



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Third Meeting of the African Learning Group on the Poverty Reduction Strategy papers

**3-5 December 2003
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

United Nations Conference Centre
Room 4

Programme of Work

Background

The Third Meeting of the African Learning Group on Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers process (PRSP-LG) will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 3 to 5 December, 2003. The PRSP-LG, an initiative of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), provides a forum for dialogue and information sharing among African countries on the experience with the design and implementation of national poverty reduction strategies by these countries. The Learning Group also provides a platform for the articulation of an African voice on the PRSP process and on the transformed development relations that this process entails.

Day One: Wednesday, 3 December

Morning Session

08:30 - 09:30

Registration

09:30 - 09:45

Opening Remarks

K.Y. Amoako, ECA Executive Secretary

09:45 - 11:15

Session I: Comprehensiveness of Growth Strategies

Rapid and broad based economic growth is critical for poverty reduction. Yet, growth in many African countries has been well below the 7% real GDP growth rate required to meet the millennium development goal of reducing poverty by half by 2015. Recent estimates suggest that sub-Sahara Africa has to grow 28 times its historical average in order to meet this goal. The comprehensiveness of the growth strategies, including macroeconomic, social and structural policies pursued will be critical in this regard.

This session will examine the following issues:

- The comprehensiveness of the growth strategies underpinning national plans to reduce poverty; and
- Country experiences with pro-poor policies.

Chair: Elene Makonnen, Principal Advisor, ECA
Rapporteur: Niall Kristiany, ECA

Presentations:

How context-specific are the growth strategies in the PRSPs countries?

Benjamin Roberts, Chief Researcher, University of Natal, Durban

Are social safety nets necessary for poverty reduction? The experience of Egypt

Heba El Laithy, Professor of Statistics
University of Cairo

What can we learn from the growth strategies of non-PRSP countries: A synthesis

Eric Eboh, Ag. Director, African Institute for Applied Economic Analysis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

11:15 - 11:45 **Coffee Break**

11:45 - 13:15 **Session II: Costing, Budgeting and Public Financial Management Issues in PRSPs**

An important objective of the PRSP is to direct resources to priority areas that have a significant impact on poverty. This objective assigns an important role to the budget and its associated processes and activities in efforts to reduce poverty. Given this, governments are expected to ensure that the PRSPs are fully and realistically costed and duly integrated into their budgets. However, the costing of poverty reduction objectives and the linkage of these objectives to medium-term expenditure frameworks/budgets feature as key weaknesses in the PRSPs of a number of countries. There is also the concern that there may be inter-temporal tradeoffs between the current emphasis on the social sector and the need for sustained poverty reduction programmes over the longer term.

This session will examine the following questions:

- 🗣️ How realistic are the costing scenarios underlying the PRSPs?
- 🗣️ What are the trade-offs between macroeconomic stability and higher public expenditures to meet PRSP goals?
- 🗣️ To what extent is the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) serving as an institutionalized vehicle for public expenditure planning?

Chair: Annie L.M Hlasoa, Director of Sectoral Planning, Ministry of Development Planning, Lesotho.

Rapporteur: Amson Sibanda, ECA

Presentations:

Assessing the realism of the cost estimates of PRSPs

Hailu Mekonnen, Principal Poverty Reduction Specialist,
Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development Unit,
African Development Bank

Costing the PRSP: The experience of Madagascar

Modeste Raveloson, Director General of Planning,
Ministry of Finance and Budget, Madagascar

The PRSP and the medium-term expenditure framework: How consistent are they?

Joseph Ntangsi, Consultant Yaounde, Cameroon

13:15- 15:00 **Lunch: Delegates Lounge Terrace (2nd Floor, UNCC)**

Afternoon Session

15:00 – 17:00 **Session III: The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Africa: Impact on Growth and Poverty**

The HIV/AIDS epidemic poses a significant development challenge to Africa. It is now a major factor in explaining the deterioration of social indicators in a number of African countries – the decline in life expectancy, rising mortality and morbidity. Economic growth by itself is unlikely to result in significant progress towards poverty reduction if the accumulation of human capital and the ability of African governments to deliver social and economic services are irretrievably eroded by HIV/AIDS. The PRSP framework provides an important entry point to address many of these issues. The challenge facing many African countries has to do with systematically assessing the developmental impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and ensuring the incorporation of related concerns into national plans.

This session will examine:

- 🗣️ The impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on growth, human capital, food security, and state structures; and
- 🗣️ The degree to which HIV and AIDS concerns have been reflected in PRSPs.

Chair: Kasirim Nwuke, ECA
Rapporteur: Demba Diarra, ECA

Presentations:

The HIV/AIDS epidemic: Impact on growth and poverty reduction in Africa

Nana Poku, Research Director, Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa, ECA

HIV and AIDS in Namibia's antipoverty program

Penny Akwenye, Director of Development Planning, National Planning Commission, Namibia

The intersection of HIV/AIDS and poverty reduction: The experience of Uganda

Michael Tukei, Assistant Commissioner, National Planning, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Uganda

17:00-17:30 **Coffee/Tea Break**

17:30-18:00 Administrative Matters

18:00 - 19:30 **Reception: Hosted by the ECA Executive Secretary**
Venue: Delegates Lounge, 2nd Floor, UNCC

Day Two: Thursday, 4 December

Morning Session

09:30 - 11:00 **Session IV: The Challenge of Institutionalising Participation**

The PRSP approach has created new political space for the participation of a broad spectrum of actors in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of national poverty strategies. Indeed, in many African countries PRSP-related countrywide consultation represents a paradigm shift from past practices that tended to be dominated by central governments and donor-led. There is now consensus that the emphasis on participation and ownership can indeed improve policy design and reduce the probability of non-implementation of policies.

This session will examine:

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- 🗣️ To what extent has participation under the PRSP process led to the integration of the concerns articulated by the poor in the policy content of PRSs?
 - 🗣️ Are there clear benchmarks for determining who is participating, at what stage, and what level?
 - 🗣️ To what extent has the quest for broad-based participation replaced or undermined the fledgling institutions of representative democracy?
 - 🗣️ How can governments best institutionalise participation?

Chair: Robert Okello, Director, Office of Policy and Programme Coordination, ECA

Rapporteur: Emebet Mesfin, ECA

Presentations:

Is participation really empowering the poor? – A civil society organization perspective

Khalid Hassan Idris,
Sudanese Civil Society Network for Poverty Alleviation

The nature of participation in a small landlocked economy: The experience of Lesotho

Annie L.M. Hlasoa

The nature of participation in a non-PRSP country: The Namibian case

Sylvanus Ikhide, Economic Advisor, Central Bank of Namibia

11:00 - 11:30 **Coffee/Tea Break**

11:30 - 13:00 **Session V: National Capacity Needs**

In many African countries, significant gaps exist in national capacity to undertake poverty analysis, design and implement anti-poverty programs and systematically monitor their impacts. Institutional and human capacity gaps are most acute in budget preparation, financial management, medium-term expenditure planning, economic forecasting, and debt management. Technical capacity for auditing and accounting – the backbone of government accountability – also requires greater emphasis.

This session will consider the following issues:

- 🗣️ How can capacity building in the technical areas needed for effective implementation of MTEFs and the PRSP be scaled up?
- 🗣️ How can efforts be scaled up to establish better statistical systems to monitor and evaluate progress?

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- 🗣️ What measures are needed to facilitate better utilization of the capacity that exists in the continent?

Chair: Hakim Ben Hammouda, Director,
Trade and Regional Integration Division,
ECA

Rapporteur: Eva Kiwango, ECA

Presentations:

What mix of capacities do poor countries really need for poverty reduction: Lessons from case study countries

K. Ntalaja, Consultant, Democratic Republic of Congo

Capacity needs for poverty analysis: Lessons from Tanzania

B. A. Shallanda, Assistant Commissioner,
Ministry of Finance, Tanzania

Is there really a capacity shortfall? Effective utilization of existing capacities for poverty reduction – The experience of Nigeria

Chidi Ikpechukwu, Assistant Director/PRSP,
National Planning Commission,
Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

13:00 –15:00 **Lunch: Delegates Lounge Terrace (2nd Floor, UNCC)**

15:00 –17:00 **Session VI: To what extent are the Bretton Woods Institutions Aligning their Modalities?**

The PRSP is now accepted as a framework for channelling partner support to government-owned priorities and plans. This offers a significant opportunity to enhance the coordination and coherence of policies among donors as well as within countries and to focus partner support on the goal of poverty reduction.

In this session, we will focus on:

- 🗣️ The degree to which the PRGF is aligned to the PRSP;
- 🗣️ How the Strategic Partnership with Africa (SPA) agenda has evolved over time in a manner consistent with the PRSP process; and
- 🗣️ Donor Harmonization – selected country experiences.

Chair: Patrick Asea, Director,
Economic and Social Policy Division, ECA

Rapporteur: Kwabia Boateng, ECA

Presentations:

Aligning the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) to the PRSP: What is the experience to date?

Elliot Harris, Policy Development and Review Department, IMF

The SPA 6 Agenda – How is it changing and how consistent is it with the PRSP?

Jeff Katz, Manager, Partnership Group, Africa Region, World Bank

Day Three: Friday, 5 December

Morning Session

09:30 - 11:00 **Session VII: Alignment of Budget Support: Country-level Experiences**

This session will have two segments. The first segment will include a discussion on the experience of Rwanda and Ethiopia with the donor harmonization and alignment of budget support to PRSPs. It will draw on the preliminary outcome of recent country missions by the SPA Budget Support Group to these countries.

Chair: Tony Killick, ODI
Rapporteur: Chantal Dupasquier, ECA

Presentations:

Rwanda

Vincent Karega,
Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda

Ethiopia

Ethiopian Official/ DFID/EU

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 -12:30 **Session VII continued . .**

The SPA, with the collaboration of ECA, administered questionnaires on the alignment of budget support and balance of payments support with poverty reduction strategies in 23 African countries. Representatives of the governments and all budget support donors in these countries completed the questionnaires. This segment of Session VII will discuss the preliminary results from that survey.

Chair: Tony Killick
Rapporteur: Chantal Dupasquier

Presentation:

Gilles Hervio, Head of Unit,
Macroeconomic Issues and Structural Adjustment
European Union

12:30 - 13:00

Session VIII: Wrap Up

Chair: Elene Makonnen
Rapporteur: Eric Eboh