



THE SHINNING LIGHT

RWANDA CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM NEWSLETTER

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Mission

The Constitution of the Platform defines the mission of the Platform as follows:

“Contribute to the well-being of the population by:

Acting as framework for dialogue, reflection, exchange of information and mutual support

Lobbying and advocating on national, regional and international issues on behalf of all members of the Rwandan civil society and citizens

Be a strong interlocutor of the civil society”

MAIN OBJECTIVES

The Constitution of the Platform also includes the main objectives of the Platform, which are to:

Promote solidarity and harmonious relations between the members of the Civil Society

Analyze the major challenges faced by the Rwandan population, and adopt common positions and strategies to address these challenges

Set up and maintain an information system to enable the Civil Society to achieve its mission, acting in close collaboration with all Partners

Develop an effective partnerships at national, regional and international level
Provide strong representation and advocacy for its members.

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NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF THE RWANDA CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM ON SOCIAL PROTECTION

The meeting was held in the UNICEF conference hall at EBENEZER HOUSE on 20th of October, 2010. The two-day meeting that brought together members of the CSOs; the Africa Platform for social Protection, and the African Union (AU) Commission; was aimed at stimulating discussions that will seek ways on how CSOs can support the implementation of the AU Social policy Framework which will lead to socio-economic development for the people.



The objective of the workshop was to share basic information on social protection, raising awareness on social protection, and initiate discussions on how to strengthen the role of CSOs in Social Protection. According to Mr. Eugene Rwibasira, the Spokesperson of Rwanda Civil Society Platform, despite efforts by donors and the good policies developed by the government, there are still some challenges in the social protection strategy.

“Inequality among the people, high poverty levels, and vulnerability still persist in the community,” he said.

He added that there is a need for a strong partnership, especially with NGOs and the civil society.

CSOs must be engaged in policies and must work in various areas through engaging in policy formulation, Implementation, Assessment, monitoring and evaluation of programs, Lobby and advocate for Social Protection and all these will assist in improvement of social protection in Rwanda.

Social protection is about putting in place mechanisms and programs to fight poverty and reduce vulnerability and he said that there is a dimension in social protection including protection of people against risks related to ill health, employment risks and loss of incomes.

The Acting Director General of Community Development and Social Affairs in the Ministry of Local Government, Mr. Vedaste Hakizimana, said that the government is committed to social protection of its people.

“Social Protection in Rwanda has made significant progress and we are confident that we will build on the progress already made towards sustainable development,” the Ag. Director General of community development & social affairs, said.

He stressed that there has been significant budget allocation and spending towards the social protection sector through various programs that deliver social protection such as UBUDEHE, VUP, ONE COW PER POOR FAMILY; MUTUELLE DE SANTE, EDUCATION SUPPORT, and other pro-poor programs.

“Policy dialogue with our partners has improved, and more people are being covered or reached by social protection and their incomes are rising,” he added.

The Government of Rwanda is committed to working closely with NGOs and CSOs as partners basing on mutual trust and respect.

The Government's representative explained that the role of CSOs and NGOs has been very instrumental in the delivering and advocating for social protection to the extremely poor and vulnerable people.

The participants agreed that the existing mechanisms are not enough and CSOs must put in place other mechanisms to complete the existing government policies. There is also a need to strengthen the capacity CSOs in policy monitoring.

CSOs can also build grass root bases to help the poor know and claim their rights.

In advocacy, he said that we have many potential avenues such as, UN policies, Government strategies and policies on which we can base our advocacy.

The participants came out with the following recommendations:

- engagement at Policy level in raising awareness to CSOs on the existing policies on SP and sensitization of the masses on their SP rights, pro activity in design and implementation of SP policies and legislations, and encouraging CSOs to participate in policies and legislations formulation.

However challenges in SP are many for example in some countries governments claim that safety nets are conservative and others say they create dependency and others that they throw scarce resources down the drain.

In a nut shell, the people who attended the first National consultative Meeting of the civil Society of Rwanda on Social Protection agreed that more needs to be done on advocacy and public empowerment. Together we can!!!

EMERGING AREAS FROM RWANDA CSOS CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

The Rwanda Civil Society Platform, in Partnership with the Africa CSO Platform on Principled Partnership (ACPP) held a two days' consultative meeting to discuss the partnership between Rwanda CSO Platform and the ACPPP.

The theme of the meeting was: Development Effectiveness- Road Map for Africa CSOs this was a follow up to the ongoing work of two distinct but related initiatives seeking to address CSOs enabling environment and through a partnership with National and Regional CSOs across Africa.

The Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) is one of the founder members of the ACPPP.

RCSP is engaged in the ACPPP because it believes that there must be partnership with all actors to ensure that there is an impact in the community. It also believes that in working together with CSOs across Africa, will strengthen its capacity and knowledge, and will have a stronger voice at the national level. It is in this regard that ACPPP delegated Mr. Paul OKUMU to facilitate Rwandan CSOs workshop on development effectiveness.

Considering that the ACPPP has members from 13 countries across Africa, participants identified some of the areas they could receive and provide support to the ACPPP.

These areas are the NGO Laws, INGO FBO National NGO Law and other Laws that affect CSOs, CSOs in Rwanda went through a rigorous and inclusive process of developing the current draft CSOs Laws. The second area is Development Effectiveness and sustainability, participants agreed that the CSOs in Rwanda need help in Developing Standards



for Effectiveness and Accountability, Capacity building, especially in Management and systems and Partnership and networking building. The last but not least area identified by CSOs was Space for Democracy and Donor Engagement in

strengthening the visibility of CSOs to increase their voice in politics and development environments
A strategy of a common engagement for policy and aid effectiveness recommends that there should be an effective support from donor

institutions and the Government to empower civil society organizations to enable them monitor policy and aid effectiveness achievements. CSOs increased awareness on development effectiveness issues and strengthened their capacity to address them in fighting poverty.

