

MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

SOCIAL PROTECTION SOUTH-SOUTH LEARNING FORUM ON MAKING PUBLIC WORKS WORK, 14-18 JUNE 2010, ARUSHA TANZANIA

The World Bank is organizing a Public Works Learning Forum to share knowledge among practitioners and to stimulate South-South learning on the effective design and implementation of public work programs. The Forum is being hosted in partnership with the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF). The Learning Forum is part of the World Bank's Social Protection South-South Learning Series.

A high ranking Government leader will officiate at opening of the Forum. Other high level Government officials, including the Minister of State in the President's Office (Good Governance), the Permanent Secretary (State House) as well as World Bank senior managers including the Country Director, Mr. John Murray McIntire will attend the opening ceremony. The Forum will run for five days, starting Monday, June 14, 2010 at the Arusha International Conference Centre and will be conducted in English, French and Spanish languages.

The Learning Forum will involve more than 200 participants from 42 countries from all the continents. Participants comprise of high-level practitioners representing a range of policy interests (finance/economy/social sectors/infrastructure, etc.), drawn from governments, donor community, World Bank, civil society, academia and the private sector. Target participating countries will be from low income contexts where public works programs are ongoing or under preparation.

The Forum will focus on the tools needed for designing effective public works programs in low income countries. In this context the objectives of the learning forum are:

1. To share emerging experiences amongst professional staff from client countries and their Bank counterparts.
2. To lay the ground for the formation of a "community of practice" that would continue sharing knowledge and expertise in a South-South environment.
3. To catalyze improved understanding and know-how on the role of public work programs as part national safety net and social protection agendas.

The forum will comprise a mix of plenary events, breakout sessions and field trips to 10 TASAF-supported Public Works projects in Meru, Monduli and Longido district councils in Arusha Region. The field trips have been designed to showcase TASAF achievement in this area and also to ensure that participants gain solid conceptual understanding supported by hands on learning and information exchange. The event will generate a wealth of information on diverse country programs, which will be captured through a

public works toolkit. The toolkit will be used by the World Bank for training and dissemination purposes and by World Bank supported countries for the design of effective public works program.

The poor and vulnerable are exposed to a wide range of risks and shocks that affect their current well-being and their longer-term prospects of rising out of poverty. Safety nets and transfers have an immediate impact by putting resources in the hands of the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. Public works is an increasingly dominant instrument for safety net response in low income countries. Public works and workfare programs generate temporary employment and income, particularly for low-skill workers, through labor intensive infrastructure investments, often for small-scale community assets.

In Tanzania, the Government's program TASAF with support from the World Bank has been supporting the implementation of community projects for the past 10 years in all districts on the Mainland as well as in Zanzibar. More than 11,375 community projects with a total value of more than TZS 197 billion have been supported. The Public Works Program, a key instrument in the Government's poverty reduction policy (National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, NSGRP - MKUKUTA), provided cash transfers specifically to food insecure households. Beneficiaries receive cash through wage paid for temporary employment while acquiring useful skills. Additionally, the program facilitates creation of useful assets, that is, roads, irrigation schemes, in the communities where it intervenes. To date, the Government's TASAF Programme implemented a total of 928 public works projects generating about 15 millions person-days of work reaching over 217,315 direct beneficiaries with a total wage exceeding TZS 12 billion.

The Forum will focus on the 'nuts and bolts' of designing and implementing public work program. The focus will be on information exchange and learning to capture country experiences and help fill information gaps in both program implementation and wider literature. The Learning Forum will showcase first-hand country experiences. Sessions will be anchored in as much as possible around unfolding country experiences. A draft toolkit will be prepared in advance of the event to help set the stage for many of the key topics under discussion.

Topics to be addressed by the participants of the Forum will among other things include:

- .. Typology of public works in different country contexts and how to assess alternatives
- .. Basic design considerations in undertaking a public works programs including wages and payments levels, types of works, targeting aspects and feasibility assessment practices
- .. Institutional aspects and how to delineate roles and responsibilities of central, state, local authorities and communities.
- .. Other important considerations in the design including environmental and safeguards issues, the gender dimension and communications.
- .. Monitoring and supervision including, flow of funds, procurement, controlling for error, fraud and corruption.