

**AFRICA REGIONAL WORKSHOP/CONFERENCE ON  
PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING**

**DURBAN – SOUTH AFRICA**

**MARCH 13, 2008**

**THEME: STRENGTHENING BUDGET TRANSPARENCY,  
PARTICIPATION AND INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT**

**TOPIC: OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT IN  
BUDGET EXECUTION**

**PRESENTER: KWAMENA AHWOI**

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
(GIMPA)**

**ACHIMOTA, ACCRA-GHANA**

# Learning Objectives

- **Highlight importance of independent oversight in participatory budgeting**
- **Indicate key operational principles**
- **Identify independent oversight bodies**
- **Define some roles of independent oversight bodies**
- **Outline some methodology and procedures for independent oversight**

# **Assumptions Underlying Independent Oversight**

- **Tolerance of independent oversight**
- **Existence of independent oversight bodies**
- **Competence and capability**
- **Availability/Appreciation of Budget Document**

# **Why State/Local Authorities Oversight Fail**

- **Partisanship of Legislatures**
- **Legislatures too busy**
- **Legislative oversight ex post**
- **Legislators often compromised**
- **Legislators as watchmen cannot watch themselves**

# Who Should Be Involved In Independent Oversight?

- Independent constitutional institutions
- Individual Members of Parliament
- Local councillors
- CSOs/CBOs/NGOs
- Professional Associations
- Independent Think Tanks
- The Media
- Chiefs/Traditional Authorities
- Neighbourhood Local Government Bodies
- Volunteer Neighbourhood Associations

# From Plan To Budget

- **Budget financial expression of plan**
- **Participatory planning and budgeting important for independent oversight**
- **Participatory planning and budgeting explains:**
  - **What is to be done?**
  - **Why it is to be done**
  - **When it is to be done**
  - **How it is to be done**

# The Budget

- **National or local authority?**
- **Summarise Budget**
- **Translate into local languages**
- **Dis-aggregate revenue budget into heads/items and collecting agencies**
- **Dis-aggregate expenditure budget to show location/programme/project specificity**

# Questions For Independent Oversight

- **What is it?**
- **What are the pre-conditions?**
- **Who are involved?**
- **What is to be done?**
- **How is it to be done?**
- **When is it to be done?**
- **What is expected out of it?**

# **Mechanisms For Independent Oversight**

- **Simplify, abridge and translate budget**
- **Pamphlet on “What is in the budget for you”**
- **Budget study cells**
- **Information on:**
  - **Contract awards and payments**
  - **Payments of salaries and other recurrent expenditures**
  - **General expenditures under the budget**

# **ICT And Independent Oversight**

- **E-Governance as public sector use of ICT**
- **Enhances service delivery, encourages citizens participation and ensures accountable government**
- **Web presence, interaction, transaction and integration**
- **Portals for internal, inter-departmental and Government-to-citizen communication**
- **Inter-independent oversight groups linkage**
- **Independent oversight groups linkage with other stakeholders**

# **Methodology For Independent Oversight**

- **Develop checklist for dis-aggregated budget items, both revenue and expenditure**
- **Use checklist to elicit information on budget execution**
- **Use media, especially FM radio stations**
- **“Freedom of Information Acts”**
- **Use the courts: Go for mandamus**
- **Conduct “Social Audit Town Hall Meetings”**

# Independent Oversight: Challenges

- **Changing mindset of officialdom**
- **What kind of training?**
- **Who training?**
- **Best procedures**
- **Guidelines**
- **Collaboration**

# **Independent Oversight: Challenges (cont.)**

- **What to look for**
  - **Bank reconciliation statements**
  - **Books of account**
  - **Physical inspection**
  - **Surprise visits**
  - **Actual oversight of municipal services delivery**
- **What happens to findings?**
- **Cost of independent oversight**

# Summary And Recommendations

- **Failure of traditional intra-system oversight**
- **Government/Local authorities tolerance of independent oversight**
- **Existence, capacity and capability of bodies involved**
- **Availability/accessibility of budget document**
- **Challenges:**
  - training,
  - best procedures,
  - collaboration,
  - budget execution information,
  - utilisation of findings

# **Summary And Recommendations (Cont.)**

- **Participatory planning and budgeting essential pre-requisites**
- **Government/Local authorities policy on participatory budgeting/independent oversight**
- **Budget dis-aggregation:**
  - Revenue heads and estimates
  - Location/programme/project specificity

# **Summary And Recommendations (Cont.)**

## **Mechanisms include:**

- **Pamphlets on “What is in the Budget for you”**
- **Formation of Budget Study Cells**
- **Use of E-Governance**
- **Freedom of Information Acts**
- **Use of courts: Mandamus**
- **Use of Media**
- **Social Audit Town Hall Meetings**

# Other Methodologies

- **Examination of bank accounts/books of account**
- **Physical inspections**
- **Surprise visits**
- **Actual oversight**
- **Comparison of findings and of effective strategies**

# Conclusion

## Independent oversight:

- **Impacts positively on budget execution**
- **Enables budget execution to reflect local needs and priorities**
- **Ensures prompt and effective budget implementation**
- **Allows for transparency and accountability in budget execution**
- **Facilitates monitoring and evaluation of budget execution process**
- **Allows for “value for money” budget implementation**
- **Accelerates infrastructure provision, municipal services delivery and community development.**

**Thank you!**