

**“IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME
IMPACTING POSITIVELY ON THE LIVES
OF TANZANIANS?”**

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****The views/opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and
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Abbreviations

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| ALAT | Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania |
| CBF | Common Basket Fund |
| CRT | Council Reform Team |
| LGAs | Local Government Authorities |
| LG | Local Government |
| LGR | Local Government Reform |
| LGRP | Local Government Reform Programme |
| MIS | Management of Information Systems |
| PO-RALG | President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government. |

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“IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME IMPACTING POSITIVELY ON THE LIVES OF TANZANIANS?”

“There is, however, one danger which must be guarded against. The transfer of power to the Regions and Districts must not also mean a transfer of a rigid and bureaucratic system from Dar es Salaam to lower levels. Nor is it the intention of these proposals to create new local tyrants in the persons of the Regional and District Development Directors.”

Julius K. Nyerere, 1972

“It is my conviction that the implementation of the Local Government Reform Programmewill contribute to significant reduction of the proportion of the people who are living in poverty.”

President Benjamin W, Mkapa, June 2002

1.0 The Contextual Framework

The Government of Tanzania is undertaking various initiatives towards poverty reduction and attainment of sustainable social and economic development. The initiatives are founded within a very broad policy framework – based on the Vision 2025, which stipulates the vision, mission, goals and targets to be achieved with respect to economic growth and poverty reduction by the year 2025. The on-going decentralization by devolution and reform process, including the Local Government Reform Programme, is fundamental to the strategy for poverty reduction in the country, now popularly known as MKUKUTA.

It is important to note that Public Service Reform now consists of a number of distinct but related reform programmes, each geared towards the same overall policy objectives, but covering different aspects of reform. At the centre of these reforms is the Public Service Reform

Programme (PSRP) tasked with operationalizing the government Public Service Management and Employment Policy, and currently concentrating on installing performance management systems throughout the public service. Charged with operationalizing the Local Government Reform, and now concentrating on implementing Decentralization by Devolution [D-by-D) policy is the Local Government Reform Programme. Currently, reform of local government involves the following five main areas: First, Fiscal decentralization, second, administrative decentralization; third, political decentralization; fourth, service delivery function of decentralization; and fifth, changed central-local relations.

The decentralization by devolution programme in Tanzania is a vast, dynamic and complex programme of **change** and **change management**. It demands a qualitatively different mindset and involves a fundamentally new change in the way Government conducts its business across the whole of Tanzania. The decentralization by devolution policy is an integral part of the reform process going on in the country which affects every aspect of the country's social fabric. All this is taking place during a period of great social, political and economic transformation and changed management in the country and is not only affected by these changes but also by the dynamics of inevitable globalization. In the more recent past, important milestones with regard to the Local Government Reform were the publication of the "**Local Government Reform Agenda**" (1996) and the "**Policy Paper on Local Government Reform**" (1998). The Reform Agenda states that local government capacity, and efficiency and reliability to deliver services to the people would be the *raison detre* for the devolution of roles, resources and authority by the central government. Similarly, it is noted that "local government will be free to make policy and operational decisions consistent with the laws....and government policies". The Policy Paper stipulates clearly that the "**local government system is**

to be based on political devolution and decentralization of functions and finance'

It is important to emphasize that, operationally on the ground, existing policy and regulations are in place or under formulation. A number of commendable achievements have been recorded but there are also constraints or shortcomings. These include the following: First, the accountability of elected representatives and community leaders remains a glaring weakness of the system although it constitutes one of the key and strategic governance frameworks for implementation and sustenance of the programme management at ward and village level. Here the remedy is open-ended and include process and quality of democratic elections, coherent and reliable capacity development targeting these levels and demand from the community to hold their leaders accountable to them.

It is worth appreciating that the context for reform has changed significantly since the beginning of the MTP, in a number of different ways. However not all these changes in context could have been anticipated. For instance, some key factors which have influenced, and will continue to affect the pace of reform include: harmonization of the legal framework for managing public servants at central and local government levels in line with the 1998 Policy Paper on Local Government Reform; more rapid than anticipated progress in implementing fiscal decentralization; pressure of work on PO-RALG due to its central and strategic position in a wide range of reform processes; an apparent acceleration in the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on local government; and increased donor resources being channeled through direct budget support with potential shortfalls in financing Basket Funded programmes. All these have direct and indirect impact and implications on LGRP and its operations.

It is emphasized that one of the strategic vehicles driving D-by-D in Tanzania is the LGRP. In this exploratory paper an attempt is made to venture at discussing the given question: **“Is the Local Government Reform Programme Impacting positively on the lives of Tanzanians?”** The following is the structure of the paper: Immediately following this introduction we propose to discuss the conceptual and operational **problematique** of the subject. This is followed by providing a broad assessment of whether or not public services are more available and accessible than before the LGRP. Derived from this, an attempt will be made to assess the effectiveness or otherwise of the LGRP, particularly in the sectors of Agriculture, Education, Health, Water and Roads. Related to this will be a follow up discussion on the impact of the LGRP on local service provision. Likewise derived from this will be a discussion on whether or not LGRP is still relevant and what can possibly be done to improve its performance in the context of MKUKUTA. An attempt will also be made to provide some ideas on how the achievements of LGRP can be sustained and the challenges ahead. To wrap it all, is the concluding summary.

2.0 The Conceptual and Operational Problematique

“The planning of reforms in government is of itself a complex and difficult exercise. This process can sometimes be limited by constraints of measures not characteristically found in the private sector.” Professor J.O. Kuye, June 2005

As indicated earlier on, LGRP is the technical and strategic vehicle for driving D-by-D in the country. It is a Government institution somewhat technically autonomous in its operations but under PO-RALG. It is funded through a special arrangement with Common Basket Fund whose support is not infinite (nor was it designed to be) It is thus very encouraging to

note that the Government is fully aware of this and that whereas LGRP has a lifespan, the Government's resolve and dedication to reforms is an on-going process even if LGRP is phased out. Indeed mechanisms are underway to ensure that there is no bumpy landing when LGRP ends! It must be emphasized upfront that reforms in public sectors all over the world come about in order to bring **change** and it is human that change induces both **expectations and fears**. While both can be genuinely understandable, both can be problematic [because of various reasons] when it comes to the **process** of realizing their intended short, medium and long-term goals and objectives. Second, public sector reforms in general and LGRP in particular must be hinged on a country's social, political, economic realities and acceptance/availability of proper planning, efficient management and political will at all levels (and always!). However, it needs to be further recognized that the notion of bureau-pathology continuously exists in most institutions within public sector domains [Kuye, 2005: 1]. Third, structures, systems, institutions and organizations world-wide that are geared towards reforms in the public sector take shape in response to many **distinct and diverse demands and needs** from countries that initiate them. While the country's public sector reforms in general and LGRP in particular may have certain permanent characteristics and a few universal aims and objectives, they are constantly **changing and adapting themselves to new demands and unexpected circumstances** (ibid). It is thus important to remind ourselves that when talking and thinking about and venturing at discussing the LGRP, one must not forget that it has the growing quality of a **dynamic living organism**. Indeed, the LGRP not only changes with concrete external and internal reality with years, it is as sensitive to place, people and institutions as it is to time! Fourth, the design of any reform process including the LGRP has to acknowledge existing policies, leadership structures and commitment, competing forces, human resource capacity and resource viability. However no government in the world can

guarantee the availability and the right mix of all these important variables at the 100% rate all the time.

Fifth, the LGRP spearheads change that should lead to full maturity and sustenance of D-by-D. In a nutshell, all this is about deliberate and systematic promotion of democratization process, empowerment, improved service delivery and increasing economic growth for poverty reduction. In other words it is about providing a policy framework and a practical implementation strategy for the transformation of public service delivery. However it is a known fact that there is always a possibility of the variance between **ideal** and **the unfolding situation on the ground**. The ever-growing demand for reliable and efficient service delivery tend to reduce the impact of even the obvious gains that have been achieved under difficult circumstances including budgetary constraints.

Sixth, the LGRP is engaging in a **process** that would lead to the realization of D-by-D in Tanzania. This is a complex and demanding **process**, not an occasional **event**. However the philosophy and implementation imperatives of realizing D-by-D demand collaborative partnerships, constant dialogue, sharing and exchanging ideas and accepting responsibilities. In other words, LGRP is neither an independent variable nor does it have an exclusive mandate to advance the course of D-by-D which is indeed a shared responsibility. The distorted and misplaced view that it is the LGRP alone that should deliver D-by-D across Government should be discarded. As a matter of fact and reality, it is a non- starter!

Seventh, one is likely to walk on a slippery terrain when one is risking to discuss whether or not the LGRP is impacting positively on the lives of Tanzanians. "**Impacting**" is more than mere semantics. In this particular context it is inherent with value judgment, understanding its dynamics, process and expected outputs. For instance, for a programme of this

magnitude, seriousness and philosophy, to do so given the fact that LGRP is hardly five years old is not only difficult but whatever “conclusions” one reaches are likely to be treated as speculative by skeptics. Eighth, given its design, nature, philosophy and approach, LGRP is required to deliver D-by-D in terms of **tangibles** and **intangibles** but not so easy with intangibles which are normally gradual and take some time to reach maturity. In brief the LGRP is also, among others, engaging in the **transformation of the mindset of the stakeholders to acquire a qualitatively different mind set that is in tune with D-by-D**. Needless to say this is a difficult and complex process whose impact at this stage may not be easy to discern. Ninth, given its deliberate design, approach and mandate, LGRP is neither required nor expected to deliver the basic service delivery **directly** to the people e.g. agriculture, education, health, roads etc but it is a technical facilitative institution (including capacity development) that enables other Government institutions, civic groups, private sector and indeed LGAs themselves to deliver these and other services necessary for the people to improve their well-being and that of the nation. In our view one needs to recognize and appreciate the contextual framework, conceptual and operational intricacies of LGRP in order to do justice, remain constructive, professional and objective in determining the extent to which it is impacting positively or otherwise on the lives of Tanzanians. Given the above premise, it is now appropriate to discuss whether or not public services are more available and accessible than before the launching of LGRP.

3.0 LGRP and Public Service Delivery

One of the pertinent objectives of LGRP is to facilitate LGAs to enable them deliver sufficient, reliable, predictable and quality service delivery to the majority of the citizens in the country. This is not only strategically important for LGRP but the main *raison – detré* for the Government to devolve power, authority and responsibilities to LGAs

and below. Deliberately and rightly so, the focus of this part is on the pro-poor sectors namely; agriculture, education, health, water and roads. It is worth emphasizing that these are the sectors which the Central Government, Development Partners, LGAs and the people themselves are working hard to improve in order to attain a better welfare and quality of life of the people. In principle the bulk of the Government and Donor budgetary allocations – directly and indirectly – are absorbed by these sectors. Indeed, the improvement and better performance of these sectors has a direct bearing and positive impact not only on other sectors, but equally important, on MKUKUTA.

Given the on-going reform interventions by LGRP, it is fair to make the following observations: First, invariably speaking, the good work by the various Outcomes of the LGRP has created not only a more enabling, favourable and facilitative environment but the necessary capacity that allows the LGAs in the country to absorb more effectively the continuously increasing volume of resources and obligations from the Government and Donors as compared to the situation before LGRP. Numerous concrete examples can be given, but we shall name a few. For instance, MEM funds are being reasonably well managed by LGAs and there are now millions of children in primary schools compared to five years ago. Likewise, there are numerous agricultural programmes and projects that are now either being managed by LGAs directly or the necessary oversight is being closely provided by LGAs. The situation is not different in the health and water sectors. Ordinary citizens are now more aware of their own role and responsibility in contributing to better health and provision of safe and clean water than before. Health and water committees are in place and operational in most parts of the country. On the other hand road construction in rural areas is mostly done by the rural people themselves either by being employed by LGAs and/or other institutions. Institutions like TASAF, CARE, World Vision, LGSP, Water

Aid, Irish Aid etc are increasingly recognizing and appreciating the important role the restructured LGAs are playing in facilitating their work in providing improved service delivery to the citizens. The employment opportunities created by this arrangement provide income for the families which in turn is used to purchase the basic necessities of life.

Second, **civic competence** is continuously being enhanced by LGRP through various education and training programmes, including grassroots level for leaders and technical staff both at district/municipal and sub-district/municipal levels. This has contributed to making citizens more aware of their **rights** and **responsibilities** for their own development and that of the nation. There is steadily emerging and convincing evidence from some parts of the country that people are now moving from **supply** to **demand** level of governance. They are increasingly becoming vocal and demanding accountability and transparency from their leaders and technical staff. They are increasingly moving from mere passive recipients of orders and commands from Government, Donors and LGAs to being active partners who demand to have a **voice** in their own destiny. Third, there is an increasing mutual understanding and collaborative partnerships between LGRP and sectoral ministries dealing with agriculture, education, health, water, roads and other sectors. There is also an increasing understanding and acceptance by these sectors on the relevance and strategic importance of not only “anchoring” their technical staff and services on the LGAs but on allowing LGAs to “own such staff and services” for more practical, efficient and effective partnership in service delivery. The old and misconceived view by some sectoral ministries that they had to “control and monitor their staff” from Dar es Salaam or Dodoma is increasingly becoming history. This in turn, has provided not only a challenge but also a set of opportunities for LGAs to improve service delivery to the public. Indeed HRD issue is strategically

important in empowering LGAs to improve service delivery and undoubtedly, LGRP is pivotal in this effort.

In brief, our main thesis is that LGRP as an enabling/facilitative institution [that is hardly five years old] continues to perform well under an environment that is fraught with a lot of constraints, some of which are beyond its power and authority to handle. At this juncture it is now appropriate to address a related issue, namely: the assessment of the effectiveness of LGRP in the service delivery of agriculture, education, health, roads, water and the like.

4.0 Effectiveness of LGRP

The Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) was launched in 1997 as a technical, facilitative and enabling institution within PO-RALG to spearhead LGR in order to realize the Government policy of devolving power, authority and resources to the people, now commonly known as D-by-D [ToR, 2004: 50]. In 1998 The Government published its Policy Paper on Local Government Reform that translates the Local Government Reform Agenda into concrete implementation framework. The Government and Donors agreed [on] a financing package through a Common Basket Fund, and formal preparations for phase I of the reforms began in July 1999 (ibid). Real implementation began in January of 2000. TOR for the Joint Government – Donor Programme Review – October – November, 2004 states explicitly:

“... Over ambitious targets, national and local elections, coordination issues with other reforms and delays in putting the necessary legislation in place, meant that progress was far slower than originally anticipated”.

It is also worth emphasizing that as a complex, challenging and dynamic programme, the context for reform has changed significantly since then. It

is equally important to note that not all of the changes in context could have been anticipated. However the Government deserves a big pat on the back for remaining firm and on track (all problems notwithstanding) regarding its valid and constitutional decision to strive to achieve D-by-D. The LGRP is a huge programme with a wide range of stakeholders and indeed a large number of components and sub-components (ibid). Currently, it is being implemented country – wide, and is operating in a complicated national framework. Despite all odds, the following observations are pertinent in relation to the effectiveness of LGRP. First, the goal and purpose of the programme in pursuit of improved service delivery and ultimately poverty reduction, including progress on the planned devolution of functions, responsibilities, powers and resources from Central Government to Local Government has largely remained on course. A lot of commendable work has been done in the areas of fiscal decentralization, HR autonomy for LGAs and legal harmonization and naturally, more remains to be done.

Second, there has been significant progress over the past three years, in the competence and service delivery role of local government and it is proper to appreciate that LGRP's work has been strategically pivotal in this initiative. Indeed transfers to local government continue to increase, and there is a great possibility this will be reinforced this year by non-sectoral development transfers and capacity building incentives through LG – CDG/CBG. [GOT/PO-RALG, 2004: 6]. At the same time council financial management is steadily improving, and indeed modern financial management and MIS systems are now rolling out (ibid). It is also worth recognizing that LGA restructuring is progressing well and achieving better role definitions, retrenchment and contracting out (ibid). Equally laudable and commendable is the LGRP's Governance Outcome's exemplary performance in raising and sustaining popular awareness of Local Government role. Likewise, and as alluded to earlier on, sector

programmes in education, health, and related sectors are contributing significantly to a new sense of participation, ownership, involvement and increased service delivery at LLG level (ibid). Indeed a gradual but systematic fertile ground is being created for the emergence of a **qualitatively new mindset** that provides the leadership at all levels with a “**software**” that they are the servants of the people and are thus required to be responsible, accountable, transparent and always responsive to the people’s needs and concerns. On the other hand the emerging mindset is an asset to ordinary people to help them recognize that they have responsibility and obligation for their own development and that it is their **human and constitutional right** to demand accountability from those who serve them.

However, a dynamic and complex programme of this magnitude and seriousness can not be all constraints - free. There are practical inhibiting factors that impinge on LGRP despite all the determination, commitment and diligence of its exemplary staff. We shall discuss a few realities to drive home the point. First, the Joint Government – Donor Review (2004:6) notes that the commendable progress at LGA level has not been matched at national level [although more collaborative initiatives has been taken since then]. It is also worth appreciating the fact that the major stakeholders i.e. Central Government and LGAs are fully aware of the constraints imposed on excessive controls by the state. Currently, there are various policy, legal, regulatory and implementation measures that are being taken in order to address the issue. Indeed this issue being addressed but it is a **process** and not an **event or an overnight exercise!**

Second, it is recognized and is indeed a practical reality that much more work remains to be done to extend (and speed up) the restructuring progress; to embed the new fiscal management and MIS systems; to

support CDG/CBG introduction and to increase the pace of building civic competence and popular awareness of the role of LGAs as locally – elected service providers (ibid). Third, LGRP will continue to be challenged by various stakeholders (for good or for bad reasons). For instance given the fact that the programme is **driving change i.e. D-by-D**, it is both practical and human that there are those who gain and those who lose. Undoubtedly [and it is simply human], the losers will do all they can to destabilize the programme, either directly or in a subtle way. Indeed efforts to continue the clarity of aspirations, vision and mission are strategically crucial to sustaining the reform efforts and to continue to make bold decisions, which are sometimes painful and could easily be misinterpreted by skeptics.

Third, despite all the commendable work being done by the programme, they continue to be challenged at the technocratic level, ie. the public service delivery. Indeed inertia, complacency and resistance to reform are still evident and disturbing. Fourth, the ordinary citizens have a right to challenge the programme. It is not unreasonable for the citizen – the primary owner and beneficiary of the reform – to demand that the gains of the programme are **immediately** translated into significant benefits in terms of basic service delivery in villages and towns throughout the country. However, one should also appreciate the fact that the work done by the programme since its inception was to lay solid ground in terms of philosophy, policy, initial implementation measures etc as a basis for enabling LGAs themselves to own and champion the reform process. At the same time one should appreciate the reality that the recorded and commendable achievements are inducing even more greater genuine demands from stakeholders while capacity and resources remain as inhibiting factors. In our view this is a positive and not a negative trend!

Fourth, there is a lingering disturbing misconception that the programme's design was meant **to go or reach the sub-district/municipal level**.

While this should be the focus and rightly so, it is demanding too much from the programme to expect them to reach this basic level themselves as a programme. It is true initiatives are being created to enable the LGAs themselves manage this important process e.g through Council Reform Teams (CRTs). Nevertheless this irritating misconception has erroneously provided a fertile ground for skeptics to complain and claim that “LGRP is **stuck** at the District/Municipal level”. One need not be an insider of the LGRP to know that some aspects of the **reform process** are already being implemented at the village, mtaa and ward level e.g. training etc. In a nutshell, these are some of the factors that reduce the full effectiveness of the programme and we should add upfront that these are fully recognized by the programme and are being addressed. It is now proper to discuss the impact of the programme on local service delivery.

5.0 Impact of the LGRP on the Local Service Provision

The preceding sections have attempted, albeit briefly, to discuss and articulate issues that will assist us provide an objective assessment of the extent to which the programme is impacting positively on the lives of the citizens in the country. We will risk re-phrasing the question/issue in this way: **Has LGRP made a difference?** Our conviction and available evidence is that indeed, **it has**. We shall refer to a few examples to support our affirmative view. First, fiscal decentralization has introduced equitable and transparent revenue and capital development grants from central Government to LGAs thus giving them more financial powers and powers to raise appropriate local revenues [URT], 2004: 68]. Second, administrative decentralization of personnel is integrating the staff into LGA administration and indeed away from sectoral subordination and unnecessary bureaucratic control. Third, political decentralization is aimed at the strengthening of the local democratic institutions at all levels – including villages, mtaa and kitongoji – thus enabling and enhancing public participation and bring control over many important aspects of

people's daily lives closer to the people themselves (ibid). Fourth, the service delivery function involves a decentralization of public services to bring efficient, predictable and reliable services closer to the end user and to ensure the **quantity** and **quality** of these services (ibid). Lastly, not least, the changed central – local relations is aimed at changing of the role of the central government vis-à-vis LGAs, with the central government retaining over-riding powers as stipulated in the Constitution and existing legal framework while the LGAs exercise and enjoy devolved powers, authority, responsibilities and resources in accordance with the law (ibid). Equally important is the **emerging positive mindset and recognition** that the two branches of Government's relations need not necessary be conflictual but complementary since they are serving the same people i.e. the sovereign people of Tanzania! It is emphasized that all these singly or in their totality help to demonstrate the direct and indirect impact the program has on local service delivery. It is true the five main areas are at different stage of implementation but one need not deny the fact that they are invariably exerting positive impact on local service delivery in the country. Needless to say this would not have been easier and possible without the strategic intervention that is being made by the programme. At this stage it is now an opportune moment to focus on the relevancy of the programme.

6.0 Relevancy of the Programme

It is worth reminding ourselves that LGRP is under PO-RALG and is mandated to carry out its functions as duly stipulated by the Government. Derived from this, it is obvious that its existence and operational autonomy are policy-wise and legally constituted, consequently, its relevance. Secondly, the programme has qualified and demonstrated its political, social, technical and legal existence on the basis of the dedication, competence and diligence of its faculty, support from various Government institutions, Donor community, civic groups and LGAs themselves. Third,

given that **actions/deeds speaker louder than words**, the programme's achievements thus are increasingly inspiring both allies and enemies of D-by-D in and outside Tanzania. It is not uncommon for local and international academic/researchers and Government delegations in the sub-region to visit the programme in order to learn from our experience, achievements and challenges. Recently, delegations from Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria have visited the programme (just to name a few concrete examples). Fourth, there is evidence of other reforms in the country are borrowing a leaf of what and how the programme is performing in order to enhance their own performance. Fifth, the programme is engaging in a complex, dynamic and on-going **process** of change and change management that would lead to the realization of the ultimate goal and purpose of D-by-D, which essentially and strategically, is about democratization, empowerment, improved service delivery, enhanced economic growth, self-reliance and elimination of poverty. Practical operations began recently i.e.2000 and despite all odds, the programme has already laid down the basic foundations, has begun serious implementation and some commendable achievements have been recorded and indeed has legitimized itself in the eyes/minds of various stakeholders. However the task is monumental, the challenges are colossal and overwhelming but **the determination and commitment to D-by-D is as alive as ever**, hence we would plead to all stakeholders to allow the programme to run its full course. The next part discusses how the achievements can be consolidated and sustained.

7.0 Consolidation and Sustenance of Achievements and Challenges Ahead

It is imperative and logical that the programme's current and future gains [need to] be consolidated and sustained in order to ensure the reform process remains "alive", continues to win the hearts and minds of the stakeholders and incrementally and systematically contributing to the

realization of D-by-D's goal and objectives. Undoubtedly, this is a demanding, challenging and monumental undertaking. It will be unwise to suggest a rigid and abstract blue-print for this. All that is needed is to consider a set of social, political, economic, ICT factors and the dynamic "reform regime" in a very flexible and pro-active manner. Some of these broad considerations are presented below: First, there is need for the programme to continue to play its strategic, technical and pivotal role in consolidating effective collaborative partnerships with other equally important reform processes going on in the country and in the region. It should always be borne in mind that left alone, LGRP will remain ineffective and possibly, an irrelevant and unwanted "enclave". The programme need to continue to win the hearts and minds of all stakeholders, given this is an on-going process, not an event. Equally important, LGRP should always try to learn from others even if they seem not to agree with the programme and should always argue its case, convince, demonstrate conviction and dedication to D-by-D and put themselves in the position of those who do not support LGRP and find out their reasons for doing so. In this way, both sides will be winners!

Second, the existing political will and commitment from the highest level provides an asset of golden opportunities that should not be taken for granted but be utilized for more gains and indeed more concerted efforts are needed to win politicians/policy makers at various levels, including sub-district/municipal level. Undoubtedly, a strategic, flexible and coherent framework is needed for this to happen (and be sustained). Third, we concur with the Joint Government – Donor Review (2004: 6) that the programme must become more outward focused, strengthen its networking and develop more effective ways of achieving greater prominence, influence, acceptance, negotiating strategies and impact on key decision makers at all levels (ibid). In our view, and we understand it is also the Government view, a Policy Advisor (PA) be recruited whose

responsibilities will include providing closer facilitation of the programme's work to embed the effective implementation of D-by-D across the Government. Fourth, it is our strong conviction that the programme urgently needs a coherent and effective **communication strategy** that will provide an effective link among various stakeholders, including the sub-district/municipal level and ordinary citizens who will be informed regularly on the implementation process of various activities under LGRP. However we should not create a false impression that there is nothing being done in this area. Far from truth! As we discuss the paper, plans are at very advanced stage to have **"Local Government Day" on July 1, 2005** whereby the nation will be celebrating the **decision, process and gains** of D-by-D in the country. It is worth emphasizing that LGRP is pivotal in these celebrations. There will be various activities leading to the 1st July in which, possibly, national leaders will participate. This is very appropriate and commendable. We will further recommend that in future regions, districts, wards, villages and even **mtaa** and **kitongoji** organize such annual events and celebrate the occasion with practical activities contextually relevant in their own communities. Indeed this is one of the effective ways of taking D-by-D and even the programme itself to the people who are its real owners and beneficiaries. Fifth, while it is true that LGRP is among the four major reforms [but each with distinct mandate], we feel that there is need for the Government to further **clarify the relationships between/among the four over – arching reforms**, namely: the PRSP, the PFMRP, the LSRP and the LGRP. We think crystal clear definition of relationships will reduce unnecessary technocratic mistrust and resistance, increase responsibility, accountability, promote a sense of shared responsibility and create synergy between and among them and even build positive competition for excellence. The Government is thus commended for recognizing this as demonstrated during the conference held last year at the then Royal Palm Hotel in which the Four Major Reforms and other Government, LGAs, civic

groups and the private sector deliberated on their experiences, how to work together closely and the best way to move the reform process forward. Indeed this will also avoid a situation in which each reform process is attempting to send a different signal to the stakeholders and the public in general. What is needed is to ensure all the reforms provide a direct impact on improving economic growth, enhancing service delivery and reducing poverty.

Sixth, we suggest that a possibility be explored to establish a reform framework that will ensure “**mainstreaming LGR process**” in MDAs in the country in consonance with the relevant policies, legal and regulatory framework. This has an advantage of ensuring LGR process is a “gospel” that everybody sings and dances across the Government. We do not envisage heavy administrative overhead costs for this... if there is political will, it can be done with minimum costs! Seventh, we also suggest that where space and time allow, the programme could initiate monthly or quarterly “**DIALOGUE ON LGR**” so as to provide additional space for additional voice on how best various stakeholders could contribute and share experiences in consolidating reform. Likewise, LGRP may wish to consider establishing a **NEWSLETTER** that will provide an additional forum for stakeholders to discuss various aspects of the programme and also to be informed on what is the latest happening with the LGRP. In addition, we strongly recommend a deliberately and flexibly designed proactive framework on informing, educating and winning the hearts and minds of ordinary citizens on the reform process. For instance most youths could be sensitized to understand the reform process, contribute ideas and indeed **market both D-by-D and the programme** by using sports eg soccer and netball. We think launching of **MABRESHO CUP** for initially the 21 regions to compete in netball and soccer bonanza will be a good starting point. The winners could be given certificates, shields, cash prize or simply a handshake with the Head of State or Prime Minister

will be inspirational to the winners. We do not envisage too huge costs for this although a lot of ground work, coordination and logistics have to be taken care of. Last but not least, the programme is doing an excellent work in generating very invaluable documentary evidence of the reform implementation process. It is now widely recognized as an important and strategic centre of both policy and research information both within and outside Tanzania. We strongly recommend, time and resources permitting, for the programme to explore the possibility of **publishing a scientific book** on the LGR process in the country capturing the fundamental processes, achievements and the challenges ahead. We are not suggesting that the LGRP does it itself, but they could commission one or two credible persons/institutions to work on this. Such a book will not only be useful to a general reader but will be extremely handy to the policy makers, reform implementers, academic and researchers in and outside Tanzania.

8.0 Concluding Summary

This was an exploratory paper aimed at **provoking an informed discussion** on the topic. We began with a contextual framework that helped to situate the discussion on a broader reform framework with a focus on Tanzania's initiatives to promote democratization process, improved service delivery, enhanced economic growth, reduction of poverty and maintaining higher standard of living for the citizens of the country. The second part concentrated on conceptual and operational problematique regarding the programme and indicated the difficulties one may face if one does not recognize and appreciate the dynamics and intricacies inherent in the programme. The focus of the third part was on the facilitative and enabling role of the programme in relation to the public service delivery. Derived from this was a discussion on the effectiveness of LGRP which formed the fourth part of the discussion. The fifth part focused on the direct and indirect impact of the programme on the local

service provision and this was followed by the sixth part that concentrated on the relevance of the programme. The focus of the seventh part was on the sustenance of the LGRP's achievements and challenges that lay ahead.

In conclusion, we can only emphasize that the decision to establish the programme was the right decision and that the paper has demonstrated positive impact has been created although this may not necessarily be observed directly and tangibly everywhere in the country but as a complex and dynamic programme that is designed in a **process approach** (instead of an event), there is hardly any controversy that the programme is on track, valid and continues not only to lay foundations for better performance but also continues to provide wide ranging opportunities for ensuring that power, authority and resources are systematically being devolved to the LGAs and that wide ranging opportunities are being exploited, monumental challenges are being faced and addressed and the struggle continues! It should be always emphasized that what the Government/LGRP is doing is not an experiment but a **determined and irreversible process for the benefit of all the people in the country.**

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