



PRS DAY – APRIL 21

Session G: Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) in fragile states

Definition:

Countries in difficult circumstances was understood to mean, those in conflict, post conflict or disaster prone; those with weak policies and institutions (fragile) whether conflict/disaster affected or not.

Reality:

Countries in difficult circumstances are characterized by distortions/destructions especially infrastructure (roads, bridges, power supply, communications systems etc), disunity and mistrust among the population, breakdown of law and order (lawlessness), displacements/homelessness, high levels of vulnerability, extreme poverty, gross violations and abuses of human rights and weak institutional base to cope with or address or handle cases.

The Issues:

For PRSs to be meaningful in such circumstances they should be comprehensive and holistic capturing all the difficult aspects of the reality described above with emphasis on the following priorities.

1. Consolidation of Peace (sustainable peace)
 - a) Addressing the immediate issues of homelessness, basic survival means (jobs and economic activities)
 - b) Undertaking rapid reconstruction and recovery process to create a sense of security
 - c) Humanitarian assistance to restore peoples' dignity and sense of worth
 - d) Trauma healing processes, disaster mitigation/management and preparedness as well as conflict transformation processes
2. Strengthen government and civil society to rebuild their capacity, institutions and networks/partnerships required to regain control and take responsibility. This prepares for a more effective and legitimate process of PRS development
3. Trade –Off between speed and real participation of stakeholders especially those vulnerable and marginalized (at the periphery/margins of society) e.g. includes the physically challenged, youth, women, farmers, miners (dealing with them as institutions/organized bodies in their own right).
4. Use PRS as coordination mechanism for development interventions and agencies
 1. Solicit greater stakeholder participation
 2. Ensure long-term commitment by development and donor partners
 3. Use an integrative and comprehensive approach that recognizes and uses to the maximum local technologies, expertise, knowledge and tools, avoiding the sectoral approach as against strategic approach, building on the existing potential e.g. use of extractive, agricultural sectors as supportive



5. Governance, Accountability and Transparency mainstreamed
 - a) Management of natural resources. Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
 - b) Anti-Corruption Strategies
 - c) Promotion/domestication of Human Rights Standards/Instruments
6. Role of Donors as crucial e.g. World Bank
 - a) Long-Term commitment
 - b) Help government negotiate peace, access funding, aid coordination, co-financing reconstruction and rehabilitation projects
 - c) Build confidence in private sector investment and intervention
7. Role of Civil Society undeniably crucial
 - a) Compliment role of government. Partner with donors and government
 - b) Mobilize, sensitize and engage the people especially the marginalized to be brought on board
 - c) Engage donors and government for transparency. Accountability and responsiveness to the people
8. Critical Issues of Priority
 - a) Security with human rights framework
 - b) Participation not compromised with speed and time factor
 - c) Indigenous process
 - d) An integrative and comprehensive approach