

PARLIAMETARY PERCEPTION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF BPOA.

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OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- Mandate of Malawi Parliament.
- An overview of BPOA with particular focus on commitment No. 2 (Good Governance at national and international levels.)
- Implementation strategy of BPOA.
- Relevance of parliamentary roles on implementation of BPOA.
- Assessment of progress, lessons learnt and challenges in the implementation of commitment No. 2 of BPOA.
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

MANDATE OF MALAWI PARLIAMENT.

- Malawi's parliament mandate, provided by the constitution under section 48 of the constitution is to exercise legislative, representative, scrutiny and oversight roles for promotion of principles of good governance to reflect the aspirations, interests and welfare of the people of Malawi.
- The other mandate is to ensure that operations and programmes of parliament are fully aligned with the Malawi Growth and Development strategy as highlighted in the Strategic plan for 2010 – 2014 and the MDGs.
- Parliament is also there to ensure that the operationalisation process of “taking parliament to the people” is being implemented so that it becomes responsive to the people's needs.

AN OVERVIEW OF BPOA

- The LDCs have been implementing BPOA for the decade 2001 – 2010 with the aim of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from acute hunger by 2015 and promote sustainable development.
- The BPOA has got a set of goals and targets along with action – oriented commitments in seven critically interlinked development areas.
- For purposes of this presentation, much focus will be on progress made on implementing commitment No. 2 of BPOA (Good governance at national and international levels), lessons learnt, challenges faced and recommendations on effective implementation of the programme for the remaining years before we reach 2015 in order to maximise achieving the targets.

Overview of BPOA Cont'd

- The effective implementation of BPOA hinges heavily on promotion of good governance at national and international levels.
- In fact, the BPOA recognises good governance as one of its commitments to be prioritised if the LDCs were to eradicate extreme poverty by 2015.
- At national level – parliament has of late been on the forefront in implementing commitment number 2 (good governance) of BPOA.
- Strict adherence to its key functions, mandate and responsibilities in implementing this commitment has been the order of the day over the decade.
- Periodic review on implementation of MPRSP and MDGs where commitments of BPOA were all built into.

RELEVANCE OF PARLIAMENTARY ROLES ON IMPLEMENTATION OF BPOA

i. Political and Institutional Context

- Malawi is a young democracy and constitution provides for separation of powers.
- Parliament has powers to approve national budgets, oversee key public appointments and govt expenditure, as well as pass relevant laws.
- Parliament views good governance as pre – requisite for growth and poverty reduction, hence one pillar of MGDS.
- Parliament is a custodian of rule of law, which is seen as both an instrument for regulating human conduct and catalyst for economic growth and development.

Progress made on implementing commitment No. 2 of BPOA

- Success of implementing BPOA hinges heavily on prevalence of good governance which is the core business of legislative institution.
- Malawi has instituted measures towards promoting economic and democratic governance, control of corruption, justice and rule of law, security, human rights, decentralization and empowerment of the vulnerable people.
- Parliamentary reforms have been undertaken to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in service delivering to the people.

Progress cont'd

- Goal of the reform is to take parliament to the people by entailing openness to the people and protecting needs and interests of the people.
- Elections conducted regularly (both presidential and parliamentary).
- Civic education on differences between democratic governance and democratic govt being conducted country wide.

Progress on Implementation of BPOA cont'd

- Institutions such as human rights commission, the ombudsman, Anti – corruption bureau and NGOs established to publicize and prosecute human rights violation. No acute human rights issues in Malawi and the law provides equal rights for all.
- Constitutional review process being coordinated by Malawi Law Commission is ongoing and to be completed soon, parliament to scrutinise and approve.
- Parliament approving national budgets annually and authorising Government to borrow funds for specific investments in areas of promoting good governance at both national and international level.
- Public Accounts Committee regularly scrutinizes audit reports of government expenditures.
- Parliament has cautiously played its oversight roles so that the budgets are developed and implemented within the framework agreed with IMF and World Bank.

Progress Cont'd

- Integrated Financial Management System put in place so that Government expenditure should be in compliance with Financial Services Management act – Parliamentary oversight role not compromised.
- Malawi member of AU, NEPAD, COMESA and SADC, international organizations with specific mandates to implement global and regional development goals.
- Malawi promoting gender equality – 50:50 campaign in progress aimed at increasing women participation and representation in politics and decision – making process.
- Considerable amounts of funds being approved for Agricultural sector development, Health, Education, Water and Sanitation and Infrastructure development.

Key Summary of Progress

- Parliament has noted that Malawi Government is committed to achieving MDGs by 2015 through implementation of its own national development strategy, The MDGS.
- Remarkable progress made, though some targets may not be achieved. Assessments show that Malawi will achieve 5 out of the 8 MDGs. More effort needed in achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and improving maternal health.
- Malawi promoting good and democratic governance, rule of law, gender equality and women empowerment in decision – making processes.
- Considerable progress made in eradicating extreme poverty and suffering from hunger through farm input subsidy programme. Parliament appropriating funds for this programme.
- Serious challenges faced during mobilization of financial resources.

Challenges Faced and Lessons learnt

- National Parliaments have got huge responsibility in promoting good governance and rule of law, hence the need for them to take leading role in reviewing and implementing commitments No. 2 under BPOA.
- Delayed and lack of fulfilment of commitments by developed countries on overseas development aid, debt relief, trade and technology transfer has had a negative effect on achieving some targets under MDGs and BPOA.
- Facilitating participation of key players in implementing BPOA took some time and this compromised the degree of quality and quantity of achievement.
- Though some targets appear not to be achieved by 2015, this should be a lesson on how best to prioritize activities that could be implemented during the remaining five years.

Challenges encountered and Lessons Learnt cont'd

- BPOA has guided well national Governments in LDCs on how to eradicate extreme poverty and suffering from hunger (Malawi being a case study).
- Mobilisation of resources for implementation of commitments under MDGs and BPOA should be the shared responsibility between LDCs and developed partners, timely allocation of resources for effective implementation of programmes should be prioritized.
- Uneven political playing field negatively affecting women participation in politics and decision making process.

Challenges Cont'd

- Politics of exclusion has got no room in modern politics of good governance.
- Unwillingness of some Government institutions to promote openness, transparency and accountability affecting implementation of commitment no.2
- Lack of intra – party democracy compromising the aspect of good governance.
- Weak opposition parties and domination of executive in issues of legislation defeating the concept of separation of powers hence also compromising the oversight role of parliament.
- Lack of financial independence affecting implementation of parliamentary activities and programmes.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

- The importance of strengthening the partnership between LDCs and their development partners cannot be overemphasized, hence need to be prioritized.
- Mobilizing all stakeholders and actors in development, both at national and international levels, to fully and effectively implement the commitments that fall under their respective mandates and competence.
- It should be a must to integrate good governance in national development agenda.
- Inter – Parliamentary Union should encourage respective parliaments to take an active role in implementing the BPOA and MDGs.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- Promotion of good governance should also focus on empowerment of women to enable them participate effectively in politics and decision-making processes.
- LDCs should promote the culture of politics of inclusion if we were to consolidate democratic governance.

End of Presentation

Thank you for listening to this presentation.