

SUPPORTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE MANAGEMENT PROCESS FOR ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCE AND LIVESTOCK SECTORS MANAGEMENT IN MARSABIT COUNTY



Thematic Working Group members in a group photo with Green Africa Foundation staff and Hon. Chachu Ganya ,M.P. North Horr constituency.

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Public participation is a process that engages the people (public) in decision making, it seeks to make use of public input for decision making. It is also defined as the actions one takes to actively engage the citizens in the affairs of their community and/or their government.

At the onset of devolution, most of the functions of national Government were transferred to the county governments. This functions include policy formulation and implementation, projects implementation and natural resource management. Some of the projects that are handled by the County Governments are not limited to; infrastructural development such as, feeder roads, hospitals, lower primary school facilities, agricultural development among others. Natural resources such as; mountains resources, forest resources, rangelands and game parks located within the county boundaries and livestock among others. Devolution availed an opportunity for growth and development in the counties.

To achieve inclusive and sustainable development in the counties, the involvement of the public in identification of development priorities, planning, financial allocation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is crucial. This process avails information that improves efficiency in technical support, budgetary allocation and expenditure. It also offers innovative solutions that would normally not have risen from the usual decision making processes. To achieve this, citizens and non-state actors need to have the capacity and the necessary tools for public participation.

Upon this realization, Green Africa Foundation is implementing a project that aims to build the capacity of citizens and non-state actors to effectively participate in public expenditure management process specific to Livestock, and Environment & Natural Resource Sectors in Marsabit County. The project is implemented with financial support of USAID and UKaid through the Agile and Harmonized Assistance for

Devolved Institutions (AHADI) program in Kenya. Through this program, AHADI aims to promote governance systems that are transparent, accountable, effective in service delivery, and responsive to empowered citizens by working at national and county government levels.

Green Africa Foundation held the first meeting with citizens and Non Stakeholders in Marsabit County on 18th July 2018, during which the project and the basics of public participation and Public Expenditure Management were introduced. The ultimate goal is to **“build the capacity of the NSAs and citizens on Public Expenditure Tracking in Environment & Natural Resources and Livestock sector through Thematic Working Groups in Marsabit County”**. The Thematic Working Group members will act as Trainers Of Trainees (TOTs) of the Public Expenditure Management and Tracking . The Foundation has engaged a consultant who is currently working on the development of a Public Expenditure Tracking tool which will be piloted by theTOT) in five wards in Marsabit County.



Mr. Milton Ogada introducing the project and the Public Expenditure Management (PEM) process to TWG members.

During the meeting, the stakeholders formed two Thematic Working Groups: the Environment & Natural Resource Sector Working Group led by Mr. Paul Lekapana composed of 15 members and the Livestock Sector Working Group led by Tumul Orto composed of 16 Members. The composition of the two Thematic Working Groups were citizens’ representatives drawn from different wards within the county and Non State Actors in the county in order to extend the reach to the larger populace.

In the working groups discussions, the stakeholders identified challenges affecting effective public participation in Public Expenditure Management in Environment & natural resource and Livestock sectors as follows:

- Poor participation due to inadequate capacity to mobilize.
- Skewed representation due to lack of political goodwill.
- Alteration of public priorities to suit individual interest.
- Short notice and insufficient time for public participation.
- Participatory process not fully inclusive.

- Low prioritization of environment due to negative social influence.
- Marginalization of the special interest groups.
- Ignorance and illiteracy among the communities.
- Lack of adherence to the available legal frameworks.
- Ownership by the duty bearers.

In order to solve the above listed challenges, the Working Group members suggested Capacity building to the communities, need to adopt the bottom up approach, awareness creation among the public, sharing of simplified information and use of local language.



Thematic Working Group members during group discussions and presentations.

Mr. Ogada, the project officer Green Africa Foundation shared the benefits of public participation as:

- Social consensus mitigates conflicts
- Process of decision-making and final decisions becomes more transparent and legitimate
- Helps prevent adverse environmental consequences of the decisions
- Public Participation generate more solutions and opinions to solving problem.
- Reduce the cost of wrong decisions for government and businesses.

Besides it numerous benefits, public participation also has some shortcomings. Mr. Ogada explained that there is a potential for confusion of the issues, since many new perspectives may be introduced. Secondly, there is a possibility of erroneous information resulting from the lack of knowledge from the participant and lastly, there is a potential project delay and increased project cost. These challenges can be easily

addressed when there is mutual understanding and best approaches are used to undertake public participation in PEM Process.

Hon. Chachu Ganya - MP North Horr who was in attendance pointed to the unhealthy relationship between the government, citizens and non-state actors over the past years. He commended Green Africa Foundation and its development partners USAID and UKaid through AHADI for this project. He said that it comes in the right time to enable the citizen and non-state actors to understand their role in the Government processes which will aid implementation of the devolved system of government. The member of Parliament said that in return, there will be massive opportunities for County growth, accountability and sustainable development.

In conclusion, Green Africa Foundation Executive Director, Mr. John Kioli informed the participants that it is time citizens, non-state actors and the government stop blame games and hold each other accountable based on their differentiated roles in community development. He said that upon completion of this five months' project, the citizens and non-state actors will have the appropriate skills and knowledge for meaningful public participation in Environment & Natural Resources and Livestock sector. This will contribute greatly in Marsabit County efforts towards climate change adaptation and mitigation.



Mr. John Kioli, Executive Director, Green Africa Foundation (Left) and Hon. Chachu, M.P. North Horr (right)

Green Africa Foundation in its mission of equipping communities with innovative models for sustainable natural resource management, is looking forward to their planned activities with the stakeholders in Marsabit County under this project.