Promoting Good Governance and Effective Monitoring Mechanisms for Development

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Thank you madam Chair

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers for giving me this chance to attend this important gathering

In most of the LDCs [poorer countries] the planning and policy making as well as implementation systems are highly centralized and top-down. This approach significantly curtails genuine involvement of citizens and civic groups and also affects ownership and sustainability of development programs. Whilst the top-down approach cannot be dismissed altogether, it cannot solely lever substantial dent in the making of pro-poor services because by overly emphasizing the supply-side indicators, it tends to overlook the link between service providers and receivers (citizens). Consequently, there has been increased interest and initiatives over the recent years especially by the Civil Society groups in the use of innovative mechanisms to ensure accountability and improve governance systems. These mechanisms are in fact used by generating empirical information and the process provides opportunity for citizens to participate in providing feedbacks in making services work for the poor and their voices be heard in the decision making process.

 This process also helped for Social Accountability to slowly grow, which is about participation of different stakeholders in accountability systems. Social Accountability mainly is important for two major reasons among other things: on the one hand to hold service providing agencies accountable to citizens by providing accessible, affordable and quality services, and on the other end to empower citizens and ultimately to enable them demand about their rights. Thus, it contributes to improved governance and increased development effectiveness through better service delivery and empowerment.

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Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a critical role in building and introducing different Social Accountability mechanisms to realize these important objectives. <u>A major pillar of Social Accountability is participation which is the process through which stakeholders' influence and share control over priority setting, policy making, resource allocations, and creating access to public services provisioning</u>.

Participation particularly in development, poverty reduction and governance processes is very important to ensure the long-term sustainability of development of different programs in LDCs as this builds further ownership, enhance transparency and accountability. Doing this also further enhances effectiveness of development programs and polices which ultimately help in making basic services work for the poorer and marginalized people in these LDCs.

There are a number of Social Accountability mechanisms that citizens, community groups, and CSOs can use to hold service providers and government officials accountable. <u>These mechanisms mainly include, Citizens Report Card, Community Score Cards, Citizen Participation in public policy making, participatory planning and budgeting, public budget tracking citizen monitoring of public service delivery, lobbying, campaigning and advocacy, etc</u>. This means in short by using different accountability mechanisms that involves participation of citizens in the process of managing public resources we can empower citizens and ensure good governance in LDCs which are corner stones for poverty reduction and enhancing sustainable development.

In general, <u>Social Accountability means gathering, analyzing and disseminating information, mobilizing public support and advocating and negotiating for change</u>.

To sum up, Social Accountability mechanisms are mainly applied in:

a) Identifying areas of improvements and/mobilizing entry points;
b) Gathering information through different techniques (to engage with evidences and demand for changes);
c) Holding different debates/dialogues and disseminating results;
d) Building alliances and supports through lobbying and campaigns to have common voices;
e) Negotiating for changes through interface meetings and forums (b/n service providers and receivers); and

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f) **Monitoring on the sustainability of change/s.**

For these to be realized we need an enabling environment for the CS to genuinely engage in the process of development and poverty reduction and exercise these mechanisms;

There should be financial support for building capacity, genuine consideration of the CS partnership as well as using the results of SA for making effective changes and monitoring the changes.

Finally, I would like to call upon the UN and the int'l community as well as the upcoming Istanbul meeting in May to put SA as one of the important agenda items and adopt it as an effective mechanism for improved governance and pro-poor service delivery mechanism as well as, as an instrument for monitoring mutual accountability from different directions (including for delivering various commitments made by rich countries at different times since long ago).

Thank you very much for your attention!

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