

## ANSA-Africa

### Strengthening accountability systems and institutions

**Crisis in Kenya:** Are poor people becoming the untouchables of Africa? And if so, what does this mean for Africa's security and development?

Last month we asked you for your ideas and concerns over what the current crisis in Kenya will mean for social accountability in that country and across Africa. We keep this invitation open. Meanwhile, we publish a couple of paragraphs from the response of Mr Stephen Mutoro, chief executive officer of the Kenya Alliance of Resident Associations (Kara), based in Nairobi. He writes:

**“Accountability [in Kenya] has been replaced with heightened mistrust and suspicion. Institutions remain shells of what they are meant to be. The people heading such institutions have first allegiance to the centralised political and economic power. The ‘winner takes all’ sense of deprivation no longer applies only to the political situation but even at a social level.**

**“The stranglehold on the majority ‘untouchables’ (the poor) by the few affluent people (and a helpless middle-class) has turned real social values upside down. We have, for instance, seen criminals (literally people who must be in a maximum security prison on account of their past atrocities, once elected, rise to be accepted by society as ‘honourables’.”**

Thank you, Mr Mutoro, for introducing this focus on how our attitude towards poverty can influence our sense of accountability. Such a situation is not unique to Kenya. This is why ANSA-Africa's five focus areas are Education, Gender, Health, ICT and Service Delivery – all critical areas for helping to relieve poverty and develop communities to share in the growing prosperity of the continent.

You can help the ANSA-Africa network grow with your thoughts on what the implications of this kind of contemporary crisis might bear for the future of social accountability in Africa. Simply email your comments to [ansa@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:ansa@hsrc.ac.za). In May ANSA-Africa will host a regional conference focusing

on social accountability in fragile and post-conflict states. Even if you cannot attend the conference, sending us your comments and ideas would be a valuable contribution.

**ANSA-Africa's goals for 2008:** Here are some highlights in store for the year.

- To host the ANSA-Africa regional conference on social accountability, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in May. Watch the website for forthcoming details.
- To issue a request for proposals and allocate one or two sub-grants for research, knowledge sharing or capacity building initiatives.
- To publish a user-friendly sourcebook on social accountability, in English, French and Portuguese.
- To develop a better understanding of social accountability in Africa, its dimensions, the role players involved, the activities being undertaken and identifying gaps and needs, through development of the African Social Accountability Profile (ASAP).
- To fund a training course or capacity building initiative on social accountability.
- To continue to mobilise financial resources for ANSA activities and projects, including the regional conference and the commissioning of research papers into social accountability in fragile and post-conflict states in Africa.
- To provide technical assistance to three social accountability initiatives in Africa.
- To develop a programme of monthly capacity building seminars on social accountability, to be delivered by videoconference to selected countries across the continent.
- To identify regional implementing partners in each of the Regional Economic Communities, ensuring that at least one partner is located in an Anglo-, Franco- and Lucophone-speaking country.

In the month just past ...

- ANSA-Africa, in partnership with the World Bank, the Prime Minister's office in Madagascar and the local initiatives of PGDI, PGRM and PIC, held a successful conference on the February 7-8. Specialists in participatory budgeting, participatory expenditure tracking, community scorecards and citizen report cards were sponsored by ANSA-Africa to attend the conference. A field trip was held on February 9 allowed delegates to observe the implementation of participatory budgets. Marguerite Monnet and Bachir Kanoute travelled on with World Bank colleagues to Fort Dauphin to further assist in looking at the use of social accountability in the mining sector.
- **Africa's Social Accountability Profile (ASAP)** has prepared an integrated report on team members' desktop studies of Egypt, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania and Togo. This report is being distributed to the relevant country representatives and will be available on the [www.ansa-africa.net](http://www.ansa-africa.net) by mid-March.

- **Visits to [www.ansa-africa.net](http://www.ansa-africa.net)** have reached record numbers over the last month. Analysis of the visitors to ANSA-Africa's web portal shows that stakeholders in five African countries – Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa – are among the top 10 users. This illustrates that it is becoming a useful, recognised web portal for social accountability issues. The high rates of new visitors (66.5%) to the site are also pleasing. Since March 2007 ANSA-Africa's web portal has had over 420 000 hits. Here are some of the newest links to informative Web documents:
  - [Solemn statement and recommendations: 11th consultative meeting on gender mainstreaming in Africa](#)
  - [Measuring and strengthening local governance capacity: the local governance barometer](#)
  - [The role of civil society organisations in promoting social justice and sound developmental policies in SADC](#)
  - [Social accountability: An introduction to the concept and emerging practice](#)

In the months ahead ...

- ANSA-Africa has been invited to participate in the Advanced Public Sector Service Delivery Seminar will take place in Maseru, Lesotho, on February 19-20, hosted by TACT Business Development & Management. For details, please email [talent.moyo@tact-bdm.co.za](mailto:talent.moyo@tact-bdm.co.za).
- **The ANSA-Africa executive committee** will meet later this month.
- ANSA-Africa will be part of the Participation & Accountability regional conference organised by the Municipal Development Partnership for Eastern and Southern Africa (MDP-ESA) on March 10-14. Please visit [www.ansa-africa.net](http://www.ansa-africa.net) or [www.asaaf.org.zw](http://www.asaaf.org.zw) for more information.
- In May the ANSA-Africa regional conference on social accountability will take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The focus will be on social accountability in fragile and post-conflict states. Watch the website for forthcoming details.

Yours for the growth of social accountability,

**The ANSA-Africa Team**

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