

## ANSA-Africa

### Strengthening accountability systems and institutions

#### **Social accountability has many vital roles to play in post-conflict and vulnerable states**

- Where can the principles and techniques of social accountability help a post-conflict state to recover, rebuild and recommence the process of development?
- How can a social accountability framework help to empower citizens in such a state, who may not be ready to trust the governance system?
- Where in Africa has social accountability helped to restore trust in government and made it more effective in areas of great need and poverty?
- Can the corporate sector also be held accountable for its impact on communities where it operates – especially in sectors such as mining?



These are just a sampling of the points to be discussed and analysed by participants in the **ANSA-Africa stakeholder conference on May 19 & 20 in Addis Ababa**. The register is now full and abstracts for presentation to the conference have been examined and selected. Participants representing almost 30 African countries and the Asia Pacific, Europe and North America will come together to share their experiences and views of where social accountability has been effective, how it can be strengthened, and how principles of social accountability can be introduced in areas of government where it is most needed.

Most importantly, in view of the many conflicts and high levels of need across the continent, the conference will examine case studies from places where social accountability has helped to bring stability and growth after times of great vulnerability. Participants from countries such as Zimbabwe, Kenya, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique and Sudan have indicated their willingness to share their experiences in this regard.

Training sessions will help to pass on practical skills like participatory budgeting, participatory expenditure tracking, monitoring & evaluation, citizens' report cards, and communicating social accountability.

**Even if you are not attending the conference, you will be able to gain from this time.**

Registration for the event is now closed. However, summaries of all the papers to be presented at the conference will be available on [www.ansa-africa.net](http://www.ansa-africa.net) from May 19 and the full papers will be posted on the website that week. The Full Circle newsletter will be sent out that week with a report on the conference, comments from participants, and contact information to allow you to follow up with speakers and the organisations that were represented. And we will be recruiting conference participants to contribute to future articles and points of discussion for Full Circle, the Building Blocks series on social accountability, and website articles.

**In the month just past...**

- **The Executive Committee of ANSA-Africa had its first meeting of the year on March 14-15.** The committee heard updates on key activities including the pilot study on Africa's Social Accountability Profile, communication activities and the monitoring and evaluation framework. Key decisions taken by ExCo were:
  - That since the current ExCo's term of office comes to an end in December, the secretariat should begin with the process of constituting a new ExCo by June. This will include preparing selection criteria and a call for nominations during the latter part of the year;
  - That the secretariat should expand the ANSA-Africa network. The database of stakeholders and social accountability practitioners should be updated continuously and should include technical experts that could be mobilised;
  - That training tools in the area of social accountability require more attention. A trainer of trainer approach should be followed;
  - That the website should increase its French and Portuguese contributions;
  - That a rigorous seminar series covering a range of aspects related to social accountability should be launched this year;

- That two calls for research grants be issued this year; and
- That partnerships across the continent be formalised.

- **ANSA-Africa launched the first installment of a new teaching series called the Building Blocks of Social Accountability**, to support organisations and individuals across Africa who want to know more about what social



accountability is and how it can help improve government service delivery and community development. The first article, “Social Accountability: A Conceptual Framework” has been archived on [www.ansa-africa.net](http://www.ansa-africa.net) for easy download. Members of the ANSA-Africa technical advisory group and executive council will contribute to future articles, drawing of African experiences and lessons learned. If you would like to contribute to this series, please send your article or outline to [patlucas@eject.co.za](mailto:patlucas@eject.co.za).

- The Municipal Development Partnership for Eastern and Southern Africa (MDP-ESA) reports that the Africa Regional Seminar on Participatory Budgeting in Durban, South Africa from March 10-14 was brought together 155 participants from the 33 countries in Africa, North and South America, Europe and Asia. The seminar was co-directed by and the Social Development Department of the World Bank in cooperation with the City of Durban (Ethekewini).

The seminar brought together key experts on participatory budgeting at the policy, operational, and capacity building levels. The event focused on three key areas: (i) Transparency and Demystification of Local Revenue and Expenditures; (ii) Citizen’s Voice in Budget Planning; and, (iii) Civil Society Oversight of Public Revenue, Expenditures, Procurement Process, and Delivery of Infrastructure and Services. The seminar launched a Peer-to-Peer Mutual Action Learning Programme, to support continuous learning opportunities between African practitioners and peers in other regions and strengthen direct exchange and co-operation on participatory budgeting. A one-day field visit to four local municipalities helped to strengthen participants’ practical understanding of participatory budgeting. A selection of presentations made at this conference is posted on [www.ansa-africa.net](http://www.ansa-africa.net) for easy download.

- What are your colleagues reading on social accountability? What topics generate the most interest in the social accountability field? The ANSA-Africa website can now help answer these questions. [www.ansa-africa.net](http://www.ansa-africa.net) has introduced a new feature that lists the documents most accessed by visitors. It automatically updates as new documents come

into demand. Visit the ANSA-Africa homepage to view it or go to [www.ansa-africa.net/index.php/popular\\_postings](http://www.ansa-africa.net/index.php/popular_postings).

The ANSA-Africa network thrives on the contributions of its members from across Africa. Please feel free to mail us at any time with your input, requests or questions: [ansa@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:ansa@hsrc.ac.za).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours for the growth of social accountability,

**The ANSA-Africa Team**

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