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In Pursuit of Poverty Reduction: What Have Parliaments Got to Do with It?

Hilde Selbervik
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Executive Summary

Launched only 6 years ago, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) has become a key reference document to a majority of developing countries. Africa was the forerunner with respect to PRSP, partly together with Latin America. Asia on the other hand has largely been a slow mover. In June 2004, 21 African countries had finalised and approved a PRSP, while the number of Asian countries was 10. More than 70 developing countries have embarked on a PRSP process. In spite of limited substantiation of success, the PRSP approach has continued to evolve.

PRSP was initiated in the wake of disappointing results from structural adjustment. Nearly 20 years of economic reforms had not brought poor countries out of poverty. A new toolbox was needed and the PRSP was launched as *the* solution. Key concepts of the new approach were ownership and participation. Increased local ownership and broad-based participation should presumably correct failures from the adjustment 'era'. The PRSP not only constitutes a point of departure for developing countries' dialogue with their developing partners, but also claims to be a national steering document for poverty reduction. It is therefore a document of potentially great impact. When the PRSP was designed, three key groups formed the inner circle: donors, civil society and domestic governments. But what about the highest elected public institutions, namely parliaments – why did they not form part of the inner circle?

This report explores why parliaments have come to be marginalised in the PRSP processes. Despite variations across continents and among countries embarking on a PRSP process, there is one common denominator: weak parliamentary involvement. However, more recently the neglect of parliaments has been recognized, but why was the request for parliamentary involvement all of a sudden brought to the fore? Existing sources indicate that parliamentary involvement is increasing somewhat but has remained extremely limited, despite the World Bank's and the donor community's recognition of the important role of parliaments in the PRSP process. If it is correct that the role of parliament is still marginal, how can this be explained? In order to answer that question in more detail, we undertake a case study of Tanzania. Tanzania is in the process of implementing its second PRSP. In that regard Tanzania is frequently presented as a PRSP success story. Are there any indications of enhanced participation by parliament and individual MPs in the second PRSP process? Delving deeper into one single case sheds further light on the mechanisms at work in the PRSP process.

The first part of this report examines whether parliaments should be involved at all in PRSPs. The next part of the report gives part of the PRSP narrative, which is important to understanding the inherent dynamics of PRSP. The last main part of this report is the case study of Tanzania that assesses the first PRSP but more importantly investigates whether parliament became more involved in the second round.

This report argues that there are strong arguments for giving parliaments a say in the pursuit of poverty reduction, although there is no blueprint for how countries are to revise their PRSPs. Parliaments were more or less totally neglected in the design of PRSP, which can be linked to a number of events. In addition, the key actors and initiators of PRSP were not really keen to have them involved. This resulted in a number of PRSP processes where ownership became rather esoteric, the opposite of stated goals on broad-based participation.

A main argument of this report is that parliamentary neglect is linked to the dominance of the executive in policy processes. Another key argument is that the disregard of parliament is strongly related to characteristics inherent in the very PRSP process itself. Five common denominators can be discerned: 1) Ownership beyond central ministries or some narrow government-technocratic circles appears rather low; 2) Despite improvements in course of the last 2-3 years, MPs and political parties are generally disengaged from the PRSP process; 3) Participation and consultation are still mainly dominated by civil society; 4) The PRSP processes

have to a large extent been driven by external actors; 5) Generally the incentives to complete a PRSP seem high, but the incentives to put it into practice are not correspondingly strong.

The initial PRSP approach may have weakened fragile channels of vertical accountability between the citizens and their representatives in parliament, as well as horizontal accountability channels between parliament and the executive. As several studies show at least in Africa, informal accountability channels based on patronage and clientelism may be more important than the formal ones. The informal structures may have remained more or less untouched and may even have been strengthened under the PRSP partnership regime.

Even if parliament later becomes involved one has not managed to escape the inherent mechanisms at work in PRSP. As is illustrated in the Tanzanian case, even after parliament was included to a greater extent in the PRSP process the inclusion did not seem to have any profound effect on the dynamics and main channels of accountability of domestic politics, which does not give parliament as an institution or individual parliamentarians strong enough incentives to get seriously involved. We believe that the findings from Tanzania may be relevant to other countries too.

It gradually dawned on the donors that domestic politics matters and that a deeper understanding of domestic politics is imperative for making any further progress with regard to PRSP. Parliamentary involvement was therefore later added on, but not mainly as a result of domestic demands but rather of external pressure. As is uncovered in the Tanzanian case, the fact that parliament has been included to a greater extent in the second PRSP has still allowed it little impact on the Mkukuta. The fact that parliamentary involvement has remained limited can be explained as a combination of lack of capacity and lack of will. At the same time, both government and donors appear in practice ambivalent to any in-depth involvement of parliaments. Due to the underlying incentive mechanisms and due to the many competing accountability channels it should not be expected that parliamentary involvement will be strengthened overnight.

The PRSP processes seem to have created new arenas and alliances or new ‘transnational’ relationships which exist as some kind of superstructure that is disconnected and floats above domestic political processes. At the same time, these relationships somewhat overlap with national structures which include both formal and informal structures and channels of accountability.

The lessons from the first generation PRSPs seem to have given birth to a new development co-operation fad: ‘the importance of domestic politics’. Of course it matters. Despite donors’ rhetoric about returning ownership and fostering partnership, the changing aid modalities may have strengthened donors’ incentives to get more deeply involved in domestic politics. But it is one thing to need to understand the dynamics of domestic politics; a totally different and more pertinent issue is: what have donors got to do with it?

Acronyms

CPRGS	Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DP	Development Partner
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MP	Member of Parliament
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PMS	Poverty Monitoring System
PRGF	Poverty Reduction Growth Facility
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SEDS	Socio Economic Development Strategy

> "Parliaments had been overlooked in the design phase of PRSPs" (Parliamentary Network on the World Bank 2003)

Introduction*

Launched only 6 years ago, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) has become a key reference document to a majority of developing countries.[1] Africa was the forerunner with respect to PRSP, partly together with Latin America. Asia on the other hand has largely been a slow mover. In June 2004, 21 African countries had finalised and approved a PRSP, while the number of Asian countries was 10. In spite of limited substantiation of success, the PRSP approach has continued to evolve (Craig and Porter 2003; Booth 2005). More than 70 developing countries have embarked on a PRSP process.

The PRSP not only constitutes a point of departure for developing countries' dialogue with their developing partners, but also claims to be a national steering document for poverty reduction. The PRSP affects budgeting issues and sector priorities which normally fall under the mandate of National Assemblies.[2] According to the World Bank, PRSPs **"**describe a country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs to promote growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated external financing needs. PRSPs are prepared by governments through a participatory process involving civil society and development partners, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF),"[3] and hence make them a document of potentially great importance.

PRSP was initiated in the wake of disappointing results from structural adjustment. Nearly 20 years of economic reforms had not brought poor countries out of poverty. Instead, in many countries the poverty problems were increasing and a growing percentage of public revenues was being spent on debt servicing. One important lesson from the adjustment era was that intrusive policies loosely anchored nationally had given domestic governments weak incentives to implement reforms (Killick 1998). The poor track record of the International Financial Institutions' (IFIs) main lending instruments resulted in escalating criticism of the IFIs. A new toolbox was needed. Concurrently, aid budgets from Western donors were declining and the bilateral donors were also facing a crisis of legitimacy due to the poor results of aid. The PRSP was launched as *the* solution or as a "Third Way" (Craig and Porter 2003).

Key concepts of the new approach were ownership and participation. Increased local ownership and broad-based participation should presumably correct failures from the adjustment 'era'. By letting the developing countries produce the strategies themselves ownership should be fostered. It was believed that participation beyond government circles was required. Participation by civil society was supposed to guarantee local commitment and ensure locally embedded ownership beyond the executive. When the PRSP was designed, three key groups formed the inner circle: donors, civil society and domestic governments (Gould 2005). But what about the highest elected public institutions, namely parliaments – why did they not form part of the inner circle?

As mentioned above, the PRSP involves issues such as macroeconomics and sector prioritisation which have major budget implications; the budget is a key parliamentary responsibility in most countries. The omission of parliaments appears therefore peculiar.

* This project has been funded by Norad. Thanks to Lise Rakner and Arne Tostensen for comments on an earlier draft. The usual disclaimer applies; any errors, whether of omission or commission, are the responsibility of the authors.

[1] Many countries have adopted their own names and acronyms the PRSP document. For the sake of clarity and consistency we use the originally term when nothing else is specified.

[2] Representative assemblies are designated by various names. The most common are parliament, legislature and national assembly. Here, these concepts will be used interchangeably without drawing a sharp distinction between them. They will all be used as synonyms with the legislative branch of government.

[3] http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTPRS/0,,menuPK:384207~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:384201,00.html

Furthermore, the whole rationale of PRSP rests on the imperative of increased local participation to ensure domestic accountability. Why then were NGOs that were not necessarily representatively elected replacing supreme popular elected institutions? This report will try to explore and explain how the role of parliaments has come to be marginalised in the PRSP processes.

Despite variations across continents and among countries embarking on a PRSP process, there is one common denominator: weak parliamentary involvement. However, more recently the neglect of parliaments has been recognized, which brings us to the second main research question: why was the request for parliamentary involvement all of a sudden brought to the fore? Existing sources indicate that parliamentary involvement is increasing somewhat but has remained extremely limited, despite the World Bank's and the donor community's recognition of the important role of parliaments in the PRSP process. This leads us to the third and final key research question: if it is correct that the role of parliament is still marginal, how can this be explained? Part of the answer may of course be related to the fact that parliaments have only very recently been included in the PRSP process. Nonetheless, we believe that the reasons run deeper. In order to answer that question in more detail, we undertake a case study of Tanzania that also serves to shed additional light on questions one and two. It also serves as an illustrating case for investigating whether lessons have been learned from the first PRSP process. Tanzania is in the process of implementing its second PRSP. In that regard Tanzania is frequently presented as a PRSP success story. Are there any indications of enhanced participation by parliament and individual MPs in the second PRSP process? Delving deeper into one single case sheds further light on the mechanisms at work in the PRSP process.

A main argument of this report is that parliamentary neglect is linked to the dominance of the executive in policy processes. Another key argument is that the disregard of parliament is strongly related to characteristics inherent in the very PRSP process itself. Five common denominators can be discerned: 1) Ownership beyond central ministries or some narrow government-technocratic circles appears rather low; 2) Despite improvements in course of the last 2-3 years, MPs and political parties are generally disengaged from the PRSP process; 3) Participation and consultation are mainly dominated by civil society; 4) The PRSP processes are to a large extent driven by external actors; 5) Generally the incentives to complete a PRSP seem high, but the incentives to put it into practice are not correspondingly strong.

Even if parliament later becomes involved one has not managed to escape the inherent mechanisms at work in PRSP. As will be illustrated in the Tanzanian case, even after parliament was included to a greater extent in the PRSP process the inclusion did not seem to have any profound effect on the dynamics and main channels of accountability of domestic politics, which does not give parliament as an institution or individual parliamentarians strong enough incentives to get seriously involved. We believe that the findings from Tanzania may be relevant to other countries too.

The first part of this report examines whether parliaments should be involved at all in PRSPs. It also discusses the conceptualisation of participation in the PRSP process. The second part gives a brief overview of the role of parliaments in the PRSP process with some examples from Asian and African countries. The fact that the uptake of PRSP in Asia has been relatively sluggish should provide these countries with an opportunity to learn from the African experience. It is also interesting to compare Asian and African country cases since many Asian countries are in a much stronger position as they are less aid dependent. One would therefore assume that promises of debt relief through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) II initiative and concessional lending from the IFIs have been a less attractive carrot to these countries than to many African ones, which in itself may have affected the dynamics of the processes. The next part of the report gives part of the PRSP narrative, which is important to understanding the inherent dynamics of PRSP. The last main part of this report is a case study of Tanzania that assesses the first PRSP but more importantly investigates whether parliament became more involved in the second round.

Why should parliaments be involved at all?

As one of three branches of power the legislature is supposed to function as a check on executive power, including policy decisions and PRSP implementation, according to Hubli and Mandaville (2002). They moreover underscore that engagement of existing governing institutions such as the legislature may be necessary at all stages of the PRSP process if the participatory elements of the PRSP are to become an enduring part of any country's policy process (Hubli and Mandaville 2002: 5). An idealised PRSP cycle is illustrated in figure 1 below:

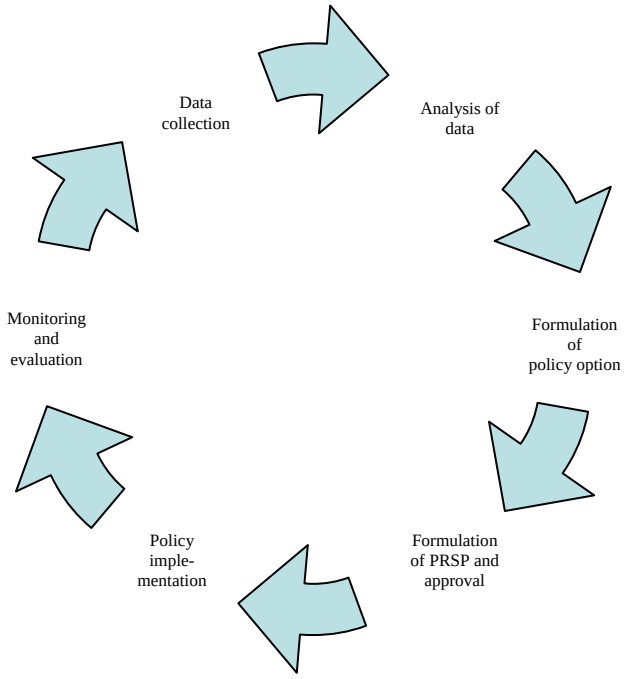

Figure 1: The idealised PRSP cycle (Driscoll and Evans 2004).

Hubli and Mandaville (2002: 3-4) argue that parliament's participation could reinforce the six core principles of PRSP, which are italicized below:

1) *Participatory, country driven and owned*: the national assembly is the most representative institution in a democracy. It can therefore provide a greater level of ownership and legitimacy than other participatory channels.
2) *Results-oriented*: formally parliament frequently has a central role to play in the passage of enabling legislation so that the PRSP can be implemented. Also, the parliament's involvement through the budget process (but depending on parliament's formal budgetary powers) may affect the allocation of resources.
3) *Comprehensive*: parliamentary debates in principle represent a nationally comprehensive view of poverty reduction measures.
4) *Prioritisation for feasible implementation*: the Assembly provides an arena for (ideally) a balanced debate and could function as a check on the interests of the ruling party.
5) *Partnership orientation*: parliament could contribute to greater transparency of the PRSP process by arranging committee/public hearings, and producing reports. This could in turn facilitate donor coordination.

6) *Medium- and long-term perspectives*: broad PRSP support in parliament ensures PRSP continuity and resistance to possible setbacks due to changes in the political environment.

The above PRSP principles somehow incorporate one or more of Parliament's central functions. Eberlei and Henn (2003) largely support Hubli and Mandaville's arguments. In a democracy parliaments are the legitimate representatives of the people. Parliamentarians should be actively involved in the development of PRSP to ensure that the interests of their constituents are taken care of.

The PRSP could be considered a contract between the citizens and the government, and the citizens should be able to hold the government accountable for the commitments made in the PRSP – parliament is one possible avenue with respect to this. Also, public financial management reforms and PRSP processes depend on each other (Alonso, Judge, and Klugman 2005). Public financial management and budget allocations must reflect the principles and content of the PRSP for it to be effective. Parliament has a central role to play in this regard, holding the executive to account through the budget process (Spanger and Wolff 2003: 52). Even if parliamentary involvement in the PRSP process is not legalised in the sense that the PRSP document holds the status as a law or rests on parliamentary approval, there are several important reasons why it should be involved. To sum up, parliaments could and probably should be involved at several stages of the PRSP cycle (cf. Figure 1).

As will be argued in this report parliamentary involvement has been low in all phases of the process in the first generation PRSPs, while in the second generation PRSPs parliamentary involvement has been strengthened somewhat although limited to rather unstructured and occasional participation. However, it should be underscored that the role of parliaments may also be confined by constitution and political system. Here, we shall be careful and avoid sweeping generalisations. However, many of the PRSP countries, the African ones in particular, are electoral democracies with a dominant executive equipped with wide discretionary powers (Croissant 2004; Bratton and van de Walle 1998). This does in itself limit the role of parliaments but does not affect parliaments' core functions, as outlined above.

Even if there is a strong case for including parliaments in PRSP, more pragmatic considerations related to the very state of parliaments in many developing countries may weaken the case somewhat. The IFIs and the bilateral donors have always related predominantly with the executive and have little experience in dealing with parliamentarians. Despite the many internal differences, the better part of the PRSP countries are nascent democracies. Experiences from both Africa and Asia indicate that the institutionalisation phase has been difficult and stagnation has been the case in several countries. Some Asian countries have even experienced backsliding (Croissant 2004).[4] Parliaments in developing countries have often been associated with particular problems. Their legitimacy has often been perceived as low and parliaments are often operating in the shadow of an overly dominant executive. Parliaments have been blamed for not functioning as democratic organs. In addition, competence and capacity are perceived as low, even if parliaments at least in some countries have been strengthened in recent years (Norton 1999; Gyimah-Boadi 2004). If strong parliamentary involvement had been formalised already from the outset, key actors such as the IFIs and the bilaterals may have feared that the PRSP process would be hampered. This may have weakened their incentives to have them involved and may even have impacted on the conceptualisation of participation.

The conceptualisation and the ethnography of participation in PRSP

Participation has become a buzz-word and is an integrated part of the PRSP approach, but how shall participation be defined? Eberlei (2001: 11) points to different forms of political participation with

[4] While a majority of African countries have presidential rule, a majority of Asian countries have parliamentary systems. The form of governance defines the parliamentary mandate in addition to the Constitution.

relevance to PRSP ranging from e.g.: information-sharing, consultation, collaboration, (joint) decision-making, and empowerment/control by stakeholders. Eberlei and Henn (2003: 28) distinguish between: 1) (minor) substantive participation by the parliament (e.g. in working groups and debates); 2) formal participation (parliament adopts the PRSP); 3) involvement of individual parliamentarians in consultations; 4) non-participation by parliament. Eberlei argues for a causal relationship between institutionalised participation and ownership. Ownership is seen as a prerequisite for PRSP to be effective. He defines country ownership as: "A (clear) majority of the population and their representatives (democratically legitimated representatives as well as representatives of pressure groups) have participated in the development of the strategy, identify with the goals and elements of the strategy, and will participate in implementation and ongoing development of it" (Eberlei 2001: 11). Ten aspects or dimensions of institutionalised participation are identified. The key words here are: sustainable, structurally integrated, thematically embedded, politically relevant, broad-based and inclusive, decentralised, qualified, representative, conflict-aware, and safeguarded by the rule of law (Eberlei 2001: 14-16).

Piron and Evans (2004: 5) acknowledge that any institutionalisation of participation in policymaking would require that the political processes become more open and participative, and that this process is beyond the remit of the PRSP exercise. Admittedly this could be seen as an ideal, but as we shall see below, both participation and ownership has been treated rather narrowly and have included mainly representatives from civil society. Several scholars have argued that the groups consulted in the PRSP have not been representatives, as Cornwall and Brock (2005: 1052) phrase it: "Country ownership, for example, has seldom meant the participation of democratically elected actors in a PRSP process". Moreover, participation has often meant consultations with no strict obligation for governments and donors to take the views of the consulted groups into account. The practice has been a "minimalist" interpretation of the concept.

In order to understand how participation became part and parcel of PRSP we need to explore how participation emerged as part of the PRSP agenda. The emergence of participation in this context is linked to several currents and events. Cynics have interpreted it as an attempt by the Bank to overcome the crisis of the mid-1990s (Fraser 2005: see also sections below). Fraser (2005: 321) has linked the Bank's adoption of participation to at least four overlapping processes: 1) A response to critical NGOs. Hence, the Bank introduced participation as "safety nets" for its projects; 2) In the 1990s when bilateral donors started to employ participatory planning mechanisms to their project cycles, they pushed the Bank to do the same; 3) In the mid-1990s the Bank started to introduce participatory planning also at higher levels such as economic planning; 4) In the late 1990s participation from civil society was linked to a call for debt relief through the enhanced HIPC, which led to the PRSP itself.

In the way in which participation was originally linked to PRSP the concept was not seen as part of any formal democratic process. Fraser (2005: 322) asserts that participation was not introduced because the Bank wanted to change, instead the Bank wanted the other actors "to learn from the Bank and implement its knowledge".

This view gets support from numerous scholars. Spanger and Wolff (2003: 52) warn that "Phoney participation processes can undermine democratic processes as much as autocratic processes do". McGee et al. (2002) argue that the PRSP processes have not been characterised by any real participation, but have been more an information exercise. Craig and Porter (2003: 54) claim that participation has often been treated as some kind of "proxy representatives for the marginal" and has thus lent "the legitimacy that development actors need to justify their interventions" (Cornwall and Brock 2005: 1044).

To sum up, the conceptualisation of participation seems problematic. Broad-based national participation has largely been synonymous with civil society consultations (Mandaville 2004; Eberlei and Henn 2003; Spanger and Wolff 2003). As Craig and Porter (2003: 54) formulate it: "As in much of PRSP, the kinds of local participation required, and ownership argued, are multidimensional, but politically quite limited in scope, lacking the democratic power of ballot box or parliamentary enquiry". The fact that participation has been conceptually delinked from formal

political processes may not have contributed to strengthening good governance and democratisation; it may in the worst case have had the opposite effect. Moreover, it seems to have had a negative impact on ownership and on the incentives to implement PRSP. In order to substantiate this point, a few empirical examples will be given.

Weak parliamentary involvement: Some examples from Asia and Africa

As mentioned in the introduction, despite the fact that PRSP countries both within Africa and Asia and Latin America for that matter are very different with regard to pace and domestic dynamics of the PRSP processes, there is one striking similarity: the lack of parliamentary involvement. Some examples will be given from Asia and Africa only to substantiate this fact. We will start with the late-comers, the Asian countries.

Cambodia finalised an interim PRSP in 2000, while the National Poverty Reduction Strategy was completed in December 2002. In Cambodia the PRSP was hardly discussed in parliament. While the Social and Economic Development Plan was presented to parliament, the PRSP was not. Parliament's involvement in the PRSP has mainly been rubberstamping (DFID 2003; Mozammel and Odugbemi 2005).

Bangladesh presented a so-called interim PRSP in March 2003. The draft of a full PRSP was finalised in late 2004. The interim PRSP was written by a research institute contracted by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB). The GoB's incentives to implement the PRSP and the GoB's ownership to the whole process have therefore been questioned. Government critics see PRSP as donor driven and: "just a country assistance strategy in sheep's clothing — the same prescriptions you would expect from the World Bank" (Green and Curtis 2005: 396). In Bangladesh, political debate on the PRSP has largely been absent. The PRSP has hardly been debated in parliament, which stands in sharp contrast to what is normally the case with the national development plans. However, some improvements have possibly been made lately. Now the Prime Minister is chairing a parliamentary-level National Council for Poverty Reduction (DFID 2003). It should be mentioned though that according to the final PRSP document and the so-called "Joint Staff Advisory Note" prepared by the staffs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Development Association, both the degree of ownership and parliamentary involvement has been higher than what can be drawn from more independent studies and reviews (IDA and IMF 2005; Planning Commission 2005).

In March 2001 Vietnam had an interim PRSP in place, while a full PRSP was completed in November 2003. In terms of ownership the PRSP process in Vietnam has often been characterised as a success story (Bartholomew and Lister 2005). Still, the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS), which is the local name, has not become an important document beyond narrow government circles. According to Conway (2004) the PRSP was for example not an issue at the 9th Party Congress of May 2001. Nor was it debated in the National Assembly. While the annual Socio Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) is formally approved by the National Assembly, the CPRGS was not.[5] Conway (2004: 19) holds that one major failure of the drafting process of the CPRGS was that it was not linked to domestic political structures. Hence, the CPRGS did not become "a major point of reference for domestic political actors". The whole exercise was mainly a top-down process. More recently, however, there have been some changes also in Vietnam pointing in the direction of increased parliamentary involvement. For example, Parliament has requested that findings from CPRGS consultation processes be circulated among parliamentarians (DFID 2003). Nonetheless, Conway (2004) still fears that the lack of ownership beyond a small

[5] However, it should be added that this distinction may have become less important more recently since commitments for the SEDS are now allegedly supposed to reflect the CPRGS.

political and technocratic circle may be an impediment to implementation. Vietnam will soon 'mature' and become a middle-income country and bilateral donors may start phasing out their aid. Conway (2004: 41) believes this will pose as an additional problem: "In the absence of a more diversified and empowered National Assembly, it is not clear whether accountability to citizens will fill the gap left if donors give up control".

Another example can be given from the Pakistani PRSP. In the drafting process any involvement by parliament was close to absent. When it later was suggested that the PRSP should be presented to parliament, NGOs asserted that this could only be rubberstamping and therefore not worthwhile (DFID 2003). Pakistan completed an interim PRSP in November 2001. A full PRSP was finalised in December 2003. Several other country cases could be mentioned, the countries referred to here are only meant to serve as illustrations,

Of the aforementioned countries, only Cambodia depends heavily on aid. In Bangladesh for example aid constituted as little as 2.4% of Gross National Income in 2000. One would therefore assume that for countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam and Pakistan the incentives to complete a PRSP would be weak in the first place. Notwithstanding this fact, even to Vietnam, which has a relatively strong economy, the benefits of attracting concessional lending from the IMF and the World Bank has functioned as an important incentive for completing a PRSP (Bartholomew and Lister 2005). In addition, it should be mentioned that out of the four cases that is referred to here it is only Bangladesh which falls under the definition of an electoral democracy. Pakistan and Cambodia are categorised as so-called 'failed democracies', while Vietnam remains an autocratic one-party state (Croissant 2004). This may in itself pose certain limits on the role of the national assemblies.

In Africa on the other hand, the third wave of democratisation reached further. But even if, generally speaking the role of parliaments has been somewhat stronger in Africa their involvement appears marginal. Langdon and Draman (2005) relate this trend to the dominance of the executive in policy processes. Ghana prepared an interim PRSP as far back as 2000, while the full PRSP was completed in February 2003. Mozammel and Odugbemi (2005: 40; see also Langdon and Draman 2005) claim that parliament's involvement in Ghana has been low. However, some changes have taken place more recently: "Parliament has now set up a sub-committee on poverty reduction to engage more proactively with the GPRS". Similar initiatives have newly been taken in a number of countries. Mozammel and Odugbemi (2005: 57) mention Tanzania, for instance, where several workshops have been set up to raise the MPs' awareness of the PRSP.

Uganda is the first country to embark on a third PRSP. The first full formal PRSP was in place in March 2000. It should be mentioned that a home-grown Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)[6] had been finalised already in 1997. This was a local initiative, but the idea was launched at seminar between the Government of Uganda and the World Bank in 1995. The Ugandan PEAP coincided with the launching of HIPC II. It was agreed therefore that a revisited PEAP which was scheduled anyhow should function as a formal PRSP. A second revision or the third PEAP was endorsed in 2005.

Despite the fact that the PEAP in Uganda is a home-grown initiative, it is reported that ownership beyond closed government circles is still lacking. Parliament remains an institution for rubber stamping (Piron and Norton 2004). MPs were invited to many of the PEAP consultations, but few MPs participated. Piron and Norton hold that MPs have no or little ownership of the PEAP. It is mainly perceived as a government-donor document. Piron and Norton (2004: 27) suggest that "Holding a parliamentary vote on the PEAP, as is done on some other non-legislative issues, would enhance its status among parliamentarians".[7] Nonetheless, formal voting on the PEAP is not high on the agenda among the key actors. So far the PEAP seems to have had little impact on the work of the parliament.

[6] PEAP remained as the local name of the Ugandan PRSP.

[7] However, overall, a stronger and more independent Parliament can act as a useful check on government behaviour, through monitoring of financial performance and identification of policy alternatives.

Due to past experiences and the not too optimistic outcomes of the many PRSP processes, bilateral donors as well as the IFIs acknowledge the important role of parliaments in PRSP processes. This view is also reflected in the most recent PRSPs (see e.g. Mozambique's latest PRSP, (Republic of Mozambique 2005).[8] However, how this is to be done in practice remains unclear. In reality both government and donors appear rather ambivalent to giving parliaments more of a say. This can be illustrated by the Mozambican case. Both the IFIs and donors stress that the capacity and competence of parliament has to be strengthened if it is to serve effectively its scrutinising functions of the executive. But as Gerster and Harding (2004: 19) have observed in Mozambique: "[…] there are also implicitly concerns, from both government and donors, that the strengthening of parliamentary oversight mechanisms could result in greater domestic political influence over elements of the reform agenda and decisions regarding budget allocations". And maybe it is a real concern, because as Piron and Norton (2004: 27) hold in the case of Uganda, any further strengthening of parliament's role "could conceivably pose some risks to the PEAP: clientelistic motivations might weaken pro-poor allocation, prioritisation processes might become more complex as more representatives express their views, and it might become harder for MFPED [Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development] to control the budget". Greater parliamentary involvement may hamper possible agreements on the PRSP in the short run. However, if parliament is not involved it may have more serious long-term implications. It may undermine core parliamentary functions and hinder broader national ownership.

Again, one should of course be careful with sweeping generalisations based on a limited number of cases. The dynamics of the processes differ greatly as well as domestic politics and structures of incentives. What is interesting here, however, is that despite the wide variety of experiences with PRSP processes parliamentary involvement has been and still is weak.

Even if HIPC II and the debt relief carrot does not function as an incentive in second or even third generation PRSPs, getting access to the IFI's concessional facilities and the fact that many bilateral donors partly link aid, budget support in particular, to PRSP remain a strong incentive to embark on a PRSP for most aid-receiving countries. Poor countries have incentives to complete a PRSP to make the aid flow, while the IFIs and the donors have a strong drive to disburse their funds. Domestic governments and donors alike do not want to complicate the PRSP processes.

Why parliaments were kept in the cold: How PRSP was designed and launched

In order to fully grasp why parliaments were ignored in the design phase and to understand why they are still marginalised one needs to get a little bit of the narrative of the PRSP story. But as Christiansen (2003: 9) puts it "there is no single coherent narrative of how the PRSP emerged". Instead it evolved as a result of a number of individual initiatives taken forward by some key events (Callaghy 2001). David Booth (2001) describes PRSP as an accidental by-product of the enhanced HIPC initiative. That is an important part of the story and does also partly explain why it was representatives from the NGO communities that took the last chair around the PRSP table, and why it was they who were given the mandate to speak the voice of the poor. The timing of PRSP is also key in this regard. As mentioned above the PRSP narrative is complex, but here we will sketch some key factors, which are important to understanding why PRSP was designed the way it was and why parliaments were locked out.

[8] Mozambique had an interim PRSP in place in February 2000, while a full PRSP was finalised in April 2001. The second PRSP has just been completed.

The failure of structural adjustment and conditionality: The IFIs need renewed confidence

Twenty years of structural adjustment and conditionality had not brought the majority of developing countries out of poverty. Especially countries in sub-Saharan Africa were lagging behind. Coercive methods of achieving reforms were widely acknowledged as flawed. Several studies of conditionality singled out lack of ownership at the recipient ends as a key explanation to the failure (Killick 1998; Dollar and Svensson 2000). In addition, it was acknowledged and documented that structural and monetary reforms had brought little to the poor. More targeted measures were needed. These disappointing results brought the IFIs into a general crisis of legitimacy. Some radical changes were forced.

In 1995 a new visionary and reform-oriented president, Jim Wolfensohn, was elected to lead the World Bank. He responded rather promptly to the crisis facing the Bank, and started a process of trying to alter the way in which the Bank operated. Particularly he sought to change the image of the Bank, which at the time certainly had a public relations problem. Instead of being perceived as a secretive and arrogant lender, his vision was to represent a Bank that was transparent, inclusive and responsive to the needs of the developing countries (Christiansen 2003; Selbervik 2003).

In 1999 the president himself launched a more comprehensive mode of co-operation than had been the approach in the past under the rubric of 'Comprehensive Development Framework' (Selbervik 2003). Core elements of this new framework were ownership, participation, transparency and accountability. The new comprehensive approach was linked to poverty reduction. The World Bank's and the IMF's concessional lending facilities were renamed, signalling a shift from erstwhile policies. The IMF's soft loan window ESAF was relaunched as the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF). In line with the new thinking, the Bank's Country Assistance Strategies were to be directly linked to the countries' own strategies. Moreover, the Bank introduced a new poverty-related lending device, the Poverty Reduction Support Credit. Both the Bank's and the IMF's new facilities were directly linked to PRSP (Christiansen 2003; Selbervik 2003).

Compared to earlier adjustment loans the number of conditions attached was to be reduced.[9] Instead of stipulations linked to strict deadlines, the concept processual conditionality was introduced. PRSP replaced the previous Policy Framework Paper (PFP), which had not proven effective as a planning instrument for the developing countries. They were often fully produced in Washington and domestic governments felt little ownership of them.[10] The PRSP was therefore to be produced by the countries themselves. In addition, broad-based participation beyond government offices was seen as imperative. Civil society was given the mandate to ensure ownership and popular support beyond government circles. To some extent academics and the private sector were included too. But what about parliaments, why did they not form part of the original set-up? To an outsider it may seem puzzling and at the time few questioned the set-up.

One cause is linked to the fact that it was the IFIs which initiated PRSP. The Bank for example is not mandated to be involved in 'political issues'.[11] The Articles of Agreements have provisions preventing political interventions by member countries and precluding non-economic consideration: "The Bank and its officers shall not interfere in the political affairs of any member; nor shall they be influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member or members concerned. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to their decisions, and these considerations shall be weighed impartially in order to achieve the purpose stated in Article I" quoted from (Selbervik 2003: 277). The meaning of the term "political" and "economic" in the

[9] However, Tony Killick (2004) holds that despite this rhetoric and despite the fact that the IFIs are still claiming conditionality to be ineffective in achieving policy change, in reality poor countries are under the present aid regime expected to adjust to an even wider range of policy conditions than was the case in the past.

[10] The PFP was also poorly connected to the World Bank's operations.

[11] http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20261636~menuPK:34480~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html

context of the Bank's Articles of Agreement have been subject to dispute and different interpretations from the very start. One may argue that the IFIs are indeed involved in politics and have been so for decades. It should be underscored however that in the late 1990s and the subsequent years the mandate has been assessed as being broader than what has been previously the case. Even so at the time including parliaments to the PRSP processes may have been considered too political. Adding in civil society was a way of ensuring popular participation but avoiding getting involved in 'politics'. But as many observers have noted, by treating the PRSP processes as a purely technical and depoliticised issue may not only have hampered ongoing democratic processes, but may also have curtailed domestic ownership (Craig and Porter 2003).

In order to fully understand the role of civil society in PRSP one also has to take into account that the NGO movement was highly instrumental in the very launching of PRSP.

The debt crisis and the NGO movement

From the late 1980s the IFIs came under increasing attack from a not insignificant international movement: the international NGO community (Callaghy 2001). The movement spread across countries and regions and the dynamics of the processes around this movement or, more correctly, movements are complex and diverse. Here it suffices to point to the main achievements with regard to PRSP and how they impacted on key policy makers.

The NGO movement gained increasing momentum in the 1990s as a result of growing awareness around the debt issues and also the need for more targeted measures in order to tackle growing poverty problems. Many of these NGOs had links with partners and NGOs in the south, but the main pressure and impact came from NGOs in the north. Most of the critique raised by the NGOs was mainly linked to the debt issues, especially through the Jubilee 2000 campaign launched in the UK in 1996. The campaign has been described as the most influential popular movement in modern times (Yanacopulos 2004). A key event in this regard was the G7 Summit in Birmingham in 1998, resulting in the "Drop the Debt" campaign. As many as 300 000 people made a human chain around the building where the meeting took place (Christiansen 2003). Christiansen (2003) holds that this particular episode may be seen as a point of departure for what became a global protest, and she argues that the launching of the HIPC II initiative is closely linked to this global protest (Fraser 2005; Callaghy 2001).

Another influential actor was the UK-based Oxfam, which linked the debt issue directly to poverty reduction (Yanacopulos 2004). Oxfam not only worked on public awareness, but exerted direct pressure on bilateral governments and the IFIs. Yanacopulos holds that the NGO movement was key to the very launching of the enhanced HIPC (Yanacopulos 2004). Only a few years earlier the whole idea of the enhanced HIPC had been totally neglected. However, the fact that some key personalities such as the World Bank president himself, and also Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, were instrumental and may even have been decisive for both the launching of HIPC II and PRSP should not reduce the role of the NGO movement (Christiansen 2003).[12] Nonetheless, by linking debt relief to poverty within the framework of the PRSP the IFIs cleverly managed at least partially to mend fences with the NGO movement and silence some of its critics. At the same time the main lines of the IFIs macroeconomic approach remained more or less untouched (Zack-Williams and Mohan 2005).

The main point we would like to stress here is that at the time of the launching of PRSP strong links had already been established between the IFIs and the NGOs. Since the NGOs had been instrumental in the establishing of the enhanced HIPC, which was more or less part and parcel of the first generation PRSPs, it was in a way impossible to keep them out in the cold. Including local NGOs in the PRSP process was a means of mending fences with a critical Northern NGO movement.

[12] Much more could be added here, and all the details around what happened and the dynamics of the process should be an area of further research.

The role of the bilaterals

By the late 1990s the bilaterals also needed a new legitimation and justification for development aid. In 1997 the volume of Western aid reached a historically low level. In the course of the 1980s and 1990s many bilaterals made part of their aid conditional upon developing countries reaching agreements with the IFIs. One may therefore argue that they were partly to blame for the failures of the conditionality era. The bilaterals were in need of new modes of development co-operation (Selbervik 2003; Killick 1998). The bilaterals' embracement of PRSP must also be understood against this background.

At the early stage of PRSP the bilaterals did not seem to question the neglect of parliament or the fact that it was mainly civil society groups that were participating in PRSP. One explanation can partly be related to their already established relationships with NGOs in the south. Throughout the 1990s many bilaterals had tried to foster civil society in developing countries. Broad networks and contacts had therefore already been established. At the time most bilateral donors were sceptical about funding of political parties. They would fund political movements only. If and when a political movement transformed into a political party, donor support should cease (Selbervik 1997). Although this attitude was being challenged at the turn of the millennium, at the time of the launching of PRSP including parliaments or parliamentarians in the process would probably have felt "too political" to the bilaterals. This fact may partly explain why the bilateral donors did not pressurise the IFIs to include parliament as one of the main partners in the PRSP processes at this early stage.

To sum up this section, when the PRSP was design and introduced as a concept and as a tool – many networks had been built – a special kind of "transboundary[13] relationship" had evolved (Callaghy 2001). Parliaments were not part of these relationships. Parliament became an 'add-on', only much later.

Domestic politics recognised as the missing link: Parliaments are 'added on'

"What happens when NGO participation substitutes for the participation of parliament?" (Bräutigam 2004: 3). This very timely question was raised by Bräutigam in an article from 2004, and she was then not only referring to PRSP but to economic planning and budgeting more generally. In a previous article she answered the question even more poignantly and maintained that it might contribute to strengthen neo-patrimonial tendencies and clientilistic politics (Bräutigam 2000). Others have indicated that the practice of marginalising parliaments may have been detrimental to any further democratic institutionalisation of the many nascent democracies in developing countries (cf. discussion above).

As soon as the first countries embarked on the PRSP process, numerous evaluations were initiated by the IFIs, but not the least by the bilaterals. Many of the first evaluations investigated the role of civil society in PRSP. Many of them concluded that civil society participation had been unsatisfactory. The NGOs that were consulted were not necessarily representative, and those which were consulted were not necessarily listened to. They had little time to prepare and the processes were often rushed. Cornwall and Brock (2005: 1052) summarise it like this: "They have usually offered limited spaces for engagement to invited CSOs, whose views beyond the consensus, if they are expressed at all, seldom find their way into final documents". They hold that the processes often have "run on timetables that disregard the rhythm of the domestic policy process" (Cornwall and

[13] The concept 'transnationalism' is borrowed from (Kassimir and Latham 2001: 276), who claims that "as we define them, transboundary relationships become formations when they produce and/or sustain forms of authority and order". Kassimir and Latham (2001) maintain that such formations are prevalent in the South. However, they claim that not all relationships that include international, state and local realms fall under the above definition.

Brock 2005:1052). Craig and Porter (2003) label this phenomenon as 'surrogate political participation'. In many instances participation from civil society has largely functioned as a legitimising device for the donors and for domestic governments.

As already argued, the concept of participation was in practice treated rather narrowly and delinked from formal democratic processes. Instead, the conceptualisation of participation built on an idea about some kind of consensual popular meeting where affected groups could express their views. It only gradually dawned on the donor community that bypassing elected institutions was problematic in a democratic and good governance perspective.

Several PRSP evaluations started to point to the fact that parliaments had been marginalised and bypassed in the PRSP processes. The studies concluded that participation ought to be conceptualised more broadly and implicitly criticised the original set-up of the PRSP. In 2002 a World Bank review argued that "the role of Parliaments in the preparation, approval, and monitoring of country strategies has generally been limited and is a concern that has been expressed by a number of development partners" (World Bank 2002: 9). It seems as if the greatest impetus to add parliament into the PRSP process came from some bilateral donors, even if as illustrated above the bilaterals may in practice have remained somewhat ambivalent. Also a growing network of parliamentarians around the world exerted pressure at the Bank to include parliaments in its work. It did not take long before the World Bank responded to the enquiries. A number of initiatives were taken. The World Bank has for example developed a special website for parliamentarians and a World Bank guide for MPs. The Bank is now engaged with capacity building and extensive training programmes for parliamentarians.

As referred to above, the interpretation 'political affairs' in accordance with the Bank's mandate has changed somewhat in recent years. The World Bank now maintains that "Engaging elected representatives on development issues and strengthening the capacity of parliamentary institutions are important objectives of the World Bank".[14] Already in 2000 at a conference of parliamentarians the leadership of the Bank held that "Successful poverty reduction hinges on a broad spectrum of policy changes and on wide participation, engaging all of a country's stakeholders. Clearly, parliamentarians around the world must play a role in this process" (World Bank 2000: 4). The Bank is moreover stressing the importance of understanding domestic political process, which seems to have evolved as a new mantra in course of the last few years (Booth 2005). According to the current president of the World Bank Paul Wolfowitz: "Development policies are not made in a vacuum […] Well-functioning parliaments can help ensure that the voices of the poor are heard and that their needs are addressed in the policymaking process. Against this background, the World Bank and Parliamentarians are increasingly working on issues of common interest" (World Bank 2005).

Nonetheless, even after it had been accepted that parliaments should be included to a greater extent in the PRSP processes, in practice great scepticism prevailed not only at the Bank, but also somewhat paradoxically among the bilateral donors. The donors did not want to complicate the PRSP process unnecessarily. Instead they continued opting for speedy results. It seems as if the Bank was more or less pressurized to include parliaments. In practice, parliaments have by and large remained marginalised in PRSP. The remaining part of the report investigates the case of Tanzania, which serve as a good illustrative case for the main arguments of this report.

[14]http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20261636~menuPK:34480~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html

Towards stronger parliamentary involvement in PRSP? The Tanzanian experience

As argued above, despite the third wave of democratisation sweeping developing countries institutional reform has so far not properly challenged the prevailing lack of checks and balances. The country has so far held three national democratic elections in which the ruling party CCM has won with a landslide. The CCM has had an overwhelming majority in the 1995, 2000 and the 2005 multiparty union national assemblies. Similarly the CCM presidential candidate has won the presidential elections by a large margin. Regime transition took place under the guidance of the CCM, providing the party with the opportunity to control the process (Tripp 2000). The system still vests tremendous powers in the executive and lacks a parliament that can properly challenge it (Wang 2005; Wang and Rakner 2005), similarly to many developing countries in Asia and Africa.

Tanzania has just developed its second-generation PRSP, the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty or the Mkukuta in Kiswahili.[15] The country has had a full PRSP in place since December 2000 and is thus one of the pioneers of the PRSP approach. Tanzania became one of the first countries to qualify for debt relief within the framework of the PRSP. She has been hailed as one of the best adjusters and a positive example, particularly by the Bretton Woods institutions, but is generally held in high esteem among development partners as well (Harrison 2001). All the same, the process of developing and implementing a PRSP has been far from flawless.

The first section of the remaining part of this report gives a brief analysis of the formulation process of Tanzania's first PRSP, which has been criticised for lack of participation by parliament. We will then proceed to discuss whether lessons have been learned and parliamentary involvement has increased in the second PRSP. In the subsequent sections we investigate whether the PRSP process has been linked to other key processes such as the budget process and discuss the degree of involvement by parliament or individual MPs in these processes. What are the prospects for stronger parliamentary engagement in the Mkukuta? This issue is addressed in the last section of this report.

Formulation of the first PRSP: Compressed timetable and limited participation

The Tanzanian experience with the first PRSP is similar to that of many other PRSP countries. The preparation of the first Tanzanian PRSP was subject to a very tight time frame, negatively impacting on the consultative exercise. Preparation began in March 2000 and not more than seven months elapsed before the final draft was submitted to the boards of the Bank and IMF (Evans and Ngalewa 2001). Reaching the HIPC completion point and thus qualifying for debt relief has been put forward as the main driver of the process (Gould and Ojanen 2003; OED and IEO 2004:6). A rushed consultative process took place in May 2000. Seven zonal workshops were conducted on the same day, making it impossible for the participants to prepare adequately. Meaningful contributions and interaction were also precluded by lack of available information about the PRSP in advance of the excessively rushed consultations. A very limited number of citizens at the village level participated (URT 2000). Other workshop participants comprised local authorities (including elected representatives) and NGOs (Gould and Ojanen 2003; Evans and Ngalewa 2001). Possibly a

[15] The Tanzania case study is based on 33 personal interviews and documents collected in the course of a visit to Dar es Salaam in the period 25 June – 10 July 2005 by Vibeke Wang. The group of interviewees comprised parliamentarians (8), parliamentary staff (2), development partners (12), representatives from civil society and academia (5), and civil servants (6).

miniscule number of MPs could have been among the group of elected representatives, but no exact information exists in relation to this. In addition, two hours were spent discussing the document with parliamentarians in July 2000 (Evans and Ngalewa 2001). This sums up the role of parliament in preparing the first Tanzanian PRSP.

The effect of this lack of participation should not be underestimated as "the most valuable aspect of the PRSPs may well be the processes involved in their development" (Grindle 2004). Involvement in the formulation of the PRSP (as well as active engagement at later stages) is commonly held to be critical to ensuring ownership (cf. discussion above). The role of the Bank and IMF has also been criticised as they were to endorse the final document. The image of the process as largely externally driven has stuck. Even in government an understanding of the principle of participation was not deep (McGee, Hughes, and Levene 2002). While the drafting process incorporated civil society successfully according to the World Bank and IMF, the level and effect of civil society participation have been disputed by other observers of Tanzanian politics, civil society actors, and later also by evaluations conducted by the IFIs themselves (Spanger and Wolff 2003; Evans and Ngalewa 2001; McGee, Hughes, and Levene 2002). Nonetheless, civil society undoubtedly played a more significant role in the process than parliament. As the first critical voices of the PRSP process gradually emerged in 2001/2002 it was pointed out that the role of parliament in the process had been neglected (L'autier 2002). While the Tanzanian legislature ('Bunge' in Kiswahili) has been largely excluded, the process has been dominated by an iron triangle consisting of the executive, donors and a few selected civil society representatives (Gould and Ojanen 2003). Is the Mkukuta heralding change?

The Mkukuta: Learning from the lessons of the first PRSP process?

In the Guide for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Review the government clearly had the experience of the previous PRSP in mind when it declared that the review should follow two key principles: 1) it should be nationally owned and driven by country interests. Ownership should be achieved through improved participatory consultations; 2) the content and timeframe of the review must be realistic and achievable. Focus should be on "the importance of participatory dialogue, including surveying the poor and effectively engaging elected officials and civil society organisations" (URT 2003: 4). With the revision of the PRSP and the preparation of the new Mkukuta the impression is that there has been a deliberate attempt on the part of the government to create a more comprehensive process and involve more stakeholders, including parliament.[16] It is difficult to identify the exact forces behind the development towards a more inclusive and participatory revision process in Tanzania. Several actors have been involved, but it is reasonable to anticipate that a minimum of government will must have been present for this to take place.

Whether the bilateral donors had abandoned their ambivalence in the case of Tanzania is a bit unclear. Nonetheless, it is a fact that the development partners (DPs) signalled that parliament ought to be brought more strongly on board and it is not likely that the effort to strengthen parliament's participation would have taken place in the absence of a push in a more participatory direction from external actors. One of the high ranking officials in the Vice President's Office readily admits: 'there were reasons to include the parliament but even so perhaps we would have done it less without the push from the development partners'.[17] A representative of the donor community plainly states that 'if there was no pressure from outside they [the government] would

[16] The Tanzanian Cabinet endorsed the Mkukuta in February 2005, while the strategy was presented to parliament in April 2005. The final version of the Mkukuta was launched in June 2005. The launching was followed up by a public information campaign where three documents were circulated, namely the Mkukuta itself in addition to the Mkukuta Communication Strategy and a popular version of the strategy.

[17] Interview with VPO official, Policy, Research and Planning division, 08.07.2005.

not do these things in the first place.'[18] Parliament's role in advocating for more involvement has been minimal. Donors are in fact inclined to think that parliament itself has not had any role in demanding greater parliamentary participation, but that a few individual MPs have demanded this on their own.[19]

Enhanced participation by parliament and individual MPs?

An outcome of the effort made to actively include more stakeholders in the review process should ideally be more meaningful participation. To what extent that has been the case will be investigated in the following section.

As during the excessively short consultation process for the first PRSP, parliament still has no formal powers over the review process. In Tanzania the 1977 Constitution (Art. 63, s. 3) empowers the Bunge to deliberate upon and authorise any long or short term plan intended to be implemented. This is in contrast to most other PRSP countries. All the same, neither the first PRSP nor the Mkukuta were laid before the parliament for formal ratification. Formal approval is of course no guarantee of substantive participation by parliament although it possibly could encourage parliamentarians to engage more actively in the process. The Tanzanian MPs were supposed to participate at national fora in workshops and meetings and at district level consultations. The consultations were to take place in their constituencies, through the parliamentary committees and during the parliamentary sessions in Dodoma (URT 2003). While it has been difficult to establish how many MPs were invited and actually participated in the different fora most of the MPs, development partners as well as all of the civil society representatives interviewed were sceptical about the effect and depth of parliamentary involvement (Mmari et al. 2005). A development partner representative refers to the process as simply window-dressing[20] while civil society actors were unable to identify significant change with respect to the role of parliament.[21] A CCM committee chair observes: 'There is not much involvement from parliament. Parliament is just rubber stamping. We are just an alibi. We don't own the Mkukuta. We are not involved. My understanding of the Mkukuta is not thorough. It is top-down the whole thing'.[22] Not surprisingly nearly all the civil servants interviewed were satisfied with the effort made to include parliament: 'With the Mkukuta broad consultations were held. They were as wide as you can go in soliciting stakeholder views'[23] is illustrative of the general attitude.

At the national level, consultations involving parliament as an institution were limited to three briefings held by the government. Other fora where MPs participated include the Poverty Policy Week stakeholder meeting, the PER consultative meeting as well as the PRSP consultative meeting. However, it is difficult to be heard in these large meetings, and there are few if any indications of the MPs actively coordinating their views and statements in the committees or party groups before attending. The MPs were also invited to some meetings and workshops on the PRSP. The participation was mainly limited to committee chairs, some of the deputy chairs and committee secretaries. Among the committees, the committee on environment and natural resources and its chair have particularly taken an interest in the PRSP. The committee has worked relatively closely with the Vice President's Office that has had a lead role in the review and is responsible for developing a PRSP monitoring framework (Langdon and Draman 2005).[24] Unfortunately the communication within the committees in advance of meetings, as well as reporting back to committee members and other MPs after attending workshops and seminars on the PRSP, have been poor. One of the committee chairs frankly states: 'There is no reporting back after the chairs of the

[18] Interview with development partner representative, 01.07.2005.
[19] Interviews with development partner representatives, 28.06.2005; 27.06.2005; 04.07.2005; 27.06.2005.
[20] Interview with development partner representative, 01.07.2005.
[21] Interviews with key civil society representatives, 01.07.2005; and 05.07.2005.
[22] Interview with CCM MP and committee chair, 08.07.2005.
[23] Interview with senior civil servant, MOF, 05.07.2005.
[24] Interview with CCM committee chair, 13.07.2005.

committees have participated in different meetings on the Mkukuta. I didn't know what we were going to discuss in advance, but I gave my views' and then adds 'There is no place to tell the other committee members what has taken place. And you know you need money to call a committee meeting'.[25] The outcome is that individual MPs rather than parliament as an institution have participated in the review process. Information and knowledge on the Mkukuta, in other words, have so far been very much concentrated in individuals effectively leading to, as a core civil society representative put it: 'a conflation between parliament as an institution and individual MPs'.[26] Partly reflecting this lack of internal communication and organisation within parliament, no detailed submissions were contributed from the MPs during the preparatory stage of the Mkukuta,[27] thus reducing their influence on the final product. As opposed to this, other actors such as development partners and civil society have conducted their own analyses and fed them into the process.

The MPs' involvement at the grassroots has been even less than at the national level. This is in stark contrast to the role the MPs themselves and other stakeholders think they should play in the PRSP review (SUNY/Tanzania 2004).[28] As one of the parliamentarians maintains: 'we must be involved because we are the link with the grassroots. But we have not been involved in this as I would expect us to be…. We say that we should be involved directly but instead we are only superficially involved'.[29] One of the committee chairs who is quite actively engaged in the PRSP sheds further light on the problem 'Even with this Mkukuta we must first understand it ourselves and then we can explain it to our constituents'.[30] However, Draman and Langdon (2005:13) note that a few activist constituency MPs show commitment to engage more fully with the people on the ground and mobilise them in relation to development efforts.

During the review process a questionnaire with three questions on the Mkukuta was also supposed to be distributed by the MPs in their constituencies. In addition CSOs were tasked with disseminating questionnaires. The usefulness of this procedure has been limited. Few of the MPs mentioned the existence of the questionnaires, indicating that they were not familiar with them. In addition it has been claimed that the government has lacked capacity to analyse and consolidate the findings. Accordingly they have not been used to inform the revised PRSP (Curran 2005).

Collaboration between CSOs and parliament could provide the MPs with an increased opportunity to assert themselves in the PRSP. But the relationship between civil society and MPs has so far been almost non-existent, indicating that the ability of parliament to draw on the expertise of civil society is very low. According to the MPs this has gradually started to change since a training programme was instigated.[31] There is however a long way to go. The extent of collaboration in relation to the Mkukuta can largely be narrowed down to the second round of consultations in which a network of CSOs sought an audience with the financial and economic affairs committee of parliament.[32]

A reactive Bunge operating in the shadow of a proactive civil society

From the above it is clear that although the timetable of the participatory process has been less rushed and the government has been relatively clear on the objectives of the consultations, parliament and the majority of MPs have by no means been deeply involved in the preparatory

[25] Interview with CCM MP, committee chair, 08.07.2005.
[26] Interview with civil society representative, 05.07.2005. Several of the development partner representatives interviewed also pointed to this as a problem (interviews with development partner representatives 27.07.2005; 30.06.2005; 06.07.2005; and 06.07.2005.
[27] Interview with UNDP representative, 05.07.2005.
[28] Interviews with development partners, 06.07.2005; 04.07.2005; 30.06.2005; Interviews civil servants, MOF 05.07.2005; MOF 05.07.2005; and VPO 04.07.2005.
[29] Interview with CCM MP, deputy chair 09.07.2005.
[30] Interview with CCM MP, committee chair, 13.07.2005.
[31] A parliamentary technical support programme started in 2003. It is implemented by SUNY/Tanzania and funded by DFID and USAID.
[32] Interviews with civil society representatives, 05.07.2005; 06.07.2005.

phase of the second PRSP process.[33] There are several explanations of this but the MPs tend to emphasise a general lack of resources and capacity. This problem has been pointed to in several recent studies (e.g. Lawson and Rakner 2005; Biddle, Cassidy and Mukandala 2002; ARD, Inc. 2003; Wang 2005). Issues like lack of skills, time and adequate research assistance are commonly referred to. In addition the 2005 October general elections put its mark on the review process. Many MPs were more concerned with keeping their seat in the Bunge than involving themselves in the Mkukuta. One CCM MP complained 'If we had research officers then we could come up with salient points. I have not read it [the Mkukuta]. Very few have read it. I had mine through the seminar. It came at a very busy time. The interest of the MPs now is coming back to parliament'.[34] The MPs have received information on the Mkukuta in seminars and workshops, but there are indications that very few of them on their own have actively searched for and collected information. The demand side of access to information is thus more or less absent in parliament, corresponding to the fact that supply and control of information are related to control of power. Based on this a recent study by IDASA identifies opacity and secretiveness as the prevailing culture in government – a hangover from the one-party era (Calland, Dimba, and Naburi 2004: 21 and 24). This is a severe problem in a country in which, as one donor representative relates: 'if parliament does not ask it does not get'.[35] The CSO leaders interviewed argue along the same lines and describe parliament as reactive instead of proactive.[36] Parliament's attitude towards good communication is at best haphazard and at worst almost non-existent according to a director of a technical assistance programme aimed at strengthening the Tanzania union national assembly.[37] A prominent NGO leader blames the DPs and accuses them of being 'lazy in their thinking intellectually. They must capture what goes on and how parliament can be strengthened'.[38] While this seems overly harsh it could be claimed that in the absence of a strong parliament the sustainability of accountability within government is in part dependent on pressure from the donor community.

Although progress has been noted the relative strength of the different actors in the preparatory process remains more or less the same. Civil society has so far managed to put its impression on the Mkukuta to a greater extent than parliament (see e.g. Curran 2005:11). Particularly this is the case with the large and strong Dar es Salaam based CSOs. On a comparative scale civil society in Tanzania is still weak but has nonetheless so far had a more prominent position in PRSP than the legislature. It actively seeks information on the PRSP and its relative strength vis-à-vis the legislature is by most stakeholders attributed to the political environment and access to resources.[39] Civil society has for instance received comparatively more support from donors.

DPs have not pushed for parliament's participation in the same way as they have for the involvement of civil society. With the gradual opening up of the political space towards the end of the 1980s civil society received a boost. This in part reflected a donor preference for channelling funds through NGOs which were considered links to the grassroots and thus the poor (Kiondo 1995). Since then the international development community has increasingly tended to focus its attention on civil society actors in addition to the executive. This tendency is also evident in the PRSP where participation to a large extent has been equated with civil society (cf. discussion above). In relation to this, one of the DP representatives explains 'there has been a discussion on how to shift from external accountability to domestic accountability and the first step is always to

[33] Interview with MPs, CCM, 09.07.2005; UDP, 28.06.2005; CCM, 08.07.2005; CCM, 29.06.2005; CUF, 02.07.2005; CCM, 08.07.2005; Chadema, 30.06.2005.
[34] Interview with CCM MP, committee chair, 08.07.2005.
[35] Interview with development partner representative, 28.06.2005.
[36] Interview with civil society representatives, 01.07.2005; 05.07.2005.
[37] Bugby-Smith, Donna 2005 'Comments and issues on DFID Tanzania research papers entitled "Research on citizens access to information and it's use for greater government accountability and responsiveness". File note 008/G, unpublished manuscript.
[38] Interview with civil society representative, 05.07.2005.
[39] Interview development partners, 05.07.2005, 30.06.2005, 06.07.2005; Interview civil society representatives, 01.07.2005, 05.07.2005; Interview civil servants, 08.07.2005; 06.07.2005.

think about civil society'.[40] Demanding stronger involvement by civil society is perceived as less controversial than demanding more involvement of the national assembly in PRSP. Being apolitical and not interfering in government affairs are evidently principles that are valued highly with respect to this by DP representatives. Seemingly, 'if you push for the involvement of parliament you take a clear stance, and most tend not to be comfortable with taking a clearer stance'.[41] This has led to a situation where the representative element in the review of the second PRSP is by and large derived from civil society and to a lesser extent from the democratically elected representative organ in the country.

MPs' access to central decision-making fora

As the PRSP is an overarching policy strategy there are several other projects and programmes in operation under it, including the Poverty Monitoring System (PMS) and the Public Expenditure Review (PER) process. These are related instruments. The PER may in practical terms be considered an arm of the PMS as it is supposed to provide input into the preparation of the budget, assess budget execution and whether it is in line with the priorities outlined in the PRSP. Originally it was a World Bank initiative but from 1998 onwards the government has taken a stronger lead in the process. A weakness of the PER is that it does not sufficiently involve the Bunge (see Titsworth, Rutashobya and Mushi 2004; Odén and Tinnes 2003). The PER working group organising the process is composed of civil servants while the PER macro group also comprises representatives from the Bank of Tanzania and development partners. In addition to DPs, the PER sector working groups include civil society representatives. The annual PER consultative meeting has wide local participation and some parliamentarians are also among the invitees. It has been noted that the MPs' lack of knowledge and participation in the PER compared to DPs and CSOs may in fact weaken parliament's role in and influence on the budget (Odén and Tinnes 2003:35).

The PMS, in turn, has an even wider approach than the PER. It is supposed to provide a comprehensive understanding of poverty trends and their reasons, and function as a framework for monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP and other strategies. At the moment the MPs are not involved in the PMS at all, but there is an ongoing debate about whether to include the MPs or not. It is noteworthy that the MPs are not represented on the PRSP/PMS steering committee although several committee chairs in a workshop on the PRSP recommended that parliament should be represented on this committee (Langdon and Draman 2005:19). It was also suggested that a PRSP technical committee should be established at the parliamentary level (Mushi and Ndumbaro 2005:25).[42]

A common argument against more MP involvement in the above-mentioned fora is that the MPs then get involved in the implementation process, the traditional domain of the executive, and thus their role in holding the executive to account could be compromised (Mmari et al. 2005:9).[43] A prominent academic and one of the people highly involved in the review process reasons 'Their [MPs'] place is in the approval of the budget and oversight. If they begin to get into the kitchen this is not right…The same goes for the PER as for the PMS'.[44] A mix-up of roles could of course represent a problem, and involvement in for instance, the PER sector groups may prove impossible in practice as these meetings are every other week, thus effectively excluding parliamentarians from participating. At the same time there are strong arguments in favour of enhanced parliamentary involvement in the PRSP and currently the MPs are clearly disadvantaged by largely being kept outside of the PER and PMS. If not formally including them there is always the option of keeping

[40] Interview with development partner representative, 06.07.2005.
[41] Interview with development partner representative, 04.07.2005.
[42] The committee on environment and natural resources has been involved in a community-based training programme to learn how to act on its own with respect to monitoring PRSP performance. According to the plan the committee is to start a pilot project on community-based PRSP monitoring in Tanzania (Langdon and Draman 2005:19).
[43] Interview with key civil servant, VPO, 04.07.2005.
[44] Interview with academic, 06.07.2005.

them inside the information loop and being provided the possibility of sitting in on meetings. As long as the MPs are completely prevented from participating in these fora they also miss out on an opportunity to learn how to influence the PRSP and exercise their oversight role. The CSOs on the other hand have learned how to participate from the start and thus have a comparative advantage over the MPs.

Participating when the odds are against you: The Bunge and poverty reduction

While parliament's participation in the above mentioned fora is considered controversial by several stakeholders, most of them stress that parliament has an important role to play in holding the executive to account for the implementation of PRSP through the budget cycle. The PRSP defines targets for resource allocation and outputs and the means to achieve this is pro-poor budgeting and implementation. However, although incremental progress has been witnessed with respect to the Mkukuta consultative process the problem remains that the Bunge still holds a marginal position in the political system. Parliament's ability to influence the budget process, and thus its ability to hold the executive to account for the poverty reduction goals set out in the first PRSP, has been weak (Titsworth, Rutashobya and Mushi 2004; Mmari et al. 2005). There is little reason to believe that the legislature's ability to act effectively as a constraint during the implementation, oversight and monitoring of the Mkukuta through the budgetary process should be more potent than in relation to the first PRSP. Since the Mkukuta has just entered the stage of implementation one is left to speculate, but the obstacles to overcome are many and some are deep-rooted.

The inability to affect the budget at an early stage

At the moment it could be argued that the development partners and CSOs have more impact on the budget process than parliament. Particularly this is evident at the preparatory stage of the budget process (Mmari et al. 2005; Titsworth, Rutashobya, Mushi 2004). Although DPs and CSOs in principle only have an advisory role they have the opportunity to put their mark on the budget during the initial stages of the process when changes can more easily be made and when the budget ceilings are not yet set. The Bunge, on the other hand, has limited formal powers in the budgetary process and there is no room for parliamentary input at a stage in the process where policies can easily be changed. Currently, the assembly is not engaged in the budget process before the approval of the Finance Bill which contains the extent of foreign borrowing. Parliamentary intervention is no doubt more likely to be effective at an earlier stage when the budget guidelines are in the process of being drafted and key allocations are discussed and can more easily be altered (Naschold and Fozzard 2002:46; Titsworth, Rutashobya and Mushi 2004:14). In practice the Bunge can only recommend changes within the parameters set by the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) which is a budgeting tool intended to track and facilitate sectoral expenditure. Parliament's role is thus reduced to debating the budget at a fairly detailed level (Daima and ODI 2004:93; Naschold and Fozzard 2002:46).

Engaging parliament more in the budget formulation phase could for instance entail opening the way for parliamentary access to the MTEF proposals and the budget guidelines laying out the budget strategy before they are distributed to the various ministries, departments and agencies (Titsworth, Rutashobya and Mushi 2004: 12 and 14). Presently, the budget guidelines as part of the PER process are presented to the development partners and civil society actors before they are approved by the cabinet and sent to ministries, departments and agencies. Again, CSOs and DPs in principle only have an advisory role. A key technocrat explains that 'The DPs are not really part of the process but they are very important players and contributors. You include them so you

can get the confidence that yes the resources are coming'.[45] Undeniably this gives the DPs a significant leverage over the process. As Hydén (2005) argues, the donor community has markedly increased its leverage as agenda setter in recent years. Quite ironically, in the context of a gradual shift from project aid to various forms of programme aid (sector-wide approaches) and recently also general budget support, there is perhaps an even more strongly felt need among the donors to account back to their respective national parliaments to justify the use of their taxpayers' money.[46] Many bilateral donors are also linking their budget support directly to the PRSP.

Parliamentary scrutiny and oversight in the budget process

A promising development with regard to the Mkukuta is a new budgeting tool, the Strategic Budget Allocation System, which is now under implementation. It is intended to make it easier to track expenditures within the framework of the Mkukuta. A few of the MPs have already received training in the use of it. Moreover, a number of ministers explicitly referred to the Mkukuta when presenting the ministries estimates during the 2005 parliamentary budget session, thus putting it more firmly on the agenda. All the same, the challenges facing parliament in the budget process and thus also in holding the executive to account in the PRSP, are many.

The Bunge's formal power in the budget process is largely confined to accepting or rejecting the budget, although the MPs, at least in theory, can influence the budget through the work in sectoral committees. Reducing parliament's influence over the process is the president's power of dissolution (1977 Constitution, Art. 90 s. 2a-e). The president may dissolve the Bunge and call new elections if the national assembly rejects the government budget. Dissolution does, however, require a new presidential election (1977 Constitution, Art. 38 s. 2b). The latter is a check on the application of the procedure but whether it is a very efficient one is doubtful. So far the CCM has had no real competition in the general elections and the CCM hegemony has stood firm. Also, the MPs in most cases would do anything to avoid risking their parliamentary seat in a re-election. For many not being re-elected would equal losing not only status but also their livelihood. The Bunge has no comparable means at its disposal to counter-balance the presidential privilege of dissolution.[47] A CCM committee chair insists 'You know parliament is dissolved if we vote against the budget. As long as CCM holds a majority in parliament this will never happen'.[48] This clearly has a negative effect on parliament's accountability function in the budget process.

The MPs particularly stress executive dominance and the ruling party discipline as challenging their oversight work (Wang 2005). The incentive for being on good terms with the ruling party CCM is excessively strong and indicates a structural problem weakening the independence of the MPs. The vigor of debates in the plenary have in fact dampened down since the introduction of a multiparty system (Kelsall 2003; Wang 2005). The MPs are not expected to question party policy, at least not in the plenary of the Bunge (Msekwa 2000: 76) and the president has on occasions made it clear in the meetings of the CCM party caucus that MPs opposing certain government-initiated policies will not be able to stand for re-election. Commenting the situation, one of the CCM MPs states, 'we have no say in the budget. We can never say no to the budget. There is the party caucus and the three line whip. The ruling party is so strong. This makes it more difficult to hold the executive to account. You have to succumb to the mighty'.[49]

In sum, it is clear that there has been an absence of meaningful parliamentary participation in the preparatory process of the Mkukuta in Tanzania, and that in practical terms no significant

[45] Interview with key civil servant, 05.07.2005.
[46] Argument made by development partner in interview, 05.07.2005.
[47] Parliament is empowered to impeach the president, but the procedure is complicated and can only be initiated under special circumstances (1977 Constitution Art. 46A). Besides, it enforces juridical compliance with the constitution and is thus not an exercise of political control by the Bunge.
[48] Interview with CCM committee chair, 02.07.2005.
[49] Interview with CCM MP, 09.07.2005.

improvement has taken place with respect to the involvement of parliament and its influence over the process. Taking into account the present status of parliament in the budgetary process and its position in the overall politico-administrative system there is no reason to expect immediate change in this regard. A reason, cited by the director of a parliamentary technical support programme is that 'If you involve parliament there is always the risk of parliament asking embarrassing questions. I think it has been concerted not to involve parliament. I see it as a concerted effort not to. This is a hang-back from the single party state where everything was merged'.[50] Overall, only incremental progress has been noted, underlining that opening the way for formal participation is not necessarily sufficient to ensure deep engagement in poverty reduction strategy paper processes.

Domestic politics matter: But what have donors got to do with it?

There are strong arguments for giving parliaments a say in the pursuit of poverty reduction, although there is no blueprint for how countries are to revise their PRSPs (Hubli and Mandaville 2002; PRSP M&S 2004). How deep their involvement should be is an issue for debate. Parliaments were more or less totally neglected in the design of PRSP, which can be linked to a number of events. In addition, the key actors and initiators of PRSP were not really keen to have them involved. This resulted in a number of PRSP processes where ownership became rather esoteric, the opposite of stated goals on broad-based participation. The donors and IFIs may have believed that they could avoid tricky political involvement by treating PRSP as a purely technical issue, but the outcome was PRSP processes that were depoliticised and delinked from domestic policy processes, which again negatively affected the status of the PRSP and its implementation. This was also the case in Tanzania, despite its status as a PRSP success country.

On the other hand, the PRSP processes seem to have created new arenas and alliances or new 'transnational' relationships which exist as some kind of superstructure that is disconnected and floats above domestic political processes. At the same time, these relationships somewhat overlap with national structures which include both formal and informal structures and channels of accountability, but as concluded in a case study of Uganda: "domestic accountability channels are not strong enough to match donors' influence" (Piron and Norton 2004: 39).

The initial PRSP approach may have weakened fragile channels of vertical accountability between the citizens and their representatives in parliament, as well as horizontal accountability channels between parliament and the executive. As several studies have shown at least in Africa, informal accountability channels based on patronage and clientelism may be more important than the formal ones (Mmari et al. 2005; Chabal 1999). The informal structures may have remained more or less untouched and may even have been strengthened under the PRSP partnership regime.

It gradually dawned on the donors that domestic politics matters and that a deeper understanding of domestic politics is imperative for making any further progress with regard to PRSP. The donors seem to have acknowledged that their knowledge about domestic politics is low. Already the first larger reviews of the PRSP processes have concluded that 'politics matters' (Booth 2001) and have contributed to bringing this issue to the fore. Parliamentary involvement was therefore later added on, but not mainly as a result of domestic demands but rather of external pressure. As was uncovered in the Tanzanian case, the fact that parliament has been included to a greater extent in the second PRSP has still allowed it little impact on the Mkukuta. The fact that parliamentary involvement has remained limited can be explained as a combination of lack of capacity and lack of will. At the same time, both government and donors appear in practice ambivalent to any in-depth involvement of parliaments. Due to the underlying incentive

[50] Interview with development partner representative, 28.06.2005.

mechanisms and due to the many competing accountability channels it should not be expected that parliamentary involvement will be strengthened overnight.

The lessons from the first generation PRSPs seem to have given birth to a new development co-operation fad: 'the importance of domestic politics'. Of course it matters. Despite donors' rhetoric about returning ownership and fostering partnership, the changing aid modalities may have strengthened donors' incentives to get more deeply involved in domestic politics. But it is one thing to need to understand the dynamics of domestic politics; a totally different and more pertinent issue is: what have donors got to do with it?

Interviewees

Parliamentarians and Parliamentary Staff

1	Hon. Peter Kabisa	CCM, Vice Chair, Committee on Foreign Affairs
2	Hon. Teddy Kasella-Bantu	UDP, Committee on Community, Development and Gender
3	Hon. Milton M. Mahanga	CCM, Public Accounts Committee
4	Hon. Anne Makinda	CCM, Chair, Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
5	Hon. Juma M. Mikidadi	CCM, Committee on Foreign Affairs
6	Hon. Hamad R. Mohamed	CUF, Chair, Public Accounts Committee
7	Hon. Sophia M. Simba	CCM, Chair, Committee on Community, Development and Gender
8	Hon. Willbrod Slaa	Chadema, Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
9	Thomas D. Kashililah	Coordinator, Directorate of Planning and ICT, Dar es Salaam Bunge Office
10	Julian Malangu	Officer in charge of the Dar es Salaam Bunge Office

Development Partners

11	Clemens Beckers	Poverty Policy Adviser, GTZ
12	Donna Bugby-Smith	Country Director SUNY/Tanzania
13	Tim Harris	Statistics Adviser DFID Tanzania & Kenya
14	Tor Haug	Second Secretary, Economist, Royal Norwegian Embassy
15	John Hendra	Resident Representative and Resident Co-ordinator, UNDP
16	David Howlett	Poverty Environment Adviser, Vice President's Office and UNDP
17	Sari Jormanainen	Poverty Reduction Adviser, Finnish Embassy
18	Satu Santala	Deputy Head of Mission, Finnish Embassy
19	Anne-Lucie Lefebvre	First Secretary (Development), Canadian High Commission
20	Ummy Ali Mwalimu	Programme Officer, Governance and Refugee Host Areas, Royal Danish Embassy
21	Jorunn Mæhlum	Ambassador, Royal Norwegian Embassy
22	Clara Ruhara	Programme Officer, Local Cooperation Fund, Finnish Embassy

Civil Society and Academics

23	Bernadeta Killian	Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, UDSM
24	Joseph N. Kisanji	Coordinator, Tanzania Education Network (TEN/MET)
25	Andrew Mushi	Policy Advocacy Officer, TANGO
26	Rakesh R. Rajani	Director, Hakielimu
27	Joseph Semboja	Executive Director, REPOA

Civil Servants

28	Pascal B. Assey	Director, Poverty Eradication Division, Vice President's Office
29	Mugisha G. Kamugisha	Commissioner for Policy Analysis, Ministry of Finance
30	Ramadhani M. Khijjah	Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance
31	Laston T. Msongole	Director, Policy Information Development, President's Office Planning and Privatisation
32	Servus Sagday	Assistant Director, Policy, Research, Planning, Vice President's Office
33	Bedason A. Shallanda	Assistant Commissioner Macro Policy, Ministry of Finance

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SUMMARY

Launched only 6 years ago, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) has become a key reference document to a majority of developing countries. More than 70 developing countries have embarked on a PRSP process. In spite of limited substantiation of success, the PRSP approach has continued to evolve. The PRSP not only constitutes a point of departure for developing countries' dialogue with their developing partners, but also claims to be a national steering document for poverty reduction. When the PRSP was designed, three key groups formed the inner circle: donors, civil society and domestic governments. But what about the highest elected public institutions, namely parliaments – why did they not form part of the inner circle? This report explores why parliaments have come to be marginalised in the PRSP processes. However, more recently the neglect of parliaments has been recognized, but why was the request for parliamentary involvement all of a sudden brought to the fore? Existing sources indicate that parliamentary involvement is increasing somewhat but has remained extremely limited. If it is correct that the role of parliament is still marginal, how can this be explained? In order to answer that question in more detail, we undertake a case study of Tanzania. Delving deeper into one single case sheds further light on the mechanisms at work in the PRSP process. A main argument of this report is that parliamentary neglect is linked to the dominance of the executive in policy processes. Another key argument is that the disregard of parliament is strongly related to characteristics inherent in the very PRSP process itself.

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