timeline for gathering, analyzing or publicizing monitoring data:

- **The Electoral Cycle:** Colleagues in parliament are not only likely to be extraordinarily busy immediately before an election, but may also be less inclined to take a stance on controversial issues such as national poverty reduction efforts. This may be particularly true for members of the ruling party.
- **The Budget Cycle:** Parliamentary committees are likely to be particularly interested in the impact of ministerial poverty reduction initiatives at the point in the budget cycle where ministries are defending their proposed funding levels.

over this point, monitors may wish to solicit government comment in writing. Sharing the final draft also shows good faith and a serious commitment to presenting an accurate and complete picture of the issues under consideration.

Ideally, government officials will review the draft document and will respond verbally or in writing. If they recommend technical changes that improve the accuracy of the report, the text can be revised accordingly. In situations where monitors have reservations about the substance of these recommendations, they could be included as an appendix, rather than integrated into the body of the report. If official response is limited to technical corrections, incorporating them should not significantly slow the report's dissemination. However, if significant modifications are made (*e.g.*, changing or striking a finding), all supporters would need to be notified to reconfirm their support for the final report.

**Manage and prevent media leaks:** Preventing the conclusions of the monitoring effort from becoming public prematurely can be difficult when the findings are being distributed for comment, but are not yet public. While nothing will prevent some information from circulating outside the intended group, certain actions can be taken to limit the probability of a severe media leak.

- When distributing the report for feedback, monitors should emphasize to supporters that anyone who shares it prematurely will lessen the impact of the document's formal release and may put into circulation an incomplete or incorrect draft.
- In some cases, it may be difficult to prevent governing officials from diluting criti-

cism contained in the report by preemptively leaking part of the information. In these situations, it may be wise to use channels that create an official public record to share their conclusions with relevant officials and request responses. Again, joint parliamentary-civic efforts may help avoid these situations; government may be more reluctant to leak information if it is likely to anger both parliament and civic groups.

**SHARING A FINAL DRAFT WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

- Schedule appointments with key officials and/or civil servants.
- Notify them of the purpose of the meeting in advance.
- Keep the list manageable, but share between two or more people the decision of who to contact to avoid overlooking any key officials.
- Provide selected officials or staff members a copy of the final draft (clearly marked as confidential).
- Explain the monitoring effort and request their consideration and reaction to the draft.
- If you are willing to include the government's response in the final report, explain this to the government and give them a reasonable deadline to submit their feedback.
- If the officials or staff are not available to meet (or meetings are not possible due to time or other resource constraints), deliver copies of the final draft with an introductory letter seeking consideration of the draft, etc.
- If responses have not been received by a few days before the deadline, officials may appreciate follow-up contacts to remind them of the approaching deadline.

## SECTION SIX

# Managing the End Game: Publicizing Findings to Good Effect

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No matter how successful the monitoring effort, if the report is not effectively released and disseminated publicly, it will be of very little practical use. A good advocacy strategy is essential, and being organized is the key to success.

Where parliamentary and civic actors have coordinated closely or secured endorsement from a

broad range of supporters, making the conclusions public should be done in such a way as to emphasize the collective faith in the findings and consequent recommendations. Development of a joint—or at the very least, coordinated—legislative and civic publicity strategy that uses both groups’ contacts can be an extremely effective method of helping ensure the findings lead to appropriate changes in policy.

### QUESTIONS FOR DEFINING AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY

The following questions are critical in defining a successful advocacy campaign:

- **What is the main message?** Can it be explained in three to five statements?
- **Who do groups conducting the monitoring hope to influence?** Government? The public? The international donor community?
- **How do monitors want the target audience to respond to the message?** What action do monitors want them to take? Asking for things government officials and civil servants are able to do, rather than things they can’t is often more productive.
- **When will the monitoring findings be most useful to the target audience?** When will be the best time to introduce it? Just before budget deliberations? In advance of an IFI deadline?
- **In what form/method should information be presented?** Administrative officials may want a detailed report; elected officials are likely to prefer a two-page executive summary or oral briefing.

### PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION AND USE OF MONITORING FINDINGS

Legislators have a number of options for publicizing the results of legislative monitoring efforts. As formal participants in the policymaking process, MPs can highlight the findings of a monitoring project in several ways:

- Committee hearings;
- Parliamentary questions (oral or written);
- Commissioned investigations;
- Floor debate; or
- Caucus meetings

Each of these activities allows a legislator to address the results of a monitoring effort in such a way that it becomes part of the official public record. Committee hearings, however, also allow parliamentarians to bring civic partners or experts directly into the debate.

**Making use of committee hearings:** Parliamentary committees with budget or sectoral jurisdiction will often hold hearings or meetings to review the government’s budget proposal before to a vote by the full house. Such hearings are an opportunity for parliamentary-civic collaboration. In a public hearing, civic representatives who have been engaged in monitoring efforts may be asked to give testimony to the committee on the basis of their findings and

conclusions. Parliamentarians and civic groups who have worked closely together or coordinated their efforts will be better positioned to discuss the groups’ findings in the most productive setting possible. Legislators will be able to draw on information collected through a monitoring effort at a politically opportune time, and civic groups will have a better sense of what specific information will be of most use to the committee.

PARTY TO BE REACHED (AND WHY)	WHEN MOST RECEPTIVE TO A MESSAGE	TAILORED FORMATS FOR MESSAGE
Government (Makes policy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In preparing a PRSP or the Annual Progress Report</li> <li>• During development of budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full report</li> <li>• Executive summary</li> <li>• Private meeting</li> </ul>
Parliament (Enacts policy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As parliamentary committees are considering budgets or relevant legislation</li> <li>• When there is oversight interest on an issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full report</li> <li>• Executive summary</li> <li>• Private meeting</li> </ul>
Media (Informs policy-makers and voters)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When there are events warranting media coverage of a related issue (such as a major conference in the capital city)</li> <li>• When there has been a recent scandal regarding a related issue</li> <li>• When the message is delivered by a personality who typically attracts a lot of media attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full report</li> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Press briefing</li> <li>• Taped footage</li> <li>• Live interview</li> </ul>
Public (Votes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During elections</li> <li>• When officials are scheduled to be in their district</li> <li>• When not distracted by other events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radio or television public service announcement</li> <li>• Public meetings</li> <li>• Pamphlets, public information materials</li> </ul>
Local NGOs (Inform policymakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anytime (preferably with enough advance notice to work the information into their own advocacy efforts)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full report</li> <li>• Executive summary</li> <li>• Calls from local monitors</li> </ul>
Donors (Fund development efforts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When developing country assistance strategies</li> <li>• Before making funding decisions</li> <li>• Before annual IFI missions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full report</li> <li>• Executive summary</li> <li>• Private meeting</li> </ul>
International NGOs (Implement development programs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When implementing or designing programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full report</li> <li>• Executive summary</li> <li>• Private meeting</li> </ul>



Sector- or issue-specific committees may also wish to use information from MDG or PRSP monitoring efforts to inform specific policies as well as overall budgetary allocations. In some cases, MPs may choose to invite representatives of civic groups conducting pertinent monitoring exercises to testify at these hearings as well.

**Formal communication with the PRSP- or MDG-coordination bodies:** MPs may also decide to consider ways of sharing monitoring information with official MDG- or PRSP- related groups:

- MDG issue taskforces or PRSP working groups;
- Previously organized public input forums or “stakeholder” workshops;
- The national PRSP commission; or
- Civic liaisons or public input coordinators in the offices of international development organizations.

### **WORKING WITH THE MEDIA**

Both parliamentary and civic actors will want to mobilize media coverage of the conclusions. Particularly where the findings suggest obvious policy changes or reforms, it is important to disseminate the results to build broad support for policy change. The media can play a large role in making sure the information is disseminated to a broad audience.

**Coordinated message:** Before parliamentary or civic representatives speak to the media about the

monitoring effort, it may be helpful to develop and distribute talking points to any individual who will be asked to comment on the report or its conclusions. Though the distribution list for such talking points will vary depending on the extent of the partnership, topics to cover include:

- Main findings;
- Responses to anticipated questions;
- Explanation of key terms/concepts; and
- Contact information of the monitoring body, and an individual who can provide additional information.

### **Joint or coordinated press announcements:**

Even when parliament and civil society have not closely coordinated their efforts previously, coordination at this point can help maximize media coverage. In some situations, it may make sense to schedule joint press briefings or public meetings. It can reinforce the importance of an issue if politicians and issue actors present the information together. Where a joint press conference would be inappropriate, politically unfeasible or logistically problematic, parliamentary and civic partners may want to establish a complementary schedule so as to maximize impact. For example, they may wish to time press statements to occur at intervals rather than concurrently to allow maximum press attendance. Where civic press releases are followed by parliamentary comment (or vice versa) within a brief period of time, issues that might ordinarily be ignored can receive additional public attention.

## CONCLUSION

# Setting Constructive Precedents for Parliamentary-Civic Collaboration

A positive legislative-civic partnership is only sustainable when both parties have mutually compatible goals and recognize individual benefits in specific collaborative activities. While MDGs and the PRSP offer an excellent mechanism for parliaments and civic organizations to build precedents for efficient collaboration on key national policies, such mechanisms are sustainable only when they are based on mutual respect for the role each institution plays. This requires all parties to recognize that constructive partnership does not require constant agreement: civic partners have individual goals and missions to fulfill, while MPs must balance the concerns of multiple constituents and limited resources. Particularly where legislative-civic relations have been weak, small gestures of respect from both sides during the planning stages of a monitoring initiative can establish the right tone for longer-term collaboration.

Because they provide explicit targets, the MDGs or national PRSP may be one of the most logical points of entry for legislative-civic collaboration in the fight against poverty. Few public figures can afford to be critical of parliamentary or civic efforts to reduce poverty. In cultivating long-term, sustainable state responses to poverty challenges, however, the most important outcome of a joint monitoring effort may be the precedents established in using in-country resources and expertise to confront poverty. Legislative-civic

collaboration on poverty reduction can be an important tool in increasing parliamentary capacity to integrate the expertise of the CSO sector into policy-making processes. Where legislative staff is limited, such collaboration may also improve the parliament's capacity to inform poverty policy debates.

An overly ambitious or poorly designed collaborative monitoring effort is not only unlikely to affect decisions made by public officials, but may actually discourage future engagement between parliament and civic organizations. However, a well-designed and coordinated effort can build solid working relationships between parliament and civic organizations. In the long-run, it is this partnership that strengthens national progress toward poverty reduction.

### FUTURE PARLIAMENTARY-CIVIC COOPERATION

MPs interested in exploring greater interaction with issue-specific civic groups with whom they are collaborating may wish to keep the following thoughts in mind throughout the monitoring initiative:

- How might I benefit from the knowledge of this civic body? Does their issue-expertise complement other initiatives in which I am involved?
- Would this organization be willing and able to provide my office, committee or caucus with policy analysis or suggestions in the future?
- What are the political costs/benefits of maintaining this relationship? Do we share constituencies?

## APPENDIX I

### THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE: MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TARGETS

Excerpted from: <http://www.undp.org/mdg/>

The Millennium Development Goals are an ambitious agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives that world leaders agreed on at the [Millennium Summit](#) in September 2000. For each goal one or more targets have been set, most for 2015, using 1990 as a benchmark:

#### 1. ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

More than a billion people live on less than US\$1 a day: sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and parts of Europe and Central Asia are falling short of the poverty target.

*Target: Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and suffering from hunger.*

#### 2. ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

As many as 113 million children do not attend school, but the target is within reach. India, for example, should have 95 percent of its children in school by 2005.

*Target: Ensure all boys and girls complete primary school.*

#### 3. PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Two-thirds of illiterates are women, and the rate of employment among women is two-thirds that of men. The proportion of seats in parliaments held by women is increasing, reaching about one-third in Argentina, Mozambique and South Africa.

*Targets: Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.*

#### 4. REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Every year nearly 11 million children die before their fifth birthday, mainly from preventable illnesses. That number is down from 15 million in 1980.

*Target: Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.*

#### 5. IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

In the developing world, the risk of dying in childbirth is one in 48, but virtually all countries now have safe motherhood programs.

*Target: Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.*

#### 6. COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

More than forty million people are living with HIV. Countries like Brazil, Senegal, Thailand and Uganda have shown that the spread of HIV can be stemmed.

*Target: Halt and begin reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and incidence of malaria and other major diseases.*

#### 7. ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

More than one billion people lack access to safe drinking water and more than two billion lack sanitation. During the 1990s, however, nearly one billion people gained access to safe water and the same number to sanitation.

*Targets: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources; by 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water; and by 2020 achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.*

#### 8. DEVELOP GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Many developing countries spend more on debt service than on social services.

*Targets: Develop further open trading and financial systems that include a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction—nationally and internationally; address the least developed countries' needs, and the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States; deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems; develop decent and productive work for youth; in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries; and in cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies—especially information and communications technologies.*

## APPENDIX II

### POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPERS (PRSP)

The PRSP process involves four main phases, which often overlap:

1. **Poverty diagnosis:** This includes a comprehensive evaluation of the roots and symptoms of poverty—Who are the poor? Where do they live? What factors are perpetuating current poverty levels?
2. **Poverty policy formulation:** Based on poverty diagnosis and a country's vision for its development, what are the national priorities for poverty reduction? What policies should be put in place?
3. **Poverty policy implementation:** This phase involves implementing the policies in the PRSP; for parliaments this often means the passage of necessary legislation and appropriate budgets.
4. **Monitoring and evaluation:** Has the PRSP worked? If parts have not worked, how can the PRSP be improved?

PRSPs set forth national policy by establishing concrete three-year strategies for addressing a limited number of poverty-related priorities. Once these priorities have been identified, the PRSP is intended to serve as a national roadmap for allocating resources to effect concrete, measurable reductions of poverty. In addition to being pro-poor, the PRSP was originally conceived around six core principles. PRSPs are intended to be:

- **Country-driven**, developed with broad participation by civil society and the private sector;
- **Results-oriented**, focused on outcomes that benefit the poor;
- **Comprehensive**, recognizing the multi-dimensional nature of poverty;
- **Prioritized** so that implementation is feasible, financially and institutionally;
- **Partnership-oriented**, coordinated with bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental development partners; and
- Based on a **long-term perspective**.

Alongside the PRSPs, a number of other strategic plans are generated by the World Bank, IMF, and various bilateral donor regarding their own assistance. Based on their analysis of each country's PRSP poverty diagnosis, growth targets and implementation capacity, both the Bank and the IMF develop their own country-specific assistance strategies or programs.

## APPENDIX III

### STATISTICAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS

**AGGREGATION:** refers to the process of sorting and totaling collected data according to any relevant categories that may reveal conclusions about expenditures, such as time-period, geographic region, gender, age and/or line item.

**CONFIDENCE LEVELS:** refers to how closely sample data can be compared to the population so that the sample distribution will reflect the population distribution. This has a bearing on the sample size since the larger the confidence level required, the larger the sample must be. Statisticians generally rely on a confidence level of 95 percent meaning that 95 percent of all sample means will correspond to the mean for the population.

**MARGIN OF ERROR:** measured in percentages, this refers to the likely range of values for an observation. For example, if a value from a single sample point is 48 percent, then with a margin of error of 5 percent one can expect the real value to fall between 43 percent and 53 percent. This value is important in statistical terms since it provides an understanding of how accurate the results are.

**QUALITATIVE DATA:** measures the value or quality of something, and is typically much more difficult to standardize. For example, qualitative research might examine whether urban residents have “constant, somewhat irregular, or erratic” access to basic utilities like running water or electricity. If a relatively small number of people are to be interviewed (say less than 100), qualitative data becomes relatively more valuable as a method for identifying problems, their causes and potential solutions.

**QUANTITATIVE DATA:** measures or estimates a specific number of things. For example, the percentage of the population living on less than a dollar per day represents a quantitative data set. Quantitative data is most valuable when it can be collected in large numbers.

**RANDOMNESS:** refers to the possibility of any single sample point being selected from the population is exactly the same as the possibility that any other sample point will be selected.

**RELEVANT POPULATION:** refers to that portion of the population that is of interest to the particular subject matter at hand. For example, when referring to information regarding voting, only those members of the population who are eligible to vote are to be considered.

## STATISTICAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS, CONTINUED

**REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE:** refers to a sample that reflects the relevant population as a whole. Monitors collect information from a portion of places in which the initiative is being conducted, or speak with a fraction of the population in those places. The size of the sample needed to represent reality will depend on: 1) the size and geographic dispersion of the initiative to be monitored (*e.g.*, is the initiative being piloted in one district, or nationwide?); 2) the anticipated discrepancies between locations (are there regions where demographic issues or geography may affect the initiative?); 3) the purpose of the monitoring (are the monitors trying to determine the impact of the allocation of resources, or whether resources have been dispersed uniformly?); 4) the time period over which the initiative will take place; and 5) the estimated percent of originally planned locations in which monitors may be unable to collect data (well-laid monitoring plans can be disrupted for a variety of reasons)

**ROBUSTNESS (OR CREDIBILITY):** refers to the reliability and validity of the data.

**RELIABILITY:** data is reliable when independent observers observing the same event and using the same measuring instrument evaluate the event in exactly the same way, and can therefore be independently verified. For example, if three people all measure the height of a fourth person with the same instrument (tape measure), the height measurement is considered reliable if all three measurements produce exactly the same result.

**VALIDITY:** refers to whether a particular indicator used is appropriate for the concept that is being measured. It must therefore correspond with both the scope and content of the object measured. For example, asking people to measure the size of a person will not yield valid results since size is a relative term interpreted differently by individuals. Instead, *height* rather than *size* should be measured.

**SAMPLE RELATIVE TO THE POPULATION:** refers to the heterogeneity or homogeneity of a population. Whether a population is heterogeneous or homogeneous will have an impact on the required sample size with respect to producing an accurate estimate of the subject being measured.

**HETEROGENEITY:** refers to the level of diversity of a population. The more heterogeneous a population is, the larger the sample must be to produce an accurate estimate of the subject being measured.

**HOMOGENEITY:** refers to the lack of diversity of a population. The more homogeneous a population is, the smaller the sample size can be to still produce an accurate estimate of the subject being measured.

**SURVEY INSTRUMENTS AND METHODS:** refers to the materials/questions used to conduct the survey as well as the manner in which the survey is conducted.

## APPENDIX IV

### SAMPLE MONITORING INITIATIVES AND DATA COLLECTION MECHANISMS

MONITORING TOPICS	POSSIBLE DATA TO BE COLLECTED	POSSIBLE METHOD OF COLLECTION
<p>To determine the impact of government-sponsored job training programs on income-generation in poverty stricken areas</p>	<p>Percentage of employment-age individuals in poverty stricken areas who have taken government-sponsored training programs and consequently found employment which increases household income</p>	<p>Survey of employment-age individuals in target areas to determine: employment status at time of training program; participation in training program; present employment status; relative change in household income</p>
<p>To determine whether funds allocated for a nationwide rural water project have been expended across all rural regions of the country</p>	<p>The monetary of new water infrastructure projects and improvements per region (wells, piping systems, filtration plants, etc.)</p>	<p>Objective data collection through site visits to locations in each region; information regarding cost/value of improvements</p>
<p>To determine whether health-care facilities are available to all demographic groups in a target location (<i>i.e.</i>, major urban center)</p>	<p>Perception of various demographic groups regarding access to citywide health clinics; samples of population using clinics during specified periods</p>	<p>Focus groups of varying demographics within the same city to elicit community sense of access to health centers; survey forms at health care centers</p>
<p>To determine whether the quality of maternal or pediatric health services provided in target locations are meeting the needs of the local population</p>	<p>Local opinion regarding services provided by local health care professionals and mid-wives</p>	<p>Individual interviews with local residents who have recently needed maternal or pediatric medical attention to determine where appropriate care was available</p>

## APPENDIX V

### RECRUITING AND TRAINING VOLUNTEERS

A large percentage of MDG, PRSP or budget monitors may be volunteers or individuals who receive minimal compensation who are specifically trained for the task at hand. These unpaid volunteers may be more beneficial than paid staff because they do not drain a project's budget and are often truly dedicated to the cause. However, using volunteers also brings some risks: volunteers require training and can harm a project's credibility if they fail to behave impartially and professionally. It is important to find volunteers whose reasons for volunteering are aligned with the monitoring organizations' goals, who work effectively as a team, and who complete responsibilities in a timely and accurate manner. Volunteer monitors require attention and preparation by permanent staff, who must convey the organization's expectations of its volunteers.

Before recruiting unpaid staff, it may be helpful to consider the following questions:

- How many people are necessary to monitor? How much time per week should they commit to the project? What will be the project's duration and will volunteers stay for the whole project?
- What level of expertise do volunteers require? How will such requirements be conveyed to the volunteers?
- Where will the organization find volunteers? Newspapers or other media? College campuses? Civic organizations? How will the organization convince people to volunteer?
- What will volunteers' duties include? What setting will they work in? What resources will they require to complete their assigned tasks? How will their results reach the project's central office?
- Who will coordinate volunteers? What resources/assistance/time will a coordinator require to accomplish this task? What communication channels are available to do this?
- What training is required? What information must be conveyed? (*i.e.*, introduction of the organization and its purpose; distribution of materials; review of procedures; discussion of techniques; timetable for monitoring?)
- Who will train volunteers? What type of materials will this require? Will a training manual be distributed to volunteers? In what sort of setting should training occur?
- How will the CSO ensure that volunteers uphold the integrity of the project? Will they sign a code of conduct? What are the consequences for a monitor's improper conduct (first notice, termination, etc)?
- How will the organization reward volunteers/make them feel involved? Will there be a group T-shirt, hat or badge that they can wear to show that they are working on a project with the organization?



## APPENDIX VI

### EXCERPTS FROM MALAWI CSO BUDGET MONITORING FINAL REPORT

Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE)

Budget Monitoring Exercise

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (EXCERPT)

Malawi's approval of a Poverty Reduction Strategy in April 2002 also saw the government adopt a somewhat new approach towards the budget involving the identification of Priority Poverty Expenditures (PPEs), to be protected in times of financial stress. Various civil society organisations and coalitions have welcomed this move and are keen to observe the implementation of this approach and monitor the results and impacts these have on the country. Within primary education the PPEs are identified as teaching and learning materials, teacher's salaries, teacher training and teacher housing...

In an effort to track how much of the allocated money actually makes it to frontline service delivery institutions, the CSCQBE have carried out a survey of primary schools. This looked at enrollment rates, numbers of teachers in school, the amount of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials received by the school and the frequency of visits by the primary educational adviser (PEA)...

In particular the study makes the following recommendations:

- Efforts need to be made to address the issues of retention and progression of students—especially amongst girls and in rural areas.
- Concerted action to remove discrepancies in allocations between urban and rural areas needs to be undertaken, particularly in the following areas: progression rates, pupil-teacher ratio, the number of qualified teachers, the delivery of teaching and learning materials.
- The status of women teachers needs to be improved, both in terms of providing better promotion opportunities and in offering better incentives to work in rural areas.
- Teaching and learning materials need to be delivered in a timely manner to ensure that the most is gained from them.
- Teacher training and recruitment targets need to be met.

#### METHODOLOGY (EXCERPT)

The findings contained in this report are based on a nationwide survey carried out at school level. A simple questionnaire was used to collect information on a variety of issues... The results emerging from the analysis of the questionnaire have been supplemented by secondary sources of data collected on enrollment in teacher training colleges and budget information. The areas for investigation were selected based on the identified PPEs contained in the MPRSP [Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper] and the Government's *Draft Estimate of Expenditure on Recurrent and Capital Accounts for the Financial Year 2002/3...*

The confidential questionnaires were administered on a voluntary basis by a number of CSOs, under the supervision of the CSCQBE... [A] deadline was set to ensure the analysis of the questionnaires could be completed in time to present the results as part of a pre-budget advocacy campaign...

**SAMPLE**

The initial sampling for the exercise was done with the assistance of the National Statistical Office (NSO). In this, 411 schools were randomly selected. The sampling framework covered all education divisions and administrative districts of the country, allowing comparison between the various divisions and comparison on an urban-rural basis.

**FINDINGS (EXCERPT)**
**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF PUPILS PER SCHOOL BY EDUCATION DIVISION**

Source: Survey Results from 264 Schools

	Std 1	Std 2	Std 3	Std 4	Std 5	Std 6	Std 7	Std 8	Average per School
<b>Rural</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>745</b>
Northern	89	68	69	59	50	43	38	41	457
Central Eastern	143	140	94	70	56	43	32	28	605
Central Western	251	187	166	123	109	82	69	54	1038
South Eastern	272	195	171	127	106	76	59	46	1051
Shire Highlands	231	135	137	109	72	56	41	39	821
South Western	171	114	122	77	75	53	39	32	682
<b>Urban</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>2,023</b>
Blantyre	385	360	420	334	350	257	216	153	2,474
Lilongwe	418	326	361	279	265	189	168	125	2,130
Mzuzu	244	197	222	189	173	162	145	139	1,470
Zomba	300	251	232	210	180	176	151	129	1,629
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1,127</b>

It is apparent that there is a steady decline in the numbers of children enrolled in school from one standard to the next...Most notable is the difference between school sizes in urban and rural areas (2,023 against 745).

**TABLE 2: TEXTBOOKS & TEACHERS MATERIALS COMING FROM GOVERNMENT: JUL- DEC 2002 (%)**

Source: Survey Results from 145 Schools

	Maths	Chichewa	English	Gen/Social St.	Other Subjects
Rural	15.5	15.2	17.9	12.6	4.2
Urban	20.7	15.3	13.0	12.5	5.0
Total	17.5	15.2	15.9	12.6	4.6

Interestingly, government has only provided 13.5 percent of all textbooks received in the various schools in the first half of this financial year. This is almost exactly the same proportion as during the whole of Financial Year 2001-2 when it was 13.8 percent... This may suggest an over-reliance on donor funds for the provision of textbooks, a point of major concern for the coalition, particularly as the donor funded project is scheduled to come to an end this year.

## APPENDIX VII

### SAMPLE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR MONITORS

Letter from the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation of Malawi to the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) to facilitate its subsequent monitoring work. Such strategic introductions, in this case, a government official formally endorsing monitoring efforts in writing, can be useful in obtaining data from ministry or agency staff who might otherwise be reluctant to cooperate with the CSO.

Telephone (Office): 789 033  
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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION  
P.O BOX 30134 CAPITAL CITY  
LILONGWE 3



23rd May, 2003

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) is involved in monitoring pro-poor expenditures (PPEs) within the framework of the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP). Their activities involve following up on progress of pro-poor programme implementation, gathering of relevant data and information, analysis and feedback to policy makers.

Considering the existing capacity constraints in monitoring and evaluation of programmes in the public sector, involvement of CISANET in following up of pro-poor programmes is a welcome development.

The purpose of this letter is to request all concerned officers implementing pro-poor projects and programmes to provide support and assistance to CISANET for them to undertake the exercise effectively.

Looking forward to your support.

**C. Mataya, Ph.D**  
**Controller of Agricultural Planning Services**

## APPENDIX VIII

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### ORGANIZATIONS WITH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- African Development Bank <http://www.afdb.org/knowledge/publications.htm>
- Asian Development Bank <http://www.adb.org/Publications/default.asp>
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/poverty>
- Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP) <http://www.crop.org/>
- Department for International Development (DFID) <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/>
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) <http://www.fao.org/>
- HakiKazi Catalyst <http://www.hakikazi.org/>
- Institute of Development Studies Civil Society and Governance Programme: Policy Briefs  
<http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/civsoc/PolicyBriefs/policysums.html#pol1>
- Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) <http://www.iadb.org/>
- International Budget Project <http://www.internationalbudget.org/>
- International Monetary Fund <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/prgf.htm>
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) <http://www.unaids.org/en/default.asp>
- Medium Term Expenditure Framework <http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/pe/mtef.htm>
- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs <http://www.ndi.org> and  
<http://www.accessdemocracy.org>
- Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) <http://www.oecd.org>
- Overseas Development Institute Poverty and Public Policy Group <http://www.odi.org.uk/pppg/index.html>
- Parliamentary Centre <http://www.parlcent.ca/povertyreduction/index.html>
- Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty <http://www.ifad.org/popularcoalition/>
- United Nations Children's Fund <http://www.unicef.org/>
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
<http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Startpage.asp?intItemID=2068>
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) <http://www.unifem.org/>
- United Nations Development Group Devlink <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm>

United Nations Development Programme Human Development Reports (global, regional, and national) <http://hdr.undp.org/default.cfm>

United Nations Development Programme Millennium Development Goals <http://www.undp.org/mdg/>.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) <http://www.unep.org/>

World Bank Development Forum: Poverty Profiles and Policymaking “PAC Talk” Discussion Board [http://www.worldbank.org/devforum/forum\\_pac.html](http://www.worldbank.org/devforum/forum_pac.html)

The World Bank Group <http://www.worldbank.org/>

The World Bank Group Millennium Development Goals <http://www.developmentgoals.org/>

World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/>

World Trade Organization <http://www.wto.org/>

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