

Citizen participation reinforced:

Two permanent seats for CSOs in Ancuabe District Consultative Councils

Cabo Delgado, October 2011 - In democracies, the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) is to speak on behalf of their members and monitor the exercise of power. The CSOs represent the people in large and often defend the interests of the most vulnerable populations.

UNDP's project "Empowerment of Civil Society Organizations" develops the capacity of Mozambique's CSOs to enable them to effectively participate in policy dialogue with the Government and other stakeholders on governance and economic development issues, as well as implementation of the Poverty Reduction Action Plan (PARP) (http://www.mpd.gov.mz/index.php?option=com_docman&task=search_result&Itemid=50&lang=pt). This will be achieved through training and provision of simplified analytical information on national economic development policies.



The District CSO Platform aims to facilitate policy dialogue between the Government and civil society, and the involvement of citizens in district development

In Ancuabe District, South East of Cabo Delgado province, the Community Development Foundation (CDF) assisted in the establishment of the Ancuabe District CSOs Platform, a forum which gathers representatives of 25 Community Based Organizations. The District CSO Platform aims to facilitate policy dialogue between the Government and civil society, and the involvement of citizens in district development. In the Second trimester of 2011, after one year of the establishment of the Platform and after receiving training on District Planning,

District Development Funds and Community participation, the members of this Platform managed to get acknowledged by the District government and were granted two permanent seats at District Consultative Councils.

The Platform coordinator, Mr. Joaquim Iassine says: *"This is a major achievement for us. We can now bring to the Government the concerns of citizens and recommendations with regard to district development issues. As recognition of our work in linking the Government to the communities, the District Government invited us to provide contributions in the preparation of District Strategic, Social and Budgetary Plan - PESOD 2012"*.

The Platform members were also invited to take part in the Provincial Development Observatory in July. According to the District Administrator Ms Eusébia Celestino, the experience could be shared and duplicated in other administrative posts and districts in Cabo Delgado Province.

Before the establishment of the Platform, the district administration faced many challenges in getting their messages across 25 organizations representing several groups from different localities, and communicating concerns to the local government was harder. According to the Mr. Joaquim, participating in Provincial Development Observatories enables the district to link local issues with the big provincial plans and initiatives.



Members of CSOs platform in Ancuabe, Cabo Delgado Province

Useful links:

- **Empowerment of Civil Society Organizations (CSO):** <http://www.undp.org/mz/en/What-we-do/Poverty-and-HIV-AIDS/Ongoing-Projects/Empowerment-of-Civil-Society-Organizations>
- **Portal of Government of Mozambique:** <http://www.portaldogoverno.gov.mz>