

REPORT ON A DAY TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF PERLIAMENT ON BUDGET PERFORMANCE MONITORING

BACKGROUND

In August 2009, the government of Sierra Leone signed a financial and grants agreement with the International Development Association (IDA) for the Integrated Public Financial Management Reform project (IPFMFR). The overall objective of this project is to supporting government to improve the credibility and predictability, control and transparency of fiscal and budget management. It also seeks to support core public financial management (PFM) components relating to budget management, Accounting procurement, revenue and tax policy and transparency in the management of public funds. It is against this backdrop that the Budget Advocacy Network (BAN) in collaboration with Ibis education for development decided to train parliamentarians more especially the finance committee of parliament on budget performance monitoring to be proactive and result oriented for the task of the nation .This action for BAN and IBIS to takes this venture is in two fold.

- (a) That the parliamentarians understand the budget process so as to be pro-active and make meaningful contributions in budget debates. And that;
- (b) MPS will be in a better position to analyze the budget in a sound micro economic analytical proneness to face with the challenges of corruption and other mal-practices within line ministries, MDAS political manipulations that use to take place in the collection of taxes and public funds.

Specific Objectives of the seminar

- To empower parliamentarians in the broader debate on the issues of budget and monitoring the process properly.
- To have effective participation and engagement between parliamentarians and civil society institutions that monitors the budget and public tracking system.
- To mobilize and support capacity building efforts of institutions like NSAC to enables them performance their oversight roles.
- To create an enabling environment for MDAS to cooperate and work within the budgetary process for the development of the nation, restricting leakages etc.

RATIONAL OF THE TRAINING

- To evaluate and consult with parliamentarians as to what has been done within the previous fiscal year and what parliament is doing toward improving sound micro-economic policies for the development of the state entities.

- To broaden the capacity of parliamentarians in the budgeting debate of the fiscal year which will enable them to evaluate the basic concept of the medium term expenditure framework and see how far the parliamentarians are performing their oversight role.
- To reflect the role of parliament in the budget process and come out clearly with recommendations in the areas where parliamentarians may have neglected some of their roles and responsibilities.
- To show indicators for effective budget performance and basic criteria to know whether the budget is strategic and focus more on programs.
- To bring out basic budget monitoring tools and see how non-state actors' position on the budget discussion will be important.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

- Identify areas where in the parliament or the Finance committee of parliament has done a marvelous job or need to improve in their duty.
- To see what the current parliament has done so far and equate that to the experience gained from other nations in the sub-region like Ghana.
- To come out with a template of budget monitoring and tracking system.
- To see what the current parliament has gained so far and try to be more strategically focused for the way forward.

Number of participants

35

Strategies

- Discussion forum by facilitators
- Mode of language use English
- Question and answer session for recommendations

AGENDA:

- Tea Break and Registration of participants
- Prayers

- Introduction of the chairman
- Chairman welcome remarks
- Statement- the Director – budget Bureau
- The Vice Chairman Finance Committee of Parliament
- Keynote address on opening training - Training
- Basic Concept of the Medium Term Expenditure framework
- Question and Answer
- The Role of Parliament in the budget process
- Question and answer
- Indicators for effective budget performance and basic criteria to look to know whether the budget is strategic and focus more on program
- Question and Answer
- **Lunch**
- Basic Budget Monitoring Tools
- Question and Answer
- Non State action position paper on the budget discussion
- Findings of the Sierra Leone Tax report
- Question and Answer
- End of training and Administrative Arrangement

NARRATIVE OF THE WORKSHOP

Budget Advocacy Network (BAN) in collaboration with Ibis Education for development on 23rd November 2011 organized a day long training workshop for the finance committee of parliament in particular and MPS generally on budget performance monitoring at the committee room one of the parliament building in Free Town- Sierra Leone.

The workshop attracts members of the public and media practitioners who were present to gather news and report back to their respective media houses. At the start of the training workshop Mr. Abu Bakarr Kamara BAN coordinator called the workshop to order as it started with silent prayers. He then introduced the chairman of the occasion who also doubles as chairman of BAN Mr. Abu Brima.

The chairman Welcome participants and reminded himself that he will take note of parliamentary procedures while chairing the program and the due acknowledgement that the honorable deserve when they are within the parliamentary confirms. In his remarks, he declares the purpose for the workshop and stressed its crucial nature as we are about to receive from the Ministry of Finance the budget that will soon knock the doors of parliament within two working days. He introduced Mr. Nicholas Adamtey a Ghanaian expert and asked for an apology of the Director of budget bureau at the Ministry of Finance Mr. Mathew Dingie, but however expressed that he will be deputized by Mr. Jah his deputy. He then gave participants the agenda of the workshop and asked that the deliberation be done in a snap manner in order to utilize the session properly and allows other Member of Parliament to take part in other deliberation that was ongoing along side this workshop.

The chairman then asked key stakeholders to make statements Hon. Hassan B. Sheriff Vice Chairman of Finance Committee in parliament gave a brief statement on behalf of his committee in parliament. He highlighted that the budget allocation and application is only the basic concept but it will help us as members of parliament he said to navigate the way we are going to work within the finance committee of parliament to properly contribute in the budgeting process.

Hon. Eric Kononoma gave the key note address said that the training of monitoring budget performance is a crucial component for all parliamentarians. He said if parliamentarians do not understand the budget processing those parliamentarians has lost. Parliament usually provides the nation with money through the laws they make for the nation. He stressed. He went on to say that the budget process must be better understood for all. But he said there are new challenges that added more values in enhancing our capacity in our roles as parliamentarians of the entire process.

Having concluded his statement Mr. Thassin May Jah from the Ministry of Finance was asked to make his statement. He apologized on behalf of his Director. who was unavoidably absent from the workshop maintaining that he could have love to have attend the workshop but could not as they are seriously working toward the presentation of the budget within 24 hours. He said workshops of this nature will help M.P.S to be more pro-active in the budget debate process. He said the next years budget could be very much understand when this training is good on .whatever skill acquire should be fully monitor and the appropriate members of parliament will be benefit.

No sooner as he completed, the chairman responded by saying that the content of the training is very much relevant and it will served as an important factor in helping MPS in evaluating the current budget debate that parliament is about to engage in . He said next year is very crucial for the operations of this budget parliament will be given the chance. He said that parliament is restricted not to increase but were they could not BAN and its partners will make it done. He called on the clerk of parliament Former Hon. Ibrahim Sesay to make his presentation.

He Started by saying that understanding the budget process is crucial; it can best be understood as in a diagram of cycle he presented to the participants. In the cycle there are stages, starting from stages 1 to stage 12. He called the attention of the participants a diagram of stages starting from one, making specific reference to stages seven that deals with MOF and law offices department. Prepare appropriation bill, the budget appropriation bill discuss and approval by parliament. He said the establishment of parliament the legislative authority of Sierra Leone is rested in parliament pursuant to sub- section 3. And he cataloged the following: authority for imposition of taxes, Duty free concession, duty waivers. He also made maintain of the 2005/6 synergies how the Minister of Finance faltered the authority of parliament by pushing to National Revenue Authority without consultation with parliament the issue of revenue collection he raised all of these issues and more before going to his presentation proper .

However, details of this presentation that deals with the section 110 and some other sub-section and the constitutional specifications can be found in the **appendage of this report. Mark appendage 1:1.**

In responding to the Presentation the chairman said Some of the provisions in the 1991 constitution should underscore this issue of power transfer that deals with parliamentarians to any other hand of government that may be set upon to deal with the collection of revenue as revenue is vey much key to the development of a nation. After this snap observation the parliamentarians themselves asked some few questions. Among them is the following:

- Hon. Brima Kamanda said the budget of every nation is very much paramount; and parliament must be seen in charge of the finance of the entire budget of the nation in terms of approval, implementation, and scrutiny , However, he said in most cases parliament most offer focuses on the expenditure aspect and neglect the other side as in stage eight and nine that deals with budget appropriations bill discussed and approved by parliament and secondly, ministry of finance funds released and budget executed by line ministries. He asked when these neglect are caused by parliamentarians what is expected to be done.
- Monitoring of budget and the allocation of the resources and how this resources are allocated he said this mathematic models always buying in the deficit that government usually don't have explanation for. Should parliamentarians raise them as issues to be discussed within the framework of the budget discussion in parliament?
- He made mention of today's economy in Europe citing Greece, Italy and Portugal for example and said that the budget that parliament awaits will be running into three thrill ion Leones but if parliament is not firm than the country will be in trouble. So what should parliamentarians do in term of firm action?
- Hon. Tondoneh expresses some concerns: he said the challenges on parliament are huge so parliament should not only being seen operating at the reporting stage rather parliament must being seen operating with the Ministries at the formative stage of the budget process.

- A parliamentarian usually focused on budget hearing what we generate for the running of the budget is not most often focused at. What should parliamentarians do in that direction? He questioned
- Responses were as follows: with regards to HON. Kamanda's question he was referred to the fiscal responsibility act that usually manages the deficit. On the issue of revenue there is the issue of shifting the goal post for eventualities. On the side of delegating parliamentary responsibilities parliament need to be auaiut about in a more legal manner before the action is taken.
- Hon. Hassan Sheriff made the following responses

The other presentation was made by Mr. Jah from the Ministry of Finance deputizing the Director Mr. Mathew Digie . Mr. Jah made a general overview of the MTEF process he started by saying that in some case the MTET process involves a cumbersome and time consuming preparation of detailed documents. He told the parliamentarians that we have developed a streamlined and simplified process focusing on key issues. He made mentioned that assessing all ministry programs and funding requirements form scratch each year the process focuses on identifying the changes to budget requirement.

- Additional actions required to performance and or as a result in policy change.
- Potential savings etc.

Details of this presentation are found in the appendage of this report

After the presentation these were the questions ask and few comments made

Hon. Soluko: said Most of the committees within parliament are working with different issues of contracts, salaries, furniture etc revenue collected are not properly placed within the committees of parliament that should be monitoring there processes when parliamentarians asked questions those questions they are not properly answered.

- Hon. Ose Williams - said what is the actual budget and why can't the ministry present the actual budget to parliament before the debate on the budget.
- Mr. Jah responded that there are procedures that need to be concluded before the presentation of the budget to the house of parliament.
- Hon. Saluki said parliament have this issue of institution problem involving the Mines ministry the NRA and few other who decided not to perform their function effectively and parliament has the moral grounds to question those institutions which have decide to highjack their programs.

- Hon. Ose Williams said gaps often rises between the donors and state institutions what has been the monitoring mechanism the government has created for sources of revenue.
- Hon Tonodar – where government originated this issue of pre-taxing and how effective it has serve the nation.

Respond: - the chairman on finance committee said the government is not pre-taxing business people etc. The chairman noted that parliamentarian needs to know were the pre-taxing over five hundred billions.

After the questions sessions Mr. Nicholas Adamtay a Ghanaian expert combine his presentations “ the indicators for effective budget performance and basic criteria to look to know whether the budget is strategic and focus have on program” and that of “ basic budget monitoring tools”.

Subsequently Mr. Abu Bakari Kamara- coordinator of BAN presented the other presentation on the issue of non state actor position paper on the budget discussion. He gave a general background and on the budgetary process and highlight key recommendations from BAN previous work.

Detail of this presentation is found at appendage of his report.

Likewise, Cecilia Mattia makes her presentation no findings of the Sierra Leone Tax report. Her report draws the attention of the participants and asked that BAN and it partner continues to monitor the operations of Tax collectors.

Detail of this presentation is at the appendage of this report.

Detail reaction of participants

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS BY PARTICIPANTS

CAPACITY REQUIRED IMPLEMENTING PROJECT AND MEASURES TAKEN TO ADDRESS THEM BY THE ORGANIZATION.

The capacity required in our project implementation includes but not limited to the following;

- A) advocacy and lobbying skills.
- b) Proper use of the media in reporting budget monitoring processes related incidences (electronics and print)

EXPERIENCE GAINED IN WORKING WITH MPS AT THE WORKSHOP.

The experience gained includes;

a) Knowing basic questioning techniques on finding performance indicators or impacts using the Finance of committee of parliament questioning methods.

b) Questioning skills on sensitive issues like budget processing and tax policies provoking rigid reactions from the parliamentarians themselves.

c) How to conduct formative monitoring research on impacts created and what are the indicators of change.

i) It has created a learning point which experiences can be shared with other partners and stakeholders alike.

ii) It has also created a forum to discuss the budget process.

EFFECTIVENESS AND EXTENT OF LINKS TO AND COLLABORATION WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS.

From the program operational view point, the fact that the MPS attended the program in their numbers justify, beyond all reasonable doubts, that an effective collaboration was enjoyed from our MPS and our collaboration. These could also be donors themselves who, due to confidence reposed in us as partners, through the instrumentality of our regional office, fund our activities. The staffs of our regional office are no exception to our said external stakeholders from whom we have received effective collaboration. The board of trustee of our national office, consultants, facilitators, and the like also counts among external stakeholders.

CONCLUSION AND APPRECIATIONS:

In conclusion therefore, we say this job was done under constructive planning. In order to achieve this report, we extend our appreciation and thanks for the support and funding assistance from our donors.

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APPENDAGE OF THE REPORT

1.1 PRESENTATION BY THE CLARK OF PARLIAMENT:

1.2 Basic concept of the medium term expenditure framework

1.3 BASIC BUDGET MONITORING TOOLS

1.4 BUDGET PERFORMANCE PRESENTED BY MR. NICHOLAS ADAMTEY

1.5 MEDUIM TERM EXPENITURE FRAMEWORK BY ABU BAKARR KAMARA

1.6 SIERRA LEONE TAX REPORT BY CECILIA MATTIA