

Linking The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and Millennium Development Goals



The Case of Mali



African Forum and Network
on Debt and Development

Linking PRSPs and the Millennium Development Goals
The Case of Mali

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African Forum and Network on Debt and Development

31 Atkinson Drive, Hillside,
PO Box CY1517, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe
Telephone 263 4 778531, 778536 Telefax 263 4 747878
E-Mail afrodad@afrodad.co.zw
Website: www.afrodad.org

About AFRODAD

AFRODAD Vision

AFRODAD aspires for an equitable and sustainable development process leading to a prosperous Africa.

AFRODAD Mission

To secure policies that will redress the African debt crisis based on a human rights value system.

AFRODAD Objectives include the following:

- 1 To enhance efficient and effective management and use of resources by African governments;
- 2 To secure a paradigm shift in the international socio-economic and political world order to a development process that addresses the needs and aspirations of the majority of the people in the world.
- 3 To facilitate dialogue between civil society and governments on issues related to Debt and development in Africa and elsewhere.

From the vision and the mission statements and from our objectives, it is clear that the Debt crisis, apart from being a political, economic and structural issue, has an intrinsic link to human rights. This forms the guiding philosophy for our work on Debt and the need to have African external debts cancelled for poverty eradication and attainment of social and economic justice. Furthermore, the principle of equity must of necessity apply and in this regard, responsibility of creditors and debtors in the debt crisis should be acknowledged and assumed by the parties. When this is not done, it is a reflection of failure of governance mechanisms at the global level that protect the interests of the weaker nations. The Transparent Arbitration mechanism proposed by AFRODAD as one way of dealing with the debt crisis finds a fundamental basis in this respect.

AFRODAD aspires for an African and global society that is just (equal access to and fair distribution of resources), respects human rights and promotes popular participation as a fundamental right of citizens (Arusha Declaration of 1980). In this light, African society should have the space in the global development arena to generate its own solutions, uphold good values that ensure that its development process is owned and driven by its people and not dominated by markets/profits and international financial institutions.

AFRODAD is governed by a Board of seven people from the five regions of Africa, namely East, Central, West, Southern and the North. The Board meets twice a year. The Secretariat, based in Harare, Zimbabwe, has a staff complement of Seven programme and five support staff.

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|| *African governments must frame and operationalise poverty reduction and growth policies that integrate the MDGs as key objectives. Poverty Reduction Strategies must have broader and longer term perspectives and a deepening of ownership through meaningful stakeholder consultation ...* **||**

2005 ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

Preface

The relationship between growth and poverty lies at the heart of development economics. While many see aggregate growth as both necessary and sufficient for reducing poverty, and consequently focus their efforts on achieving the desired macro-economic outcomes, others stress that the benefits from growth may not be evenly spread. In fact critics of globalization often point out that growth of the macro economy may well have an adverse effect on the most vulnerable members of society. Thus the distributional impact of growth, as well as its level, needs to be taken into account when considering the consequences for poverty.

The PRSPs have a three-year lifespan after which they can be reviewed and updated on the basis of the annual evaluations. Donor funding for PRSP programmes has tended to be focused on these short-term timeframes making it difficult to plan, focus and budget resources beyond three years. This poses a challenge on predicting donor funding commitments and continuity after the three years. On the contrary, MDGs are cast in the long-term, which would imply longer term project planning, implementation and longer-term donor funding commitments. Thus effectively the complimentary role of PRSPs to MDGs is being undermined by the disjoint in the timeframes between the two. Expanding the PRSP cycle to align it with the long-term vision of the MDGs would enhance the link between the two and increase their effectiveness.

Some quarters of civil society organizations have already recommended that if PRSPs do not help in attaining the MDGs then the PRSPs have to be done away with. All donors, even the US, have backed the MDGs, but have failed to translate this yet into aid allocation policies and practical poverty reduction actions. Nevertheless, similar to the PRSPs, the MDGs are one of the few frameworks donors could unite around and which could form the basis of the harmonization of aid policies and poverty reduction in Africa. It is therefore important to interrogate the divergences and convergences imbedded in the use of both the PRSPs and MDGs as planning tools at national level by focusing at how some African countries are handling both PRSPs and MDGs within the context of national plans and development strategies.

The case of Mali as put in this study shows that it is possible for various stakeholders to work together for the national good within a defined and institutionalized set-up. The actions set in motion under the preparatory process for the formulation; implementation and follow-up of the SFPR have enabled all segments of the population to develop awareness of their health, education and rights-related problems and to mobilize themselves towards the gradual improvement of their living conditions. This also raises hopes to attain the MDGs. The political and social stability that has prevailed in Mali has engendered a climate of confidence with significant progress in poverty reduction and respect for human rights. Political willingness among political leaders is key to such.

The Malian study reiterates the fact that more still needs to be done to articulate pro-poor policies and programmes, address HIV/AIDS, improve the links with the budget system, address capacity issues and institutionalize consultation mechanisms. In turn, donors need to scale up aid, accelerate aid harmonization and their alignment with national strategy priorities. The second generation PRSPs seem to provide an opportunity to rectify what has been amiss in the first PRSPs.

This Malian case study highlights a number of issues. Among these, it is clear that financing the implementation of PRSPs requires resources beyond what can be achieved at the national level. A stable macroeconomic environment is needed both to stimulate faster growth and to protect the poor. Most importantly is the fact that growth must be broad based, equitable and sustainable if it is to have a significant impact on societal wellbeing and facilitate achievement of the MDGs.



Charles Mutasa
Executive Director
AFRODAD

List of Abbreviations

AFRODAD	African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
CFA	Colonies françaises d'Afrique ("French colonies of Africa");
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DMP	Development Master Plan
DSSDP	Decadal Social and Sanitary Development Plan
E.U	European Union
ESAF	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPHC	General Population Habitat Census
HDI	Human Development Index
IDP	Institutional Development Programme
IPES	Investment Programme for the Education Sector
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTEF	Medium Term Expenses Framework
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NRIP	National Rural Infrastructure Programme
NSPE	National Strategy for Poverty Eradication
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PITC	Improvements of Transport Corridors
PRGF	Poverty Reduction Growth Facility
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
PVEC	Poor and Very Indebted Countries
QSSDP	Social And Sanitation Development Programme
SFPR	National Anti-Poverty Strategy
SPPSO	Support Programme to Peasants Services and Organizations
STP	Sartorial Transport Project
STSF	Short Term Spending Framework
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
UEMOA	Western African Economic and Monetary Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

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1.0 Introduction

Mali is a huge country, covering a total surface of 1 241 238 km², located at the heart of West Africa; sharing a border with seven countries namely: Algeria in the north; Niger and Burkina Faso in the east; Ivory Coast and Guinea Conakry in the south as well as Senegal and Mauritania in the west. This strategic location enables Mali to play a linking role between north arabo-berber Africa and black sub-Saharan Africa.

As for its social demography, the result of the latest General Population And Habitat Census (GPHC) conducted estimated the total population living in Mali in 1998 at 9.810 million, among which 50,5 % are women and 49.5% are men.

This population grows at an average annual rate of 2.2%. Thus by 2003, the Malian population amounted to 11.1 million people.

In 1998, general life expectancy for a Malian was 60.5 years, or 62.2 years for women and 58.8 years for men. The Malian population is relatively young with the youth aged less than 15 years being 48.6% of the total population in 2003 as opposed to 46.3% in 1998. This demographic overview gives us an idea of the magnitude of food, healthcare, education and employment needs to be met.

Regarding the political and institutional environment, since 1992, the country began a huge decentralization and deconcentration process that expresses the leaders' will to give to the people their share of responsibility in the management of their own development. This process led to an administrative remodelling of Mali in 703 communes (607 urban ones and 96 in rural areas), 49 circles, 8 regions and one district (Bamako).

This new administrative subdivision of the country is adequate to the conceptualization and the implementation of developmental actions that respond best to the people's concerns at grassroots level. The political and social situation of Mali has considerably improved over the last decade. Hence, since 1992, democratic elections (presidential, legislative and communal) were held in a peaceful and consensual political climate.

This led, in 2002, to an alternation of power within a stable socio-economical environment. From an financial and economic point of view, since 1982, Mali runs with the support of the Bretton Wood Institutions,' Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) aiming at restoring the macro-economic equilibrium and the public finance sustainability.

The real GDP growth rate shifted from an average of 1% for the period covering 1991-1993 to 4.5% for the 1994-1996 periods; then it grew to 5.7% over the last decade. By 2003, the real GDP growth rate was 6.9% due to the good crop year. However, in 2004 there was an expected decrease in the growth rate, 4.7% in average, related to a decrease in gold anticipated production.

Nevertheless, this landlocked Sahel-Saharan country's economy still remains vulnerable to the exogenous shocks (climatic changes, fluctuation in the terms of trade, socio-political crisis in West Africa).

For this reason, in spite of the progress made, the level of some key development indicators is still a concern. Therefore, in the UNDP 2003 Global Report on Human Development Mali occupied the 172nd rank out of 175 listed countries, with a 0.337 Human Development Index (HDI).

The national context of poverty reduction efforts derives from a phase of consolidation and deepening of the political, economic and institutional changes of the early 1990s and international support to Mali's 2002 Strategic Framework on Poverty Reduction (SFPR) which is regarded as the sole benchmark for the country's development policy.

Mali's anti-poverty efforts which began in the 1990s were given impetus by the adoption of the "initiative 20-20" , the formulation of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (SNLP) in 1998 and of the SFPR in May 2002.

1. 1 The PRSP and MDGs in the Malian Development Process

Over the past years, the government of Mali expressed the will to engage in and render the eradication of poverty the priority of all its development priorities. To this effect, it formulated and adopted on 29 May 2002 the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) known as the SFPR as mentioned above. This consensus document was developed in conjunction with the state, the private sector and the civil society.

Table N°1: Mali's key Development indicators

Indicators	year	Value
GDP (in Billions CFA Francs)	2003	2 494,0
Real GDP growth rate	2003	6,1
Annual GDP per person (in thousands CFA Francs)	2003	225,0
Population (in millions of inhabitants)	2003	11,1
Population growth rate (in %)	2003	2,2
Life expectancy at birth (in years)	1998	60,5
Nominal value of the external debt stock over the GDP (In %)	2003	72,1
Household Poverty Incidence (in %)	2001	63,8
HIV/AIDS Prevalence rate among adults (in %)	2001	1,7
Population having access to clean water (in %)	2003	62,0
Proportion of malnourished children aged 5years and below (in %)	2001	33,0
Infant mortality ratio (per 1 000 live births)	2001	113,0
child mortality ratio (per 1 000 live births)	2001	229,0
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100 000 live births)	2001	582,0
Gross enrolment ratio (GER) in primary school (in %)	2003	67,0
Parity index (girls/boys) in primary school (in %)	2002	73,3

Sources: DNSI/DNPD/DNH/CPS- Health and Education

The Malian government has recognized the PRSP as a priority to be given primacy above all other priorities. As such there is recognition that the way towards achieving the objectives set takes in factors such as the overall international environment, the financial viability of the state, observance of the community convergence criteria established under the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), and the need to ensure the competitiveness of the Malian economy within the context of sub regional integration and globalization.

In actual terms the Malian SFPR is based on and largely inspired by a process developed through the following steps:

- 1 1997: political will expressed at the highest level to render the fight against poverty a national development priority.
- 2 1998: adoption by the Government of a National strategy for Poverty Eradication (NSPE) that was largely shared by the international community over the Geneva Round Table of September 1998.
- 3 1999: completion of the national prospective study of Mali up to 2025. This study, conducted at the eve of a new generation, from January 1997 to June 1999, sketches the possible scenarios of the Malian community's evolution; as well as the strategic orientations defined in the long run that will enable the realization of a future so much desired. This background document was drafted in line with the relevant technical requirements and the participative approach that fosters the involvement of all the layers of society.

In 2001, 63.8% and 21% of the total population lived, respectively, in poverty and in extreme poverty. Poverty prevailed more in rural areas, to the extent that big cities were more and more affected by poverty in terms of the employment market and migrations. Thus, the main objective of the PRSP was to reduce poverty in Mali from 63.8% to 47.5% in 2006.

The specific objectives were:

- Reaching an average economic growth rate of 6.7% per annum;
- A minimal employment creation of 10.000 jobs per year in the formal non-agricultural sector
- A decrease in the incidence of monetary poverty and its depth followed by a decrease in inequalities between regions, as well as between rural and urban areas
- A considerable fall in both the infant mortality rate and the maternal mortality rate
- An increase in the school enrolment and literacy rate followed by a fall in equalities between boys and girls, and between regions.

To achieve these objectives, they defined three (3) strategic axes that are:

1. Institutional development and improvement in governance and participation through:
 - Decentralization
 - Respect of the State and fight against poverty
 - Modernization of the Administration
 - Participation of the civil society in the decision making process.
2. Human development and reinforcement of the population access to basic social services namely:
 - Health/nutrition services
 - Education
 - Clean drinking water supply
 - Social protection
 - Access to habitat
3. The development of infrastructures and support to productive sectors through:
 - A balanced land use scheme and a policy of adequate infrastructures
 - A new vision of rural development and a multi-dimensional approach to food security
 - A new commercial policy and an integrated development framework for the development of both the private sector and the key economic channels of the national economy.

The first phase of the PRSP is completed and the country is fairing towards a second generation of the PRSP stretching from 2007 to 2011 based on the following aspects:

- 1 The consolidation the PRSP 2002-2006 achievements
- 2 Taking note of the weaknesses observed in terms of follow up process as well as in terms of participation.
- 3 The integration of the MDGs
- 4 Speeding up the growth process through the removal of major constraints as well as the implementation of new sources of growth for a better exploitation of the country's assets and potentials.

The actions set in motion under the preparatory process for the formulation; implementation and follow-up of the SFPR have enabled all segments of the population to develop awareness of their health, education and rights-related problems and to mobilize themselves towards the gradual improvement of their living conditions. The MDGs provide an input into capacity building at the national level, promotion of partnerships, and monitoring cum evaluation of development policies and strategies.

1.2 The MDGs in the Malian Context

The process officially began in December 2003 with the launching of a national workshop which brought various representatives of government , civil society, the private sector, the media as well as technical and financial partners participated.

In order to domesticate the MDGs and harmonize them with the PRSP objectives and indicators, eight (8) objectives, nineteen (19) targets and sixty one (61) indicators were adopted during the launch. It was agreed that both the PRSP objectives and indicators should be adjusted in order to foster a better coherence with the general MDG framework without losing sight of the initial situation and the national priorities. During this same workshop, it was acknowledged that the PRSP presented credible and clean plans and policies that contributed to the realization of MDGs.

1.3 PRSP and the Budget Making Process

In the budget making process, significant efforts were made to ensure a greater coherence with the PRSP. This link was established mainly through the following process:

1. The budgetary process is prepared on the basis of both global and sectoral orientations and objectives of the PRSP. Thus the SFPR constitutes the preparational framework for the national budget, and specifically that of each department's programme.
2. The PRSP implementation reports are used to settle budgetary issues. In fact, the different ways of budget allocations should consider addressing the problem highlighted in the implementation report namely; insufficient growth and the weakness expressed in the quality of basic social services (education, health, clean water, etc.); the need for better inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral allocation of the budget. The end objective pursued is to produce and avail the PRSP implementation framework in June of every year, for it to truly shed light on the budgetary process.
3. The link between the budget and the PRSP is also emphasized at the follow up and evaluation stage of the PRSP through a unit that identifies three central institutional pillars around which the follow up of the sectoral implementation strategies is organized: The government ministries' departments (all the technical ministries) the ministry of Finance and Economy, the Ministry of Planning and Land Use, the associations/groups as well as all end services users.
4. Finally, this link is also followed up through short-term spending framework (sectoral STSF and global STSF), The main objective being to generalize and harmonize the STSF preparation process in all sectors.

2.0 Relationship Between the PRSP and the MDGs

Although the two have been conceptualized, developed in different contexts and pointing towards different temporal horizons (five years for the PRSP and 15 years for the MDGs). The SFPR now constitutes the benchmark and the standard for the sectoral policies and strategies. It is founded on three dimensions and targets to be achieved by the year 2006, namely:

- Institutional-building and improving governance and participation
- Sustainable human development and promoting access to basic social services
- Developing basic infrastructure and support to the supply-side sectors.

In essence most of the national issues translated into this strategic axis cut across the MDGs thrust areas.

The MDGs are considered as a political engagement at the international level and as a long term vision. During the MDG launching workshop in Mali, a consensus was already built on the need to develop coherence between the PRSP objectives and those of the MDGs. In this regard, the PRSP objectives and indicators should be adjusted with a view to have a better coherence with the general MDGs framework, without losing sight of the initial scenario and the national priorities.

During this same workshop, it was acknowledged that the PRSP presented credible plans and policies, which would adequately contribute to the realization of the MDGs.

The PRSP review process began in mid 2005 and it considered various observations and recommendations made earlier on. Failure to arrive at the desired coherence and fulfilling the necessity to find a unified follow up framework for both the PRSP and the MDGs, an alternative strategy would be to have the PRSP objectives act as intermediaries to achieve the MDG s in 2015. This is in fact a point of interest considered in the formulation of the first MDG report in Mali (covering the period December 2003 to October 2004).

However, one major weakness of the PRSP is that several indicators were not matched to figures while it is evident that these indicators would be used to measure the MDGs progress. The tool is therefore not fully-utilised even though it is at the heart of public development policies, of government actions towards the eradication of poverty, and also given that it is a point of reference for both technical and financial partners in the implementation of their aid programmes.

Table 3 here below, presents the agenda and the objectives of both the PRSP and the MDGs.

Table 3: MDG and PRSP Objectives Compared

Objectives	Indicators	Actual level	PRSP 2006	MDG 2015
To reduce Poverty	Poverty rate (%)	64 %	47,5%	32 %
To reduce Hunger	Malnutrition rate (%)	30%	22%	15%
To increase School enrolment	(GER)(%)	70,5 %	75 %	100 %
To reduce Child mortality	CMR (%°)	229	210	76
To reduce Maternal mortality	MMR (%000)	582	500	145
To increase Access to clean/drinking water	Rate of access (%)	63,7 %	67	82
To enhance global Partnership	Economic growth Rate	4,3	6,7	7,0

SOURCE : MDG: National Council of the Civil Society, February 2006

As it can be observed, the levels of most national social indicators are found far below the MDGs targets and it seems difficult for Mali to move at that pace of the MDG agenda. The UNDP Global Human Development Report 2003 edition ranked Mali 172nd out of 175 listed countries, with a 0.337 Human Development Index (HDI).

Thus, at a glance the first results obtained from key development indicators show that, in spite of the progress made, they are still disquieting and that there is still a long way to go for Mali to meet the MDGs by 2015.

The UNDP Human Development Report has revealed much work needs to be done for Mali to have realistic indicators for both its PRSPs and MDGs. Currently, it is not sensible for the country to hope to attain MDGs targets as its PRSP targets are lowly targeted. In the absence of reliable figures to trace the progress of the various indicators, it is not possible to measure whether:

- Fast and significant progress is being made in the area of primary education and enrolment of girls,
- Potentials and progress made in the area of food security (land stewardship fosters a decline in the effects of climatic contingencies)
- A sensitive trend towards gender equality in favour of participatory democracy,
- A delay in the improvement of medical coverage (evident in a loss of momentum in the tendency of some indicators such as those of infant mortality and maternal mortality)

3.0 The World Bank and the IMF in the MDG Agenda

The World Bank and the IMF has continuously extended support to Mali since 1992 under three successive Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) and the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) agreements.

The report of an evaluation commission on the results obtained by Mali over the last three programmes FASR/FRPC supported by the IMF, over the period 1992-2002, underlines the progress made by Mali towards macroeconomic stability.

In appreciation of satisfactory progress made by the government, in implementing macroeconomic and structural policies, under the stewardship of the world Bank and the IMF, Mali has become the seventh country to reach achievement (in February/March 2003) within the initiative for Poor and Very Indebted Countries (PVEC) after Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda.

To this point, Mali benefited from availed resources, due to the initiative that put social sectors and the various activities for the reduction of poverty defined in the PRSP high on the agenda.

In fact, over the period 1993-2002, about 60% of the funds received by Mali from the ADC were devoted to basic social services.

The net value of this support by the end of the year 1998, in millions U.S Dollars, is as follows :

Initiative PVEC	Support							
	Total	Bilateral	Multilaterale	IDA	IMF	AFDB/AFDF	Others	(%)
	539	169	370	185	59	69	56	37 ;3

Through the PVEC scheme Mali enjoyed a 1% relief in 1998.

From December 2002, due to the positive results obtained after factoring in the conditionality imposed by the Bretton Woods Institutions, Mali's financial assistance grew from 401.5 to 417.5 millions U.S Dollars in total, more specifically from 43.9 millions to 45.2 millions U.S Dollars from the IMF and from 138.5 to 142.6 millions dollars from the World Bank.

Besides, the progress made in the reduction of external debt through the PVEC initiative and improvement of the balance of Payment enabled Mali to reduce by more than half the ratio (in %) of debt servicing over the amount of goods and services exported thus bringing the ratio down from 36.8% in 1990 to 15.2% in 2003.

However, over the whole period, more than a quarter of Malian exports revenue (about 24%) were allotted to the payment for external debt servicing which is significantly rising each year from 71.1 Billions CFA Francs in 2003, to 74.02 Billions CFA Francs in 2004 and 90.69 billions in 2005. This in turn deprives the country of significant resources necessary for its development and consequently for its fight against poverty. (First UNDP report on the Malian MDGs).

4.0 Opportunities and Challenges

If the various frameworks that have been set up and the contended will of both Mali and that of the Technical and Financial Partners (TFP) constitute in themselves ascertained opportunities pointing at national priorities towards the global objective, then in view of the progress made, there still persist a good number of challenges to be addressed.

Thus, in Mali's current situation, it would be very elusive to think that the MDGs would be achieved by the predefined horizon if outstanding measures spearheaded by the state are not taken. The state would be in turn supported by the TFP through massive financial support, a better support from vigorous and notational initiatives as far as additional funds are concerned.

The challenges to be addressed are:

- 1 improving the quality of public policies
- 2 good governance and better management of public affairs
- 3 The statistics relevance and quality
- 4 A performing follow up system
- 5 Institutional reforms and capacity building at all levels.

Also, in order to ensure that "Mali is the best place for all by 2025 ", the government should see that all national players concerned by the implementation and MDGs follow up have their capacity built, and also see to the funding of these strategies, programmes and Development projects.

4.1 Consistence and Coherence Between Messages and Support From Multilateral Organizations

Mali, over and above the PRSP that constitutes the main negotiation instrument with the group of technical and financial partners, has put in place, conjointly with the PTF, a Malian composite commission (including government authority) - Development partners (heads of aid and cooperation agencies, ambassadors of OECD) presided by the MEF in the organization's joint action framework.

This commission meets periodically to take stock of the progress made towards achieving the PRSP on the basis of orientations given by the government in order to better coordinate support in the main areas.

In terms of harmonization of procedures, we can note the efforts on the side of donors aiming at better coordination the joint follow up procedures, developing co-financing agreements as well as some delegated cooperation initiatives.

All the development partners are stakeholders in these frameworks and have adopted these principles.

The PRSP strategic axis operationalization is done through major projects and programmes with objectives and activities mainly refocused around poverty reduction.

Conjunct Multilateral partner's intervention operates in the following areas:

At the institutional level, a National strategic reform framework and an institutional development Programme (IDP) (main E.U funding) was adopted by the government in July 2003, integrating political elements and objectives defined in the President's framing letter dated 23 October 2002 and in the declaration of the government's general policy chaired by the Prime Minister in the National Assembly.

Sectors such as health, education, rural sector as well as employment, equipped themselves with important programmes for the short runs that are the references and the intervention framework.

At the socio-sanitary level:

The Decadal Social And Sanitary Development Plan (DSSDP)-1998/2007 and the Five Years Social and Sanitary Development Programme (QSSDP) serve in the implementation of the sectoral health policy as well as in social development.

The first phase for the QSSDP (1998-2003) was 192 billions CFA while the second phase of the same (2004-2008) is in progress.

In the field of education, the educative policy is implemented through the DSSDP that was drafted using a participatory approach that involves the people and the financial and technical partners. The implementation of the DSSDP is fast-tracked by an efficient take off in the Investment Programme for the Education Sector (IPES) that is financed in conjunction by the state's budget and the technical and financial partners. The first phase of the IPES covered the period 2001-2004 and will cost an estimated 395 billions CFA Francs.

Regarding development in the rural area, the Development Master Plan (DMP) drafted in 1992 was updated in 2000 and the new version was adopted by the government in 1992. The objectives and the strategies therein contained were summarized into nine major support programmes among which were the Support Programme to Peasant Services and Organizations (SPPSO).

SPPSO phase one, for the period 200-2004 cost about 60 billions CFA Francs and the national rural infrastructure programme- NRIP (1998-2005) cost about 96 billions CFA Francs. These two programmes started more efficiently. The others are either in the making process or still looking for funds.

In the field of basic infrastructures, the Malian government commenced, since 1995, in conjunction with technical and financial partners, the implementation of the Sartorial Transport Project (STP) which has been extended up to December 2004. Upon expiring of this deadline, significant financial needs will still have to be met to fund the urgent upgrading of transport infrastructure needed. This concerns mainly a number of national neuralgic axes.

The government of Mali is engaged, with the support of technical and financial sector partners in the making of a project called "Project For The Improvement Of Transport Corridors (PITC) " scheduled for a period of four years (2004-2007) in order to consider the concerns while waiting for the preparation and implementation of the second sectoral transport project.

However, one general paradox occurrence report was made in this seemingly consensual context: " there is a somehow strong decreasing tendency in public support to development ".

4.2 Institutional Set-up and Participation

The institutional set up and the organization for the participation of all players is translated into actions by order no-175/PM-RM of 12/04/2001 placing institutional preparation mechanisms, follow-up and evaluation mechanisms through the following organs:

- A Policy Committee that proceeds to the orientation makes decisions in the set-up process and follows-up the PRSP.
- It is chaired by the Prime Minister and has the Minister for Finance and Economy as vice-chairperson; the Steering Committee includes most government departments and also a significant number of civil society representatives.
- A steering committee chaired by the Ministry of Finance and Economy's secretary general and includes among its members five representatives of the civil society who are responsible for:- initiating, starting-up and coordinating all the activities within the PRSP preparation framework, follow up process and evaluation process: - facilitating consensus building among the various stakeholders and;- ensuring the technical relevance of the documents compiled, their publication and their circulation.
- A national technical committee, chaired by the secretary general of the Ministry of Finance and Economy. "This is the technical organ for the PRSP preparation, follow-up and evaluation. Its mission is to promote synergy among the various players (the government, the civil society, financial and technical partners) and to ensure the realization of the technical process ".
- Working groups, steered by various departments depending on the thematic tackled and made up of government

structures representatives, the civil society and Technical and Financial Partners (TFP). On a regular basis, it takes stock of progress made in the 13 strategic areas earlier pointed.

As for the MDGs, neither a framework nor a specific macro-organizational design has been put in place within the MDGs, which are incidentally considered in the plan for indicators follow-up ran by the PRSP crew.

5.0 Relevance of the Civil Society and That of the Private Sector

In terms of participation and contributions from the civil society towards development programmes that target directly the eradication of poverty, in 2004, NGOs mobilized 35 billions CFA Francs for the realization of investments that are beneficial to the people, reflecting their ever growing role in development actions. However, available alternatives are conditioned by the support of development partners thus giving a random character to any progress in this stake.

The participation of all stakeholders has been identified to be the key to success in meeting poverty eradication challenges. Also, it has been a support requirement by technical and financial partners, to ensure their participation at all stages of the process. i.e. formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

5.1 Participation of the civil society : Findings, Issues and challenges

Within Mali's legal framework, there is provision that civil society should also contribute to the various stages of the country's development including the achievement of the MDGs and the PRSP. This has since the 2002 national workshop resulted in the formation of working groups, to better adjust to the timely realities and especially to the changes registered within the various actors (the civil society being one of them). The coming in of the PRSP gave opportunity to civil society organizations to make a progress report of their participation with the support of development partners. Thus, in the case of Mali, the following were found as the strengths, weaknesses and constraints relative to their participation:

5.2 Strengths

- They have a good structured way of engagement which is constitutionally vested, making their participation well-organized.
- There was and still is wide consultation of the various players within the civic domain.
- A number of working group meetings and conferences have been regularly organized
- A constant will to build consensus prevails.
- Regular publication of PRSP updated progress reports makes communication easy, thus offering to the of the civil society organizations more opportunities to influence the process for poverty eradication.
- The establishment of the civil society's National council gives a rallying point to all.

5.3 Weaknesses

The weaknesses that have been pin-pointed in the Malian context arose from not only processes that did not meet all the expectations but also from structural issues linked to the CSOs. These include:

1. The diversity of CSOs on the Malian scene, with divergent interests, raises questions of adequate and legitimate representation among colleagues as they all have varying expectations, approaches, expertise) and in some instances , motivation.
2. High tensions and leadership problems between and within CSOs (due to a lack of cohesion in the civil society) despite the various attempts to consolidate the civil society through the establishment of the civil society's National Council.
3. Inefficiency and shortcomings in participation as they try to decentralize the process at local level.
4. The lack of experience to adequately consult and get feedback with large scales of interested parties within a specific allotted time.
5. Inconsistency in the rules and technical efficiency of consensus building (for example: non-functional follow-up frameworks, non-functional short list of consensual evaluation PRSP indicators, etc.)

6. The lack of arbitrary rules despite the fact that the PRSP should respond to multiple objectives. This becomes gnawing.
7. The lack of rigorous critical review and data capitalization to allow adjustments. Most of the time, activities are stopped at the information and consultation stage of the process. The CSOs express their views and concerns which are not covered by the final reports. This results in the lack of content and process ownership.

In this context, civil society's issues and challenges are related to quality participation in their endeavour to put forth their influence on current issues and emerging issues. Promoting a strong engagement, representativeness and responsibility of the civic movement at all stages (formulation, implementation, follow-up and evaluation) remains a major challenge. The inability to develop mechanisms to influence the PRSP and other development programmes and policies remain a constrain. The only way to show vibrancy and value-addition among the CSOs is to first strengthen their own alliances, have agreed-upon procedures and by the same token ensure that decisions taken are followed, promote and support the flow of information around the question of the PRSP and MDGs.

Despite the shortcomings mentioned above, one must hastily mention that under the stewardship of the development partners, solutions to misunderstandings among CSOs are being worked out and CSOs seem to be on the right path to monitor the PRSP process and the MDGs.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Despite the relevance of the PRSP document to the Malian government, its attempt to ensure compliance with donor policies, the participation of all the stakeholders; the implementation of the PRSP revealed a number of weaknesses for which a leeway should be made to make sure that the document keeps its strategic and political relevance. Otherwise, Mali is one of the few countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that has demonstrated the feasibility of partnership between various national stakeholders and such a desire should see an end to poverty in that country.

6.1 For the Malian Government

In the PRSP actualization, strengthening and operationalization perspectives and in the pursuit of the MDGs, necessary adjustments should be done at several levels so as to respond to fundamental issues, namely:

*on the relationship between the MDGs and the PRSP:

1. The necessity to foster consistency between the PRSP and the MDGs, mostly in the sense that PRSPs should be considered in the MDGs plan of action: the second generation PRSP process should also bear the responsibility to harmonize the PRSP temporal horizons and objectives that can be used to measure progress towards MDGs. Technical issues of follow-up means and serviceability should also be tackled in:
 - a. strengthening data collection structures and data analysis statistics, boosting coordination and homogenization of data bases.
 - b. ensuring a greater collaboration with the National Bureau of statistics and information technology that would establish a master plan for the 5 years to come to equip the PRSP evaluation with the necessary tools.
 - c. The search for a better articulation between the PRSP set objectives and the budgetary impact (identifying constraints on the MTEF (Medium Term Expenses Framework)).
2. To optimize the link between the PRSP and the MDGs, it is vital to create more harmony. For instance, the current version of the PRSP has some important areas that have not been sufficiently overlined inspite of their direct relation with poverty. In other words it is a matter of, on one hand environment, food security, AIDS; handicrafts, tourism and the fight against corruption on the other hand.
3. Positioning and anchoring an institutional framework as well as a MDGs follow up mechanism in Mali.
4. The follow-up system of the PRSP has been identified as its major weakness. Therefore it is necessary to strengthen intervention abilities of technical departments in charge of data collection, processing, analysis and provision of vital statistics in setting MDGs indexes and targets. On the same note, the abilities of central, sectoral, regional and local planning structures, statistics gathering and non-governmental information and communication structures should equally be strengthened.

6.2 For Stakeholders

Both the civil society and the private sector should make efforts to improve their organization and sharpen their abilities to act.

In that regard, they will have to:

1. Put in place a Civil society institutional framework within which all organizations, especially women's organizations, could participate equally; work in a more optimal way in alliance with other partners (the government and the financial and technical partners) in the formulation and implementation of national policies.
2. Support their organizations so they can better understand and play their role of interface between the micro, meso and macro players of other development players.

3. Position themselves at the decision making level in order to influence the decision making process and exercise their right to participate in development policies formulation, implementation and follow-up evaluation as well as in the institutionalization of social equity.
4. Fostering their members capacity building especially at the technical level (gender, lobby, advocacy, internal communication and at the level of the institutional and organizational council).

6.3 For the International Community at Large

1. The international community in line with the Monterrey Consensus, the Paris Declaration, the Millennium Declaration, the G8 Gleneagles' among others should focus on up-scaling quality aid delivery to poor countries such as Mali through a greater mobilization of resources required to finance projects and programmes in the fight against poverty.

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