

## **MeTA Zambia Chairperson Hon Lazarus Chota outline programme for working together with its focus groups**

MeTA Zambia chairperson on August 27, 2014 opened a workshop for CSOs at Mika Lodge in Lusaka. He outlined ways in which MeTA Zambia can work together with its focus groups in various districts through the formation of the CSO Coalition for Transparency in Medicines. Below is his full speech to 8 focal persons from Solwezi, Chililabombwe, Kitwe, Mufulira, Ndola, Chongwe, Kafue and Livingstone.



op. no. this is not a workshop but a meeting to share  
g a cso coalition for transparency in medicines.

t together we can find ways of working together on health issues  
acy, accessibility, availability and affordability.

in particular has a set of core principles. These principles are  
providing access to health care, including access to essential

2. Stronger and more transparency systems and improved supply chain management will increase access
3. Increasing equitable access to medicines improves health and enables other human development objectives to be achieved
4. Improved information about medicines can inform public debate, and provide a basis for better policy
5. A multistakeholder approach that involves all sectors – private, public and civil society – will lead to greater accountability

These core principles are important to us because they bring into the picture issues of transparency and accountability as the basis for all activities in the medicines sector.

Many times the following scenario exists in our country.

1. There is little publicly available information on the price, quality, availability and promotion of medicines.
2. Whether information is available or not -there are three things that block it
  - a) that information doesn't exist
  - b) that it exists but not in a publicly accessible form
  - c) or it is publicly available but no-one knows so no-one uses it.
3. Lack of openness and accountability which contributes to
  - a) excessive price mark up
  - b) corruption
  - c) poor forecasting of essential medicines hence leading to shortages

This is of concern to us and this where we come in as meta. since july last year when our current funding started we have conducted a number of activities across five provinces namely

1. Solwezi in North Western Province
2. Ndola on the Copperbelt
3. Kabwe in Central Province
4. Livingstone in Southern Province and
5. Lusaka in lusaka provinces

These activities have resulted in 18 focus groups being formed, more than 30 one hour radio programmes. the aim of all our activities is to sensitise communities about medicines as a human right.

We have also sensitised procurement officers in public health institutions on good governance in medicines procurement.

But the old adage – one fingure cannot kill a louse – is perhaps always true. this is where you come in and this is why we are meeting here.

We would like to work with you and you to work with us. that together we form a coalition to move forward the medicines agenda for the good of our people.



Plot 35 Central Street  
Jesmondene, Lusaka  
info@metazambia.org  
www.metazambia.org

Coalitions are a form of courtship. i recall after the 1962 inconclusive elections harry mwaanga nkumbula was portrayed in the *Central African Mail* as a bride being courted Kaunda (United National Independence Party) and John Roberts (United Federal Party).

So coalitions are in real life like marriages. MeTA Zambia has come to you. we have come to you to propose that we work together.

But for this to happen we need to know the following

- a) what your mission is
- b) what your goals are
- c) how you are funded
- d) who has the final say in what you do – your policies and programs
- e) how your work will contribute to the overall mission of the coalition
- f) what you expect to gain from the coalition

These are pertinent issues and like in marriage you need to know your partner. you need to know each other.

To do this we have prepared two documents.

1. discussion paper 1 – statement of intent
2. discussion paper 2 – the charter

The first paper we will discuss and develop our mission, its goals, objectives and purpose.

The first paper is what will bind us. it is the ring a groom puts on the finger of his bride.

I think I should leave all this to you. they say the devil is in the details. so i will leave the details to you.

For some of you, you have another meeting on friday 29 august. i will not be present but wish you the best in your deliberations.

As for today, please deliberate, participate, disagree aand agree. but at the end i want you to come up with something. let the cso coalition for transparency in medicines be born at this meeting.

Thank you very much and good discussions.



Plot 35 Central Street  
Jesmondene, Lusaka  
info@metazambia.org  
www.metazambia.org