

POLICY BRIEF ON LOCAL AND INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY: LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA¹

1. INTRODUCTION

The UNDP (Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Service Centre) commissioned the preparation of four Policy Briefs on decentralization, local and inclusive service delivery, local government finance and local government capacity development for Local Governments in Eastern and Southern Africa. These Policy Briefs build on the primarily analytical study undertaken by the UNDP on Local Governments in Eastern and Southern Africa in 2010.

The Policy Briefs are instruments aimed at informing policy and decision-makers within the local government space at national, regional and continental levels on the nature, scope and principles that should underpin future programmatic interventions. These latter interventions will have the potential to strengthen the local government sector as the strategic entry point and key driver for achieving inclusive, sustainable and decentralized governance, local development and poverty reduction in the two regions. The four Policy Briefs present key observations, lessons and policy positions that need to be considered by decision-makers. Ideally, these briefs require a strong evidence-based orientation associated with a particular theme or issue.

This specific Policy Brief on local and inclusive service delivery focuses on key policy which require discussion, consensus and a shared vision by decentralization, local governance and local development policy makers in Eastern and Southern Africa.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

The two baseline reports on Local Governments in Eastern and Southern Africa provide an adequate theoretical and basic empirical foundation to the thematic area of local and inclusive service delivery. The basic components of local and inclusive service delivery arising from the reports include:

- a) There is a primary focus on public goods and services;
- b) There is an explicit pro-poor bias;
- c) The services are provided at a local community level, although various levels of government can be involved;
- d) These goods and services are created to support the production and reproduction of social, economic and political life;
- e) Service delivery contributes to human dignity, quality of life and sustainable livelihoods;
- f) Inclusive service delivery is a process of responding to the diversity of human needs through increasing participation and reducing social exclusion of historically marginalized groups, e.g. women and youth;

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- g) There is a focus on the provision of basic services to previously marginalized groupings, e.g. a consequence of this is gender-mainstreaming;
- h) Accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and equity in service delivery are key considerations;
- i) Freedom of choice by citizens in the service delivery process is a crucial element;
- j) State and non-state actors have a role in the service delivery process; and
- k) Service delivery must address the entire life-cycle, such as planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

What is the context for Eastern and Southern Africa? The figures for Sub-Saharan Africa on access to key basic services suggest a daunting challenge. The overall progress in meeting the MDGs is not good, and is at best regarded as mixed for Africa. The primary message at the end of the first decade of the 21st century is that Africa will not meet the MDG targets by 2015: *"Africa's progress towards the MDGs varies by sub region, by country and by goal. Although overall progress is in the right direction, its pace is largely inadequate for achieving all the goals by the 2015 deadline"* (UNECA, 2011:39)

The World Bank (2010) has also argued that the absolute number of people living in extreme poverty has been on the rise in Sub-Saharan Africa. The World Health Organization (2010) equally, points to a disturbing picture for Sub-Saharan Africa for water and sanitation. It indicates that only 60% of the population has access to improved water sources and 31% of the population has access to improved sanitation. The rural -urban figures show that rural areas face greater challenges with access to basic services for water and sanitation: 83% of urban and 47% of rural people have access to improved water; and 44% of urban and 24% of rural people have access to improved sanitation. The WHO report concludes that Sub-Saharan Africa is not on track to meet neither the water nor sanitation MDG targets.

3. IDENTIFICATION AND ELABORATION OF KEY POLICY ISSUES FROM THE TWO BASELINE REPORTS

The baseline report on Local Government in Southern Africa focuses on 14 countries², while the Eastern Africa report covers 8 territories³. The discussion on service delivery in the above two reports identifies most of the crucial issues that require policy debate, however there are some gaps and omissions which are flagged in this report.

3.1 Policy and Definitional Approaches to Local and Inclusive Service Delivery

The central policy question is whether there is consensus on the concept of "local and inclusive service delivery" and whether this is appropriate to address the challenges in Eastern and Southern Africa. The critical elements of this approach are teased out in the introductory background section. Additional elements are proposed in section 4.

² Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

³ 5 countries of the East African Community (EAC)- Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda; 2 countries of the Horn of Africa – Ethiopia and Eritrea; and one Indian Ocean Island state – The Union of the Comoros; and South Sudan (note: it was not covered since it became an independent country in July 2011).

3.2 Constitutional and Legal Architecture for Service Delivery

A key policy issue is whether it is desirable to have an explicit mandate on service delivery for local governments in the respective Constitutions and legal frameworks of countries in the two regions, or only in primary legislation and associated policies.

Empirically, however, it should be assessed whether countries with the local government service delivery mandate in their Constitutions have made greater progress in broadening access and reducing backlogs compared to those who have only enshrined the service delivery mandate in primary legislation and national policy.

Of the countries assessed in the Eastern Africa baseline report, only four (4) have decentralization enshrined in their Constitutions: Union of Comoros, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Of the fourteen (14) countries assessed in Southern Africa, ten (10) have local government in their national Constitutions: Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zambia. The implied policy argument from the reports is that it is desirable to have enabling legislative and legal frameworks to guide the consistent and systematic implementation of local and inclusive service delivery.

3.3 Service Levels, Norms and Standards

Both baseline reports recognize that countries adopt different approaches to the issue of service levels, norms and standards. One policy issue is whether it is desirable to adopt a common approach to service levels, norms and standards in both regions. For example, what is regarded as a basic or minimum level of access to safe water? Is it a communal standpipe, and if so, how many people should the communal standpipe reasonably serve?

Both baseline reports do not provide examples on these issues, neither do they offer guidance on how individual countries are approaching these issues of service levels, norms and standards. The reports also do not offer concrete lessons or policy advice on the matter of service levels, norms and standards.

3.4 Service Delivery Models

Both reports provide an inventory of service delivery models with some country examples. However, policy lessons and preferences are not clearly made in detail on any of these models. The primary four categories of service delivery models are: models of public sector provision; community based provision; private sector provision and partnerships; and various 'mixed models'.

There is a very limited critical appraisal of the appropriateness or effectiveness of these various service delivery models. Also a closer appraisal of national policies and legislation in Southern and Eastern Africa needs to be undertaken to assess the policy preferences regarding these service delivery models. In addition, more empirical work must be undertaken on the de facto adoption and utilization of these service delivery models.

3.5. Which Services Should Local Government Focus on ?

The national policy and legal architecture on decentralization and service delivery typically distributes and assigns responsibility for specific services and functions across and within various levels of government; this is also extended to various state and parastatal agencies.

Both reports recognize the central role that local governments are playing in service delivery and the specific responsibilities that have been assigned to the local level. At the same time it is pointed out that in Southern Africa, central governments retain responsibility for critical services that would otherwise be the responsibility of local governments, i.e. water and roads. Key services that are provided by local governments in Eastern Africa are:

- a) provision of social services such as education, health, housing;
- b) planning; infrastructure development and maintenance;
- c) waste management and environmental conservation;
- d) facilitate local economic development;
- e) security for people and property; and to some extent
- f) judicial services.

3.6 Institutional Arrangements, Coordination Modalities and Capacity for Service Delivery

The system of government provides the institutional framework for the distribution and assignment of functions and services and what sub-national governments need to implement, manage, coordinate and oversee.

Regarding the overall responsibility and coordination, all countries are recognized to have agencies or national Ministries to spearhead decentralization. One of the most common problems is the lack of coordination between various sectors, Ministries, agencies and sub-national governments. *More empirical work needs to be done regarding the various institutional arrangements and capacity challenges for local service delivery.* But at the same time there are strong policy lessons and recommendations emerging.

3.7 Inter-governmental Fiscal and Funding Approaches to Service Delivery

Inter-governmental (decentralized) fiscal and funding regimes have a direct impact on local and inclusive service delivery. Put differently, an appropriate decentralized fiscal and funding regime is a critical enabler for service delivery.

There are a number of key observations and conclusions from the reports that have policy implications for the link between fiscal decentralization and service delivery. These include that local governments should maximize their revenue collection from existing local sources. Inter-governmental formulae should also provide for predictability that assists with planning for service delivery and accountability. An element of performance incentives also appears to be having positive results in some areas by encouraging effective and efficient implementation of service delivery programmes. It is noted that uncoordinated streams of local development funds can also undermine local development and accountability. Corruption must also receive a dedicated focus.

3.8 Stakeholder Involvement and Community Participation in Service Delivery

The primary objective of service delivery is to serve the basic human needs of citizens and various stakeholders. In the context of Eastern and Southern Africa, the focus must be more acutely on historically marginalized and disadvantaged groups and involve the marginalized groups in all stages of the service delivery life-cycle - from planning through to monitoring and evaluation.

Observations from the Eastern Africa report show that most, if not all; countries have made provision for stakeholder and community participation in local development and service delivery. There is a strong focus on the role participation of non-state actors in service delivery across both regions. Some of the key lessons learnt from both regions are:

- a) Civil society and private sector participation in service delivery should be regulated with appropriate incentives for mutually beneficial partnerships;
- b) Communication is absolutely essential between communities and local governments for building trust and facilitating the service delivery process;
- c) The importance of gender and youth mainstreaming and the necessary enabling policy and legislation;
- d) Structured platforms for community participation are preferable;
- e) Pro-poor initiatives require suitable planning and service delivery tools;
- f) Community-based natural resource management approaches is appropriate in many contexts;
- g) The establishment of Anti-Corruption bodies enhances overall accountability in service delivery; and
- h) Partnerships and coordination with donors and development agencies requires a particular focus by government.

4. ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVES, DISCUSSION AND CRITIQUE OF POLICY ISSUES ON LOCAL AND INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

4.1 Policy and Definitional Approaches to Local and Inclusive Service Delivery

The conceptual approach of local and inclusive service delivery as elaborated is correct, but insufficient. A review of additional literature suggests that other important concepts that should inform service delivery must be explicitly recognized: equity; indigenous knowledge; alternative technologies; climate change adaptation, and sustainable development.

4.2 How does the Constitutional and Legal Architecture of a Country Impact on Service Delivery?

There is no predetermined relationship between decentralization, local government, local development and effective service delivery. Many studies have argued this point conclusively (e.g. Ribot:2002; Cabral: 2011; USAID: 2010; Wunsch: 2008; Alam & Korateng: 2011; JICA:2008)

More recently another study looking at Eastern Africa posed a similarly direct question: "*Will decentralization really lead to improvements in service delivery to the people?*" (JICA, 2008). Most

studies argue overwhelmingly in favor of the merits of the relationship between local government and service delivery. (e.g. Cabral, 2011).

Some of the key legal and policy preconditions, enabling and success factors put forward for decentralization include (Crook, 2003; Ngaruko, 2003; USAID, 2010; JICA, 2008; Cabral, 2011; Smoke, 2010):

- a) The extent of poverty reduction is determined by the politics of central-local relations;
- b) Pro-poor policies succeed where central government consciously challenges conservative local elites;
- c) Instances of administrative decentralization or deconcentration have also demonstrated positive results in local development and service delivery, e.g. Ethiopia, Burkina Faso; and
- d) More attention must be given to decentralization implementation strategies.

One of the most fundamental challenges that the Constitutional entrenchment of local government is likely to address is the tendency in some countries to “re-centralise” powers and responsibilities away from local governments. This has taken different forms: taking back political powers from local governments; central governments diminishing local government resources from inter-governmental transfers; and in extreme situations, like in Pakistan, removing local government structures completely.

In summary, all these lessons point to the overall value of having a defined Constitutional and legal framework that enshrines and supports decentralization and local government.

4.3 Which Services Should Local Government Focus on ?

There is no obvious template of services that local governments should focus on in the literature. The approaches adopted by countries are influenced by their colonial histories, post-colonial independent regimes, approach adopted to decentralization, and current development challenges etc.

UN Habitat has argued in their International Guidelines on Basic Services (2009) that basic services are the minimum requirements needed to offer decent life to citizens in human settlements. These could arguably be the focus of local governments. These basic services include: water supply and sanitation; sustainable waste management; energy; transportation; communication; primary education; primary health; and public safety.

4.4 How do Different Approaches to Service Levels, Norms and Standards affect Local and Inclusive Service Delivery?

The determination of appropriate service levels, norms and standards is influenced by many factors. Some of the key lessons influencing the choice of a particular level or standard of service include:

- a) Inappropriate importation of cheap technology to Africa from outside the continent can be a problem for service delivery;
- b) Poor quality infrastructure and services can be more costly to maintain in the medium and long-term; and
- c) Community ownership and management is critical to the provision and sustainability of basic services.

South Africa provides an example of a country that has defined very clear service levels, norms and standards for basic municipal services. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2010) uses the terminology of “improved” and “unimproved” water and sanitation as another way of approaching the discussion on service level norms and standards. *Additional empirical work is required in Southern and Eastern and Southern Africa to closely assess the common services provided by most local governments and how their respective countries have approached the definition of basic services, and what indicators they use.* One of the main policy lessons on this matter is that a balance must be struck between nationally set standards and locally set priorities.

4.5 Which Service Delivery Models are Better Suited for Africa?

The choice of a particular service delivery model is rooted in considerations regarding the role of the state in providing public goods and whether public sector provider models have had the desired impact globally and in Africa. One of the common arguments for both decentralization and privatization centre on the failure of the central African state to provide services to citizens (Meredith, 2005).

There is a robust discussion in the literature on the lessons and examples of the various service delivery models across Eastern and Southern Africa, especially on privatization (e.g. JICA, 2008; UN Habitat, 1998; Bond & Zandamela, 2000; McDonald & Ruiters, 2012). At the core of this debate on service delivery models are political and pragmatic considerations.

Key benefits and disadvantages have been put forward regarding the major four models of service delivery.

a) Public Sector provision:

Most, if not all, governments are responsible for ensuring that the basic needs and services of citizens are attended to. These essential and basic services are argued by many to be public goods that are the direct responsibility of the public sector, e.g. water, energy, health, education etc. This argument has been at the core of all public service delivery models. It has been noted that in 90% of the largest cities in middle and low income countries, water services have been provided by a public provider in mid-2006 (Hall, D & Lobina, E – 2006).

The primary rationale and intended benefit of this model is that the public sector should not be driven by the profit motive and therefore it should ensure that all citizens receive adequate basic services. Globally the world experienced a strong wave of privatization of public services in the 1980s and a significant part of the 1990s. This wave has since reached its peak in the late 1990s with various public sector models re-emerging. One such trend is that of “remunicipalisation”. In a recent study in 2012, five examples of remunicipalisation of the water sector were studied across the world. (Pigeon et al, 2012).

The study noted that 40 municipalities in France have decided to remunicipalise in the near future, in Africa more and more private water contracts are not renewed, and in Italy a 2011 referendum saw 96% of voters opt to overturn laws facilitating water privatization in their country. In 2009-10, Paris became

the largest example of water remunicipalisation in Europe. One general lesson from this study is the need to develop a new vision for public management of basic service services, such as water.

For many countries in Africa, public service provision is the preferred approach. However, inefficiencies and ineffectiveness by these state-centred models of service provision have opened up the debate for alternative and complementary approaches, as noted below.

b) Community-based involvement and provision:

There are increasing examples of local communities playing a direct role in the provision of essential services. Some examples below provide some of the reasons and benefits for community consultation and participation in the service delivery process.

Bond (et al, 2000) quotes from a World Bank Source Book on Community Driven Development in Africa where he shows how the established views towards community involvement in service delivery have changed.

“Twenty five years ago hand pumps designed for North American farmsteads were installed in villages across Africa. They all broke down shortly after being installed ... Donors were spending more and more money to maintain what was installed and less and less on new facilities.

Fifteen years ago, community based management and user-friendly hand pumps were introduced, together with VIP latrines. Communities had to manage and pay for the maintenance of their hand pumps. The approach was received with great skepticism by sector ministries: “Villagers can’t possibly maintain a pump”. Today community based management is accepted by all sector professionals across Africa as the only sustainable approach to village water supply and sanitation (with construction of low cost latrines) and increasingly to town water supply.”

Another example is in the case of Mozambique where after 15 years of civil war, community leaders managed 500 000 “land transactions” that helped settle about 5 million refugees without the help of central government or donors (Gorjestani, N:2000).

ICLEI also cites another example from a Paper Recycling and Composting Project in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Through working with community partners, Mutare reduced waste going to their dumpsites through composting at both the municipal and household levels, and through recycling initiatives on the part of the local authority, private sector and community. Mutare also created employment opportunities for both women and youth.

The Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) approach has also yielded a number of positive results. Various studies have spoken about the advantages and challenges affecting community-based conservation initiatives (e.g. see Africa Resources Trust, 2002).

An over-riding lesson from the above examples is that community participation, ownership and management can be critical in the provision and sustainability of basic services.

c) Private sector provision (Privatization):

A paper by the World Bank in 1992 (Kikeri et al, 1992) looked at the global lessons of privatization. Privatization was defined as the transfer of ownership of assets to the private sector (Shirley, 1992). This paper argued that at the time privatization was on the rise and that more than 8 500 state owned entities in over 80 countries were privatized over the previous 12 years. A total of 2000 were from countries that borrowed from the World Bank. The overall conclusion was that “privatization – properly structured – yields substantial and enduring results”.

Eight lessons were offered as to how privatization should be done correctly:

- i. Privatization works best when it is part of a larger program of reforms promoting efficiency;
- ii. Regulation is critical to the successful privatization of monopolies;
- iii. Countries can benefit from privatizing management without privatizing the ownership of assets;
- iv. The sale of large enterprises requires considerable preparation;
- v. Transparency is critical for economic and political success;
- vi. Governments must pay special attention to developing a social safety net;
- vii. The formerly socialist economies should privatize in all possible ways that encourage competition, and they should experiment with all available methods that go beyond a case by case approach to privatization; and
- viii. In changing the public-private mix in any type of economy, privatization will sometimes be less important than the emergence of new private business.

It argued that privatization has three goals: improving the use of public resources; improving operating efficiency; and improving dynamic efficiency. Another writer argued in 1992 that “*the present interest in privatization is no fad. What we now see is a restructuring of the balance between public and private sectors ... Lessons have been learnt ... Markets fail, but so do governments. The public services were unable to meet all their ambitious goals; instead they sometimes undermined the very objectives they were created to serve*”. (Shirley, *ibid*: 31-32)

In one of many more recent studies the World Bank, through its Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility, has argued that greater private sector participation in the municipal waste sector in Latin America and the Caribbean has increased potential. One of the biggest challenges it notes is municipal capacity to manage contracts and ensure service standards (PPIAF, 2007).

Other studies have also shown that private sector provision is not the exclusive domain of big corporations. In the case of Kenya, small scale water operators are playing an interesting role in water provision. Some of the main findings of a 2011 study showed that small scale providers are playing an important role as gap fillers and that in some instances they are reducing the distance between the water source and the point of consumption; also these small scale providers also offer flexible payment and credit arrangements. However, there are also key concerns from these providers: for example mobile vendors charge the highest unit prices for water and their water supply is unreliable (UNDP, 2011).

Similar findings were noted about private water vendors in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (UNDP, 2011b). The latter Tanzanian study made four high-level recommendations: strengthen the capacity of the utility; shorten supply chains; target the private sector; and support community provision.

Many have severely criticized World Bank- and private sector-led approaches to service delivery, especially privatization in Africa (Bond & Zandamela, 2000; Boag, G & McDonald, D (2010); McDonald & Ruiters, 2012). One argument has warned against “western imports to Africa”, and that inspiration should rather be drawn from lessons in state service provision whose roots are found in ancient India, Egypt and China.

d) Public Private Partnerships (PPPs):

Partnerships for service provision can take on various forms. Typical forms of PPPs include the following: service contract; management contract; lease; Build / Operate / Transfer (BOT); and Concession. It is argued that the key benefits of partnerships models are that they allow the municipality to concentrate resources and management on core strategic activities of the municipality, while on the other hand delegating service delivery to a specialist service provider that has the potential of improving efficiency, customer service and quality etc.

Private-public partnerships (PPPs) have been defined “as a contract between a public sector institution / municipality and a private party, in which the private party assumes substantial financial, technical and operational risk in the design, financing, building and operation of a project” (GTZ, 2008).

Key advantages for PPPs from the above study include the fact that they harness the joint power of the various parties, and enable greater access to resources and tend to generate innovative ideas. The key challenge is that PPPs are inherently more complex than a traditional project and requires a different skills set and mindset.

A study of privatization of municipal services in East Africa by UN-Habitat (1998) found that the main types of privatization and partnerships in East Africa were:

- Contracting or leasing out to private sector firms (e.g. Kampala)
- Commercialization of municipal services
- Pure privatization of municipal services(e.g. Dar es Salaam, Arusha)

The global trend is that privatization of water services since the 1980s and 1990s has decreased, but the commercialization trend has continued largely through PPPs. (Pigeon et al, 2012)

In 2011 CLGF undertook an interesting study of *Municipal Finance for Inclusive Development* looking at South Asia where the merits and demerits of various innovative financing mechanisms and service delivery models were discussed. One of the observations of this report is that Public Private Partnerships are useful in attracting private sector investment and expertise for infrastructure investment.

There are many critiques of PPPs. One example is a study that focuses on the Buenos Aires Water Concession. This concession began in 1993 and was one of the largest water concessions in the world, servicing a population of 10 million people. Despite been hailed as a success story this study argues that

on the criteria of promoting greater public accountability and increased efficiency this PPP has not done very well, e.g. as many as 30% of households have fallen behind in their payments for water and sanitation (Loftus et al, 2001).

e) Various 'mixed models':

The above conceptual and pragmatic models for service delivery can be mixed in a number of hybrid forms. For example, a recent study in 2012 (Lipshutz & Romano) argues that there is currently a wide variety of “public” alternative models. The common feature is that there are no large scale, wholly private sector corporations or entities involved in the financing or operations of these models: utility reform; public-public partnerships; consumer cooperatives; community management; community corporation; community service trust; communitization; small scale user groups; NGO-community management; and small-scale PPPs. This study concludes that no single organizational form is more effective than the other based on available evidence.

Some Emerging Issues

There are a number of lessons and observations from the literature above that have relevance for Eastern and Southern Africa:

- i. There is a sober recognition that state services have declined in many cases; this has been accompanied by the rise of “civil society” which has brought with it many possibilities and innovations for service delivery;
- ii. New social movements are emerging which are self-organizing for the provision of some services, but they are also challenging poor quality and unacceptable state services provision;
- iii. Donor driven support for various governance and development initiatives has shifted accountability by states and local governments to foreign funders and away from citizens and voters;
- iv. Community trusts and worker self-management are appropriate to enhance state service provision;
- v. When market oriented supply of services fail then popular protest can be expected;
- vi. Service delivery models typically have a strong male gender focus and *“technologies and innovations that are actually targeted for women are based on the perceptions and preferences of men”*;
- vii. There are alternatives to privatization which include public entities that are entirely state owned and non-state organization that operate independently from the state on a not-for-profit basis;
- viii. The degree of state or non-state ownership and control is neither a singular nor exclusive marker of alternatives to privatization;
- ix. There is a need to insulate public provision from the direct or indirect effects of turning provision into a financial asset;
- x. The vulnerability of public sector provision to erosion and distortion is a consequence of the absence of broader supportive institutions and policies after decades of neo-liberalism;

- xi. There are various examples of Public-Public Partnerships that have yielded interesting results, for example there are 130 such partnerships in over 70 countries, which include the benefits of building solidarity among municipal operators;
- xii. The alternative to private sector led models can be defined by their objectives :
 - Defending the status quo (i.e. current bias of public sector delivery);
 - Reclaiming public services;
 - Utopian models of serviced delivery; and
 - Historical models of non-private service delivery.

Different dynamics are also playing themselves out in different sectors that have a bearing on service delivery models. For instance, the water sector is pointed out as being a sector with the most vibrant debates regarding alternative service delivery models. Electricity is found to be the least organized sector when it comes to the conceptualization of alternatives to the current dominant forms of energy. The health sector has seen many positive alternatives but it more fragmented in its ability to recognize and promote these models. In general, Latin America is recognized as the region in the world with the largest number of alternatives to neo-liberal and established western models and innovations in service delivery (McDonald & Ruiters, *ibid*).

The debate on policy options regarding appropriate service delivery models in Africa is a complex and urgent one. *Again more research and empirical evidence would be useful.*

4.6 How do the Various Institutional Arrangements, Coordination Modalities and Capacity Challenges Affect Decentralized Service Delivery?

The institutional arrangements and architecture of decentralization have a direct impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery at a local level. The structure of governments influences how responsibilities and functions will be distributed across government in a manner that is consistent with that country's decentralization agenda.

A number of observations arise regarding the relationship between the institutionalized architecture of decentralization, capacity distribution across government and local service delivery:

- a) Countries with a greater number of sub-national levels of government do require a greater effort with their coordination modalities;
- b) The distribution and assignment of responsibilities and functions for various services varies considerably;
- c) A common thread in most, if not all, countries is to openly or indirectly support the principle of subsidiarity; and
- d) Concurrent or shared responsibilities for particular services have presented planning, coordination, and implementation problems;
- e) Conventionally local governments are understood to have the most serious capacity challenges in the overall scheme of government, but these capacity challenges also affect other levels of government;
- f) Rural municipalities most often face the greatest shortages of skilled professionals, like engineers, planners and technicians, that further impacts negatively on non-urban areas;

- g) Some countries have experimented in providing special incentives to skilled professionals and managers to recruit and retain them in local governments, especially rural ones.

Regardless of the political system and approach to decentralization, for effective local and inclusive service delivery to succeed, countries need to have a clear delineation of responsibilities across government in general. Coordination instruments from the lowest level of delivery to the central government level are also a fundamental precondition for success. Capacity development for effective service delivery also requires innovative responses by central and local governments.

4.7 How do Different Funding and Fiscal Decentralization Approaches Affect Local Service Delivery?

Adequate and sufficient funding for local government is a necessary but not exclusive enabler for inclusive accelerated service delivery. For all countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, a supporting properly designed fiscal decentralization regime is critical to advance service delivery.

In 2009 UN Habitat issued guidelines on decentralization and fiscal decentralization that speak to some the challenges identified. On matters related to fiscal decentralization it offers the following advice, inter alia,

- a) *“Local authorities’ financial resources should be commensurate with their tasks and responsibilities and ensure financial sustainability and self-reliance. Any transfer or delegation of tasks or responsibilities by the state shall be accompanied by corresponding and adequate financial resources, preferably guaranteed by the constitution or national legislation..;”*
- b) *Local authorities should have access to a broad variety of financial resources to carry out their tasks and responsibilities. They should be entitled, preferably on the basis of constitutional and/ or national legislative guarantees, to adequate resources or transfers, which they may freely use within the framework of their powers ...”*

4.8 How have Stakeholder Involvement and Community Participation Affected Service Delivery?

There is a rich discourse on the relationship between for decentralization and active citizenship. Almost without exception, a consistent primary objective of decentralization is the need to deepen local democracy and citizen participation in local governance and development. Some have referred to this as the "proximity principle" (Caldeira et al, 2010).

It has also been argued that the current infatuation with democratic governance which resurfaced in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Africa is characterized by a decisive shift from monocentric to polycentric forms of governance (Eyoh & Stren et al, 2007). Notwithstanding this wave of democratic governance, a World Bank study in 2002 (Ndegwa, 2003) found in an assessment of 30 countries in Africa that more than half, i.e. 16, scored "very low" on downward accountability in their decentralized systems. The basic assumption of decentralization is that it promotes community participation, local democracy, and more responsive service delivery. Contrary to this assumption it has been argued that the impact of

decentralization on service delivery in Africa is probably limited and the pro-poor character questionable (Cabral, 2011).

The last two decades in Africa have also seen the rise of social movements (Bond & Zandamela, 2000; McDonald & Ruiters, 2012). It is clear that these social movements must be consciously factored into the service delivery process.

Drawing from the Aberdeen Agenda and the UN Habitat Guidelines on Decentralization, there are a number of critical principles that should inform local stakeholder and community participation in local government and service delivery. These include:

- a) Participation through inclusiveness and empowerment of citizens should be an underlying principle in decision-making, implementation and follow-up at the local level.
- b) Local authorities should have the right to establish and develop partnerships with all actors of civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, and with the private sector and other interested stakeholders;
- c) The effective training of civil society is important;
- d) The active participation of stakeholders and communities in service delivery must extend from needs identification to impact assessment; and
- e) Participatory budgeting can be a crucial tool for accountability.

4.9 How does Urbanization Impact on Local and Inclusive Delivery?

Urbanization in any context has a direct impact on local service delivery. At a quantitative level, more people in cities and towns means that more services need to be provided. Africa is reputed to have the fastest growing urbanization rate of all regions in the world between 2005 and 2010. However, recently some of these statistics have been challenged arguing that a closer scrutiny of statistics show that the rate of urbanization is not as rapid as initially thought. (Potts, 2012)

Urbanization presents both tremendous opportunities, but also brings critical challenges. In Africa, one of those challenges has been the emergence of slums. Slums pose unique challenges for urban planning and service delivery. It is argued that 6 out of 10 African urban residents are slum dwellers and 27% of them live in extreme deprivation (Pieterse & Smit, 2011).

It is estimated that in 2010, about 40% of all African resided in cities. In the Eastern African region 23.6% of the population resided in cities. In this sub-region the relationship between poverty, slum incidence and inequality has brought three issues to the fore (UN Habitat, 2010). Southern Africa is the most urbanized sub-region on the continent. Between 2000 and 2010 the urbanization levels in this sub-region increased from 53.8% to 58.7%. Here there are also critical challenges of slums, poverty, inequality and critical backlogs in basic infrastructure.

Some of the emerging lessons and interventions proposed for Africa as a whole on the issue of urbanization have a direct bearing on local service delivery in Eastern and Southern Africa:

- a) Urbanization must not necessarily be seen as problematic. The urban poor should not be punished for their poverty and lack of access to basic services. Urban planning and building regulations should be responsive to the needs of the urban poor; and

- b) Slum upgrading and the provision of basic services must receive top priority if the focus is to reach the most poor and vulnerable in urban Africa. Intrinsic to this priority, is the need to address food and water insecurity, amongst other basic needs.

The overall lesson is that the proactive management of urbanization and urban development in Africa is a crucial enabler and precondition for effective local and inclusive service delivery.

4.10 What is the link between Local and Inclusive Delivery and Local Economic Development (LED)?

The provision of inclusive, efficient and affordable services is an important enabler and precondition for local economic development. All economic activity in a local area is directly dependent on the functioning of basic services. The provision of potable water, decent sanitation, reliable and affordable energy and electricity, waste management services are the key considerations that investors and local entrepreneurs require to sustain their businesses.

If basic services do not function well, then it can have a detrimental effect on economic activity, which in turn threatens jobs and could increase levels of under-employment and poverty. It should also be emphasized that efficient services and infrastructure is necessary for both the formal and informal economic sectors. It has been noted that the informal sector makes a huge contribution to African economies. In Sub-Saharan Africa the informal sector is estimated to contribute nearly 55% of the sub-continent's GDP. (Hobson, EW 2011)

At a recent CLGF Conference focusing on LED in Cardiff (Wales) in 2011, delegates recognized LED as “a process which brings together different partners in a local area to work together and harness local resources for sustainable economic growth”. Critical actions required to enable local governments to play its LED role were identified to be:

- Providing a clear national framework for LED;
- Creating an enabling environment for LED;
- Local strategies to promote LED; and
- LED partnerships with the private sector and other partners.

Lessons from many African countries suggest that there is thrust towards “pro-poor LED” which focusses on the mobilization of internal resources, capacities and skills, without excluding appropriate Foreign Direct Investment and other smart win-win partnerships. It has been argued by some that a new developmental vision and approach to LED in Africa should be multi-faceted and should be built on a “massive expansion of infrastructure” (Bond, P; 2002).

5. PROPOSALS OF VIABLE POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTIONS FOR LOCAL AND INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

What should be agreed to and done going forward to build policy consensus among critical policy makers and stakeholders in these regions to advance local and inclusive service delivery? Ten core policy interventions and propositions are put forward.

I) **The role and status of local government must be clearly enshrined in the national Constitution of a country.**

- (a) Decentralization by Devolution is the preferred policy approach to inform the Constitutional role and status of local government.
- (b) Local governments should be democratized and should allow for regular free and fair elections at a local level;
- (c) National Constitutions should have enabling provisions that provide for the core mandate, objectives, structure and basic fiscal and financial arrangements of local government.
- (d) Local government must be viewed as a partner of other levels of government;
- (e) Cooperation, cooperative governance, integration, inter-dependence and seamless working together in service delivery must be emphasized in the relationship between different levels of government;
- (f) All legislation at a central and sub-national level and local government by-laws must be consistent with complement the provisions of the Constitution on decentralization.
- (g) The basic service delivery mandate of local government should be clearly defined in the Constitution.

Programmatic Intervention(s):

- i. A *Constitutional and legislative review project on Local Government* should be undertaken in Eastern and Southern Africa to assess the status and role of local government in the regulatory frameworks of countries in both regions. (Cross-cutting)
- ii. An *Advocacy Handbook on the Role and Status of Local Government* should be developed for both regions (Cross-cutting)

II) **Informed by the Constitutional provisions, separate central governmental umbrella legislation must be enacted to elaborate the role, status, functioning, and core service delivery mandates of local governments.**

- (a) National legislation on local government must provide the common enabling and mandatory elements on matters, such as the developmental role of local government, development planning, the institutional development and systems, human resource management, fiscal and financial management, performance monitoring and accountability etc.
- (b) The intention of this legislation should be to position local government as a decentralized partner of central and other sub-national levels of government.
- (c) Sector legislation affecting local government must be subordinate to the primary umbrella legislation on local government.

Programmatic Intervention(s):

- i. *National campaigns* should be undertaken by individual countries to raise awareness of the Constitutional and legal role and status of local government. (Individual Countries)

III) The developmental and service delivery responsibilities for local governments must be clearly defined and implemented to embrace a number of elements: inclusivity, a pro-poor orientation, equity, gender-mainstreaming, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, active citizenship, indigenous knowledge optimization, the use of appropriate alternative technologies, climate change adaptation, and sustainable development.

- (a) Official national policy position papers on local government must elaborate on the various developmental and service delivery responsibilities of local government and the key elements referred to.
- (b) Indigenous African values and concepts that reinforce the role and status of local government must be embraced and be reflected in the national policy on local government.

Programmatic Intervention(s):

- i. *Guidelines and manuals* should be developed for both regions that define the core elements of inclusivity, a pro-poor orientation, equity, gender-mainstreaming, effectiveness etc. for policy makers, local governments and civil society formations (Cross-cutting)
- ii. A *competition* should be undertaken in both regions to solicit proposals on which African values and concept best reflect the approach to local government and local development (Cross-cutting)

IV) The decentralized distribution of responsibilities and functions across government should be informed by the principles of, amongst others, subsidiarity and complementarity.

- (a) National legislation should assign the powers, functions and responsibilities for local government in relation to central and other sub-national levels of government.
- (b) The distribution and assignment of responsibilities to local government must be based on principles of subsidiarity, complementarity, differentiation, active citizenship and participation, solidarity, and efficiency.
- (c) Of fundamental importance, central governments must ensure that funds and resources follow the assignment of responsibilities to local government.
- (d) Provision must be made in law for a predictable medium term review of the distribution and review of responsibilities to local government.

Programmatic Intervention(s):

- i. An *Audit* should be undertaken of the specific powers, functions and responsibilities entrusted to local governments in both regions, and what they are de facto implementing (Cross-cutting)

V) The provision of free basic services should be considered as a time-bound intervention that is targeted at the very poor and most marginalized sections of society.

- (a) Countries that are lagging behind in achieving specific MDG targets, should consider (based on resource availability and affordability) adopting and implementing targeted free basic service policies and programmes.

Programmatic Intervention(s):

- i. *Best practice lessons* on Free Basic Policy implementation should be compiled from both regions and elsewhere and distributed for further policy discussion and debate. (Cross-cutting)

VI) Countries should set national minimum service levels, norms and standards that bind all sector Ministries, sub-national governments, service providers and non-state actors.

- (a) National legislation and/or national policy instruments must be adopted by individual countries to set national minimum service levels, norms and standards for all legally mandated local government services. (Individual Countries)
- (b) National service levels, norms and standards should allow for local discretion in applying national norms and standards through a transparent process of approval by central government.

Programmatic Intervention(s):

- i. In the short-term, *existing baseline service delivery backlog information* should be compiled by all countries. In the medium- to long-term appropriate census authorities must be take responsibility to collect this information at regular intervals.
- ii. A *comparative compilation of service levels, norms and standards* should be undertaken of all local government service delivery obligations in the two regions. (Cross-cutting)
- iii. *Best practice case studies* should be compiled by individual countries for peer sharing between local governments, countries and beyond (Individual Countries and Local Government Associations)

VII) The choice of an appropriate service delivery model (or models) by local governments must be informed by a national policy framework that requires mandatory local community participation.

- (a) Countries must adopt a national policy framework on service delivery models for local government.
- (b) Key principles of inclusivity, a pro-poor orientation, equity, gender-mainstreaming, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, active citizenship, indigenous knowledge optimization, the use of appropriate alternative technologies, climate change adaptation, and sustainable development must inform the national policy frameworks on service delivery models.
- (c) Community-, worker-, and CAMPFIRE (Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources) -based models of service delivery must be promoted.

Programmatic Intervention(s):

- i. *Best practice case studies* on local service delivery models across both regions for peer knowledge learning and sharing (Cross Cutting).

VIII) Fiscal decentralization must encompass an appropriate mix of inter-governmental transfers, incentives, appropriate revenue and expenditure autonomy, appropriate options to access market finance, which match the legally mandated responsibilities and service delivery obligations of local governments.

- (a) From a local government service delivery perspective, the cardinal principle is that the fiscal decentralization regime must be an enabler for local and inclusive service delivery.
- (b) The principle of “funds follow functions” must be endorsed.
- (c) National legislation and policy instruments must provide clear modalities and procedures to avoid the imposition of unfunded mandates and service delivery obligations to local governments.
- (d) National legislation must focus specifically address the problem of corruption, patronage and nepotism in local service delivery and in the fiscal decentralization system.

Programmatic Intervention(s):

- i. *Campaigns* to encourage citizens to pay for services should be undertaken (Individual Countries; Local Government Associations)
- ii. *Best practice case studies* on various types of grants, fiscal and funding mechanisms that promote the service delivery principles should be undertaken (Cross Cutting).
- iii. *Best practice case studies and innovative policy instruments*, initiatives and programmes aimed at the eradication of corruption, elite capture and nepotism must be promoted and undertaken in individual countries and across both regions (Individual Countries; Cross Cutting; Local Government Associations; Civil Society Organizations)

IX) Coordination modalities for the planning, implementation, management and oversight of local service delivery must be specified in law, with clearly articulated appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms for both state and non-state actors.

- (a) Central and sub-national governments must be obligated by law to participate in appropriate coordination forums that enable and facilitate local and inclusive service delivery.
- (b) Consistent with the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity, local governments should be recognized as the principle locus of service delivery coordination by all other levels, tiers and spheres of government.
- (c) National legislation must provide clear procedures and mechanisms for dispute resolution between all state, private sector and non-state actors in the service delivery process.
- (d) Central Ministries responsible for local government and decentralization should be given specific coordination and oversight responsibilities in law over sector Ministries, sub-national governments, stakeholders and donors on all matters that affect local government and local development.

Programmatic Intervention(s):

- i. A *capacity audit and assessment* should be undertaken of all central Ministries responsible for local government regarding their capability to fulfill their support, coordination and oversight responsibilities (Cross-cutting; Individual Countries)
- ii. *Best practice case studies* should be compiled across both regions on innovative coordination modalities, procedures and institutional arrangements.

X) Community and stakeholder participation platforms and accountability mechanisms related to local service delivery must be clearly outlined in national legislation and should indicate the respective roles and responsibilities of inter-governmental agencies, service providers, elected and administrative officials, non-state actors and civil society organizations.

- (a) National legislation on local government must provide the common enabling and mandatory elements and processes for community and stakeholder participation in all stages of the service delivery process.
- (b) The distinct local conditions in urban and rural areas should be taken into account when establishing community participation platforms at a local government level;
- (c) Performance contracting between various levels of government and between service providers and beneficiaries (users) should be considered by all countries.
- (d) Accountability and public participation forums should involve all levels of government, service providers and donors.
- (e) Local governments must undertake regular citizen satisfaction surveys of service delivery performance between electoral terms.

Programmatic Intervention(s):

- i. *Guidelines, manuals and best practice case studies* on active citizenship and community participation in service delivery should be undertaken across both regions for peer knowledge learning and sharing (Cross Cutting).
- ii. *Regional and country-specific capacity building programmes* should be rolled out to benefit non-state actors, civil society organization and formations that in particular represent marginalized groupings (Cross-cutting and Individual Countries)

XI) Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies must inform the provision of infrastructure and services, e.g. locating informal settlements and slums outside of flood-lines.

- (a) Local development, spatial planning and infrastructure planning must mainstream risk reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and measures.
- (b) Local governments must undertake vulnerability assessments, taking both scientific and indigenous knowledge into account, of existing and planned settlements.
- (c) All local governments must consider establishing disaster management and climate change units.

XII) Local governments and central governments should recognize the important relationship between the provision of infrastructure and services and local economic development (LED)

- (a) Inclusive, efficient, affordable, reliable and sustainable basic services are a precondition for LED. Central governments must ensure an appropriate enabling environment for LED and support local governments in this regard;
- (b) Local governments must give particular attention to the basic services required for pro-poor LED and community-based economic / entrepreneurial initiatives; and

- (c) Local governments should be encouraged to adopt micro- and small enterprise development strategies and ensure their implementation. Effective monitoring and evaluations systems should also be put in place at a local level.

XIII) Countries should put enabling provisions in place to promote knowledge sharing and international municipal cooperation, e.g. local government to local government and city to city twinning agreements

- (a) Local governments should consciously undertake knowledge and peer sharing initiatives within their own countries, within in their regions, across the African continent and beyond.
- (b) National governments should have enabling policy and legislative provisions and instruments to guide and monitor international municipal cooperation.

XIV) Countries should ensure that there is a synergized, integrates and seamless approach to development and service delivery by various levels and sectors of government, e.g. health care services by different of government should link and feed into each other

- (a) National legislation should enjoin central and other sub-national levels of government to participate in local government development planning processes to ensure improved coordination in the provision of services by different sectors and levels of government.
- (b) Appropriate development planning and service provision coordination forums should be established within countries where all levels of government can actively work together to coordinate the planning and provision of services.

Two transversal programmatic interventions should be considered to cover all aspects of decentralization and local government to cover both regions:

- Establishment of a UNDP coordinated *Local Government Knowledge Management Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa*.
- Establishment of a *Strategic Local Government Capacity Building Programme* in both regions to target and train local government policy-makers, practitioners, councilors, officials, and relevant non-state actors, civil society organizations and private sector partners.

7. CONCLUSION

Evidence-based policy discussions on local government and service delivery must receive greater attention in Eastern and Southern Africa. There is no shortage of international, Pan-African, regional state and non-state bodies active in the two sub-regions. African countries and local governments need to make a greater effort to share lessons on local and inclusive service delivery.

End, 16 October 2012

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