

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

Botswana has achieved remarkable progress in socio-economic development and welfare outcomes, as evident from increasing average living standards over time, a considerably low prevalence of child malnutrition, nearly universal coverage and utilisation of health services and a marked improvement in educational attainments.

Despite these achievements, however, conditions of poverty persist. The percentage of population living below poverty datum lines is high. Unemployment remains high, particularly in rural areas. Amongst the poor, there are few working adults and unemployment is high amongst those seeking employment in the labour market.

The employed poor mainly occupy low-paying jobs, because of low educational attainment and skills acquisition. A high prevalence of HIV/AIDS has also impacted negatively on human development gains and is, in fact, slowing or reversing gains in reduced disease burden, mortality rates and life expectancy.

The persistence of these conditions of poverty is not commensurate with the Vision 2016's goal of poverty eradication. Past efforts in implementing and coordinating a multi-sectoral approach to poverty reduction have not been adequate. This necessitates a coordinated effort in harmonising all sectoral initiatives relating to poverty reduction.

In recognition of the slow pace of poverty reduction and institutional weakness, the Government of Botswana adopted the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (NSPR) in 2003 (the strategic elements of the policy framework and the current implementation plans are highlighted in Annex 1).

One of the priority areas for implementing the NSPR is to institute and promote comprehensive poverty monitoring and evaluation systems at national, sectoral and programme levels. The CSO (government Central Statistics Office) undertakes household income and expenditure surveys (HIES), which ideally would enable periodic reporting on the state of poverty. The 2002-03 HIES provides timely benchmarks for monitoring the NSPR. But disaggregated poverty estimates are not yet available.

The Government ministries are at different stages of instituting welfare monitoring systems for tracking positive impacts on the well being of the poor. The objectives of the sector ministries are not yet aligned to the NSPR goals.

The indicators monitored are mainly to assess progress on implementation. The exceptions are the sector ministries that are monitoring the MDG indicators (education, health and nutrition). But often these indicators are not sufficiently disaggregated to monitor the well being of the poor, unless one assumes that the welfare of the poor improves at the average rate of growth indicators.

Building on the existing MDG welfare indicators, the MSCPR has recently adopted expanded sets of indicators for future monitoring at policy level. To ensure these indicators are monitored at sufficiently disaggregated levels, the MSCPR has also

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recommended the periodic implementation of a multi-topic household survey, building on the current HIES.

As the conclusions drawn from a review of selected NSPR programmes demonstrate, poverty M&E systems are not developed at a programme level, i.e. the programme objectives are not linked to the NSPR, indicators are not complete (not capturing the whole output-impact chains), none of the indicators are monitored at the beneficiary level (hence it is difficult to assess targeting effectiveness and benefit level), and costs are not sufficiently disaggregated by major activity categories.

None of the programmes have planned for impact assessments to evaluate what effect they are having on the well being of the poor, or poverty reduction.

6.2 THE WAY FORWARD

The MSCPR has adopted process-based implementation plans for translating the NSPR into action: to sharpen the poverty focus of policies and programmes, to institute and strengthen poverty monitoring and evaluation systems, to promote impact assessment, lessons learned, and scaling up, to identify and scale up pro-poor institutions, to enhance poverty assessment, poverty statistics and poverty policy analysis, and to foster knowledge sharing, advocacy and consensus building.

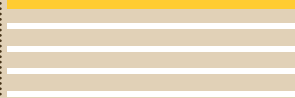
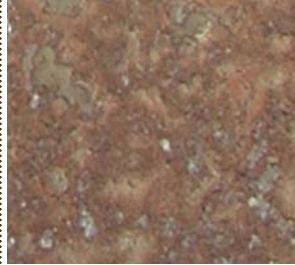
The MSCPR's highest priority is to promote an awareness of the NSPR – the strategic elements of the policy framework and the action plan. Using various communication media, the MSCPR will call for the implementation of the action plans in their totality, for a frontal attack on reducing poverty in its different dimensions.

The second priority is to make sure the programmes monitored through the MSCPR meet the standards of good practice in design, operation, and monitoring and evaluation.

The specific activities include:

- To develop projects or intervention based on established evidence on the causes of poverty and effective remedies;
- To clarify the assumptions and links between programme objectives and poverty reduction;
- To sharpen the characteristics of the targeted beneficiaries, in order to better identify and target the poor (clarify the concept of poverty targeting);
- To clarify benefit type, channels of transmission, and to provide information on benefit level disaggregated by income/expenditure groups;
- To develop cost accounting records that link project activities to costs;
- To institute and strengthen a monitoring and evaluation system that is comprehensive (capturing the input-output-outcome chains);
- To undertake impact assessments, when necessary, and to give feedback to policy makers on the strengths and weaknesses of a particular intervention.

A systematic implementation plan is underway to enhance the outcome monitoring capability of the NSPR programmes in three stages. New templates are being introduced for monitoring outcome indicators at programme and beneficiary levels.



The major programmes/agencies implementing these templates include: Housing for the Poor (Department of Housing), ALDEP III (Ministry of Agriculture), Small Stock and Poultry under LIMID (Ministry of Agriculture), the Destitute Programme (Department of Social Services in the Ministry of Local Government), and the Integrated Nutrition, Health and Food Programme (Food and Nutrition Unit in the Ministry of Health).

The MSCPR, through its Secretariat office, continues to provide technical and advisory support to enable these programmes/agencies to effectively implement the templates as monitoring tools. In addition, there will be a concerted effort to enhance skills for planning and implementing impact evaluation studies.