Role of Donors in Environmental Resource Policy in Zambia

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ABSTRACT

Donors have played a significant role in the environmental sector in Zambia. They have over the years provided financial and technical resources for environmental management. Purposive stratified sampling was employed in selecting the respondents for the study. The sample population of the study consisted of government departments, statutory bodies, donors, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations. The research employed semi-structured and key informant interviews, focus group discussions, field observations, and review of existing literature. The results revealed that policy making and implementation was an expensive implementation hence government depended on external financial and at a foreign technical support. As a result of inadequate resources, most policies in the environmental resources sector had not been reviewed for some time. Other challenges in policy making include; conflict of interests among different stakeholders and weak linkages between research and policy making. Public policies in the developing countries possess certain challenges and peculiarities of their own. It is as a result of these various challenges that most developing countries need donor support when making and implementing.This compromises environmental resource governance and consequently, there is a high probability of donor driven policies influencing how environmental resources are managed as the new policies have the potential to reflect a broad range of international interests at the expense of local interest.

Keywords: Policy making; Environmental management; Financial support; Donor influence.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Most governments in developing countries have formulated devolution policies and legal instruments that provide an enabling environment for devolved natural resource management (Kamoto et al.,2013). However, most countries rely heavily on international experts for technical advice, thus recipient governments are dependent on foreign assistance (Thomas et al., 2004). Decentralized forms of natural resource governance and management are seen as mechanisms for sustainability of livelihoods as local communities are empowered to make decisions over natural resource use (Ribot, 2002; Tacconi et al., 2006). The success of these approaches, however, depends upon the careful development of policies. Donors' role in policy making is mainly to provide financial support, technical support and capacity building in policy making and work closely with the recipient

governments in bringing about changes in policies (Sogge, 2003). For instance, the Administrative Management Design for Game Management Areas (ADMADE) programme in Zambia was financed by the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD) (Dalal-Clayton and Child, 2004). The popularity of the ADMADE approach in environmental management gave impetus for the development of a policy framework that led to governance reforms in the national parks and wildlife management. It was also realised that tackling poverty would entail ensuring that robust policies for environmental resources management were put in place (Dalal-Clayton and Child, 2004). Thus the involvement of local communities in environmental resources management is now a significant feature of national policy, and to some extent, practice of internationally supported programmes throughout the world (Shackleton and Campbell, 2001). According to Rodary (2009), ADMADE in Zambia is known to have contributed to the dual objectives of conservation and rural socio-economic development though criticised as having failed to effectively control poaching and empowering local communities.

According to Tobias et al. (2012), policy making is not merely a technical function of government, but a complex interactive process influenced by the diverse nature of socio-political and other environmental forces. Environmental forces that form the policy context lead to the variation in policies and influences the output and policy impact. Due to the contextual differences, public policies of the developed countries significantly differ from those of the developing countries (Mosse, 2005). Although policies of developed countries have proved their effectiveness in many cases, their effectiveness cannot be applied to understanding the dynamics of the policy making process of developing countries.

Public policies in the developing countries face various challenges such as unstable socio-political environments (Sogge, 2003) and economies. It is these challenges that lead to most developing countries needing donor support when making policies (Tom, 2008). In that context, donors such as multilateral and bilateral have played a significant role in environmental governance and management in Zambia (Chunduma et al., 2006). They have over the years provided financial and technical resources for environmental governance and management. Donors have funded programmes at a national and local level ranging from development of policies and support sustainable socio-economic development through building capacities for implementing environmental policies (Zulu, 2008). Donors have also been instrumental in providing support for the adoption of sustainable environmental resources management practices and policies (Community based Natural resource management and Sustainable Agriculture, 2002).

According to Mbaiwa (2013), at the local level donors have provided support towards legal and institutional reforms necessary for the involvement of local communities in environmental management. Much of this support has been provided through project assistance for specified periods of time (Mupeta and Makota, 2004). While significant strides have been achieved, the sustainability of some project support has been questioned as many projects fade away once donor funding is phased out. Motivated by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are now historical and international campaigns aimed at 'ending poverty', bilateral and multilateral donors have in recent years made numerous commitments to substantially increase their foreign aid budgets to developing countries (Tom, 2008). In light of this, changes in environmental management policies owe much to the influence of international organizations that have played a crucial role in the delivery of sustainable development policies (Sogge, 2003 and Stone 2008). It is quite clear that by embracing the discourse of sustainable socio-economic development, national environmental management policies are no longer in the hands of national governments alone. Sogge (2003) argued that international NGOs and aid agencies have

clearly claimed a stake in policy making. Consequently, the new policies reflect a broad range of international interests. A key danger in this scenario is that this leaves little room for a country to articulate its own aspirations of the future and raises the question of local policy ownership or buy in. Another prevailing transnational linkage is the technical and financial support to policy development from international donor interventions as reported by Patankar et al. (2010), Romijn et al. (2010), Verbong et al. (2010) and Jolly et al. (2012). The amounts of financial support, technical assistance, institutional capacity-building and awareness-raising campaigns channelled through donor interventions have been substantial (Mosse, 2005).

This has always been a challenging situation for many developing countries (Mosse, 2003) as Taiwo (2005) argues that some of these policies fail due to lack of political will, low technical and financial capacity and weak institutional arrangements. Additionally, internationally influenced policy prescriptions are not always in harmony with local realities. Therefore, Sogge (2003) noted that there is a tension between policy ownership and donor aid because excessive dependence on donor aid may constrain recipient countries from exercising policy autonomy.

However, donor strategies have changed significantly since 2000 according to the aid commitments introduced in the Paris Declaration (World Bank, 2007). These commitments prescribe that donors and recipient governments cooperate in a mutual partnership whereby the recipient country establishes a country development strategy towards which the donors then align their development assistance (World Bank, 2007). This study, therefore, endeavoured to assess the role that donors play in the formulation and review of policies that govern the environmental resources sector in Zambia.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study area

A qualitative case study methodology involving interviews with key informants and review of documents was employed. A timeline of events was developed, which guided the purposive sampling of respondents and identification of relevant documents. The study was carried out in Lusaka and targeted government departments, statutory bodies, donors and non-governmental organizations dealing with environmental management (Figure 1). One community based organisation dealing with environmental management (Kabulwebulwe Community Resource Board) in Mumbwa Game Management Area (GMA) was also included in the sample. The GMA is located on the eastern boundary of Kaoma District of Western Province between longitudes $24^{o}50'$ to $25^{o}35'$ East and latitudes $14^{o}36'$ to $15^{o}58'$ South.
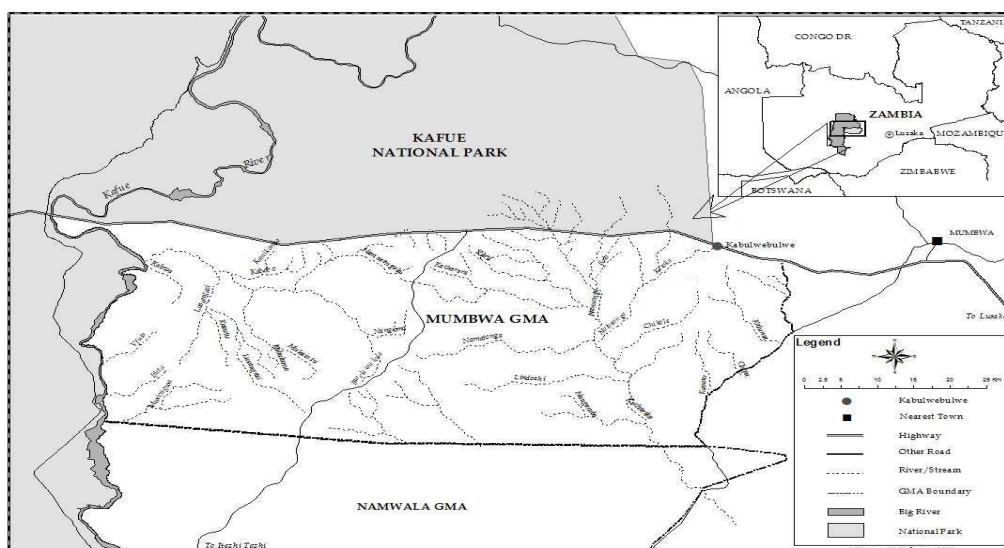
Figure 1: Lusaka and Kabulwebulwe location. (Source: Department of Wildlife and National Parks, 2015).

2.2 Sampling design, sample size and data collection tools

Purposive sampling was used in order to only target major players in environmental resources management. According to Oliver (2006), purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling with which decisions concerning the individuals to be sampled are made by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria that may need specialist knowledge of the research issue, and their capacity and willingness to participate in the research. In this case, the institutions to be sampled, the officials to be targeted for interviews were based on their knowledge and influence (Bryman, 2004; Kothari, 2013).

The Department of Fisheries, Forestry Department and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Management were selected from the government stratum. Three statutory bodies namely National Heritage Conservation Commission, Department of National Parks and Wildlife and the Zambia Environmental Management Agency were grouped in the statutory bodies' stratum. Six multilateral and bilateral donors that are Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), Embassy of Norway and Embassy of Finland were classified as the donor stratum. Ten non-governmental organisations registered with the registrar in Zambia which were sampled namely; Munda Wanga Environmental Park, Regional Community Based Natural Resource Management Forum, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Keepers Zambia Foundation (KZF), Wildlife and Environmental Conservation Society of Zambia (WECSZ), Zambia Institute of Environmental Management (ZIEM), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-Zambia), Zambia Climate Change Network (ZCCN), Game Rangers International (GRI) and Centre For International Forest Research (CIFOR) and the Kabulwebulwe Community Resource Board (CRB) which is a Community Based Organisation were classified as the civil society stratum. With the exception of Kabulwebulwe (CRB) which is based in Mumbwa, all the other organisations and institutions are based in Lusaka.

An interview guide containing tens (10) questions was used in the focus group discussion with seven Kabulwebulwe CRB members in Mumbwa GMA. Focus group discussions are considered an effective technique to generate information.

Data was collected through the usage of questionnaires containing both closed and open-ended questions from key informants. Semi-structured interviews with respondents from the target organisations and institutions were used as primary data collection tools. Semi-structured interviews are effective tools to capture the opinions and feelings among a range of stakeholders on various topics (Amin, 2004; Cooper and Schindler, 2011).

Data were organised and coded, then entered into Social Package for Social Scientists was used for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies, measures of central tendency, and measures of dispersion were generated. Data were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) due to its simplicity in the analysis of data. Quality graphs and tables were generated using pivotal charts in MS Excel 2007.

3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Donor support and influence in policy making

A total of 39% respondents indicated that donors provided financial and technical support, and (30%) reported that donors built technical capacity in institutions responsible for policy making. On the other hand nine percent (9%) indicated that donors facilitated the hiring of international consultants and five percent (5%) indicated that donors played an advisory role as shown in figure 2.
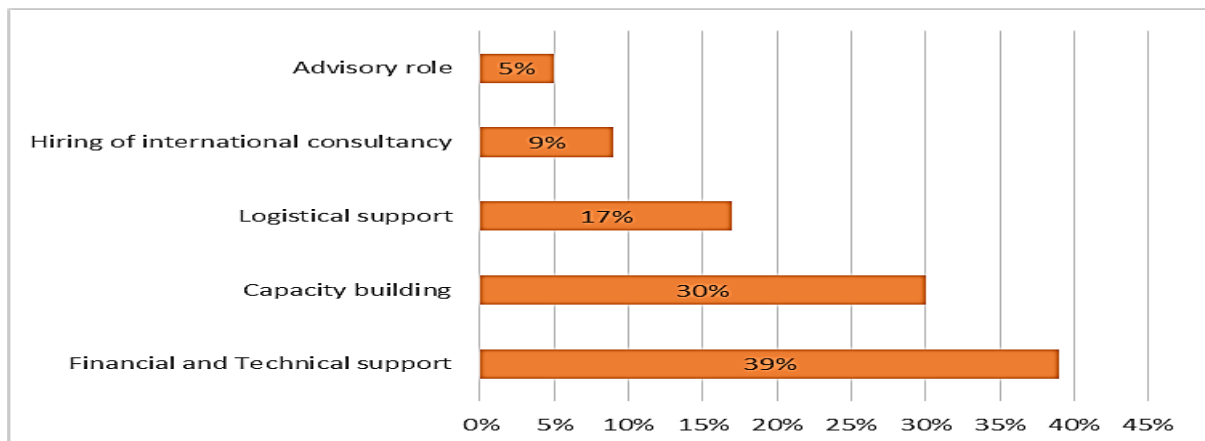
Figure 2: Donor support in policy making and implementation

3.2 Challenges in with policy making

A total of 46% of respondents reported inadequate funds as the major challenge encountered during policy making. Twenty percent indicated (20%) said that the major challenge was government bureaucracy. Fifteen percent (15%) indicated that the major challenge was inadequate information. Ten percent (10%) indicated the conflict of interests and nine percent (9%) indicated weak linkages between research and policy making as a major challenge as shown in figure 3.
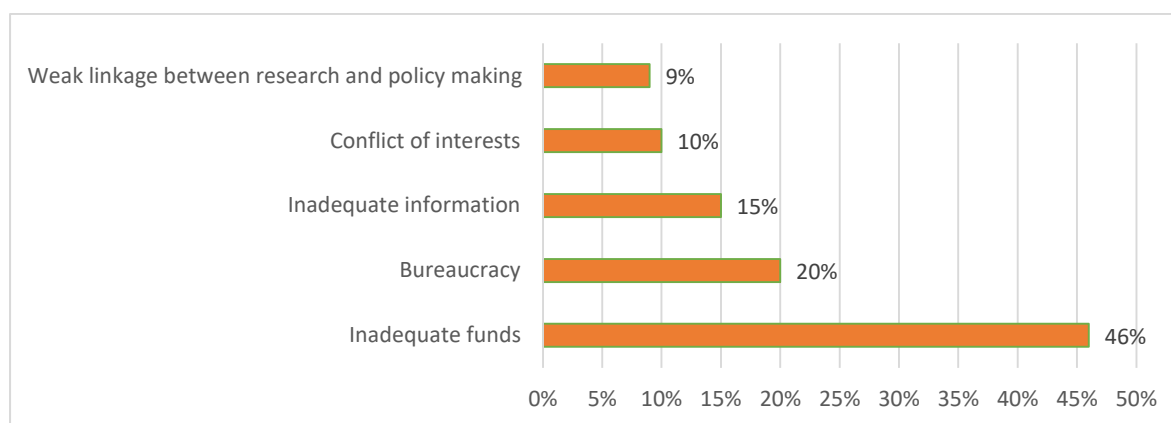
Figure 3: challenges associated with policy making.

3.3 Major stakeholders and their contribution to policy making

Bilateral and multilateral agencies, government institutions, private entities, traditional leaders, non-governmental organisations, community based organisations, local government and local communities were identified by 90% of respondents as key stakeholders in policy formulation.

Table 1: key stakeholders in environmental management policy making.

Key stakeholders	Respondents identifying key stakeholders			
	Forestry	Fisheries	NHCC	Zawa
Government	x	x	x	x
Foreign missions	x	x	x	x
UN agencies	x	x	x	x
Statutory bodies	x	x	x	x
NGOs (international)	x	x	x	x
NGOs (local)	x	x		x
Traditional leaders	x	x	x	x
CBO/FBO	x	x	x	x
Private entities	x	x	x	x

Table 2: Key stakeholders and their contribution.

Key stakeholders	Contribution to policy making
Government ministries and departments	Provide policy direction as they lead the policy making process
Provincial Development Coordinating Committee (PDCC)	Provide input during initiation of policy making
District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC)	Provide input during initiation of policy making
Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)	Advocacy and capacity building
Donors	Provide financial and technical support
Local communities	Provide input during initiation of policy making
Research institutions	Identify policy gaps through research findings
Private sector	Support implementation of policies
Community Based Organisations /Faith Based Organisations	Advocacy in terms of best practices/ Provide checks and balances
Traditional leaders	Provide local knowledge

4.   DISCUSSION

4.1 Policy review cycle in Zambia

The policy review process in Zambia can be initiated, the sector needs to either have the existing policy revised or a new policy formulated, the existing policy is 10 years old in the subsequent year or that the existing policy does not reflect the strategic political interests of the governing development objectives, please see figure 4.
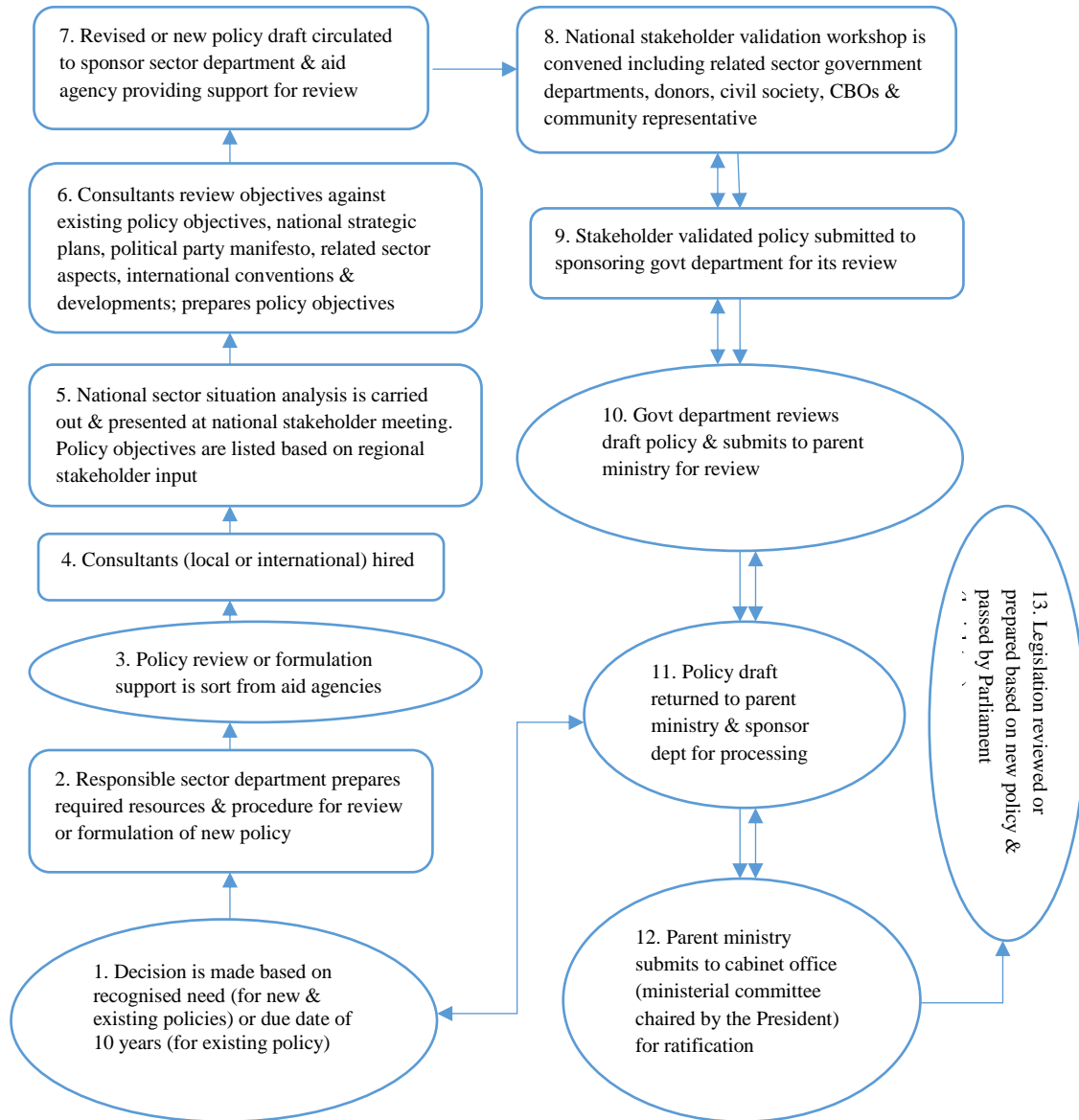

Figure 4: Policy review or formulation in Zambia.

Cycles with rectangle show independent decision by national government with or without donor influence; cycle indicates independent national government action; rectangle shows donor influence on national government decision.

Regardless of the policy review or formulation initiating factors, the process of reviewing a policy fundamentally remains the same. However, in the event of strong political need, stages 2-9 where the parent ministry requests the sector department to revise the policy to reflect the development objectives contain in the

governing party's manifesto. Even though this particular catalyst to policy review can result in national ownership, it may delay the process of policy approval and may result in a policy framework that lacks stakeholder interests. The implementation of a policy motivated by partisan strategic interests may suffer national buy in and lack stakeholder interest in ensuring that the policy is implemented in a way that reflects national aspirations. Motivating factors for policy review or formulation of new policies are critical in the way that stakeholder interest and buy in is ensured.

4.2 Donor support and influence in policy making

Policy making (either formulation of new policy or revision to existing policy) is not cheap to start with because it requires a lot of resources for stakeholder consultation process, document analysis including previous policy review. Thus, it is an expensive process given that resources are limited coupled with the fact that in some cases the target policy and legislation, either principal or subsidiary legislation, may not have been reviewed for some time. This means that scarcity of financial resources in developing countries has made donor agencies another dominant policy actor which is non-existent in developed countries (Adhikari and Lovett, 2006). In this context, therefore, donors have been seen to play a vital role in policy making (Jones, 2011) through the provision of financial resources and technical support that are used at all stages of policy making. To that effect, over the last two-decades developing countries have made changes in their state oriented development strategy mostly in line with the policy advice of the donors (Mosse, 2003) and this is particularly significant in the case of Zambia. Therefore, several foreign bilateral and multilateral donors have provided support to different environmental management sectors in Zambia. Much of the financial and technical support towards environmental management has targeted the environment, fisheries, forests and national heritage, national parks and wildlife management (Jones, 2011). Starting in 2010 and based on the increased recognition of the significant role of anthropological factors in climate change, policies and legislation related to all environmental factors, and forestry in particular, have been targeted for review.

By and large donor support to policy making has conditions attached that create some influence on policy making processes (Sogge,2005). According to Sogge (2003) policies are no longer in the hands of national governments alone as aid agencies have clearly claimed a stake in policy making. This means that policies reflect a broad range of international interests, which can leave little room for a country to articulate its own strategic policy direction for the future and raises questions about the ownership of the policies. Despite the external support and influence, the approval of donor supported policies is only made when government is satisfied that such draft policies capture issues that the government wanted to address. This is done at ministerial level, after the technocrats have developed the policy, stakeholders have validated the same policies (Asante, 2005) which the technocrats review again together with the ministry responsible for justice. It can however be argued that the articulation of national strategic interests depend on the ability of the technocrats to understand the sector targeted and inherent dynamism, future strategic development projection of the sector, inter-relationships with other sectors, boundary impacts of the policy to be developed, national technical and financial capacities, and the development programme of the political party in charge of government.

The main concern of the ministry responsible for justice is not the inherent aspects of the sector but ensuring that the sector policy being reviewed does not conflict with policies and legislations for other sectors. Given the significant role that sector technocrats are supposed to play, internal institutional failure to place the new policy

objectives in the context of dynamic and future economic, socio-ecological, inter-relationships, boundary impacts, national and technical capacities and political inclination factors, can render the policy to reflect objectives that fall short of being the required policy objectives. The strategic visioning that integrates policy objectives in the national economic spectrum can only be articulated by sector technocrats with the support of economists well versed with macroeconomic planning (Ribot, 2002; Tacconi et al., 2006). Therefore, the ability to implement and monitor future policy effectiveness is diminished in this context due to technocratic failure to create a future policy framework that they will be able to control. One can only control the future of a policy framework if that future is created by the same individual or institution.

In practice, the term policy ownership is currently used more to denote the extent to which there is a confluence of strategic interests and ideas between aid agencies and the political leadership, regarding the design and implementation of certain policies favoured by the international agencies (Brautigam, 2000). Although donors have increasingly embraced the concept of national ownership of policies, at least in official discourse, they have not abandoned the use of conditionality (Rocha and Rogerson, 2006). Although reliance on economic conditionality may be decreasing, but the number of conditions is still very high. This means that donors have not changed their attitude because they are too afraid of letting go of their traditional way of doing things (Sjolander, 2009).

However, the extent of donor funding in support of policy making processes varies greatly, from situations where a single donor provides small amounts of funding targeted to support a particular activity to others where one or more donors together fund virtually all aspects of the process. There are other situations in which limited availability of domestic funds results in heavy reliance on donors even in processes initiated and run by domestic actors (Sjolander, 2009). Even where the donors are not pursuing their own interests, such funding is usually subject to conditions, reporting procedures, regular meetings with the embassy and a range of stakeholders, and perhaps the dominating presence of foreign advisers from the donor country (Sogge,2005). Stakeholders in this may be international civil society operating locally. This entails that results of such arrangements can include widespread suspicion in the host country of foreign interference, particularly from local civil society including national political parties. Such suspicions still exist even in situations where donor funds merely supplement appreciable levels of domestic funding for the policy review or formulation process. The sense of national ownership and the legitimacy of the policy making process and perhaps of the policy it produces can all be undermined by the suspicion of foreign or external interference generated. Other problems can be experienced in circumstances where there is a dependence on several donor inputs, or where the interests of the international community in the policy review or formulation process is so great that there is pressure from many sources to accept technical and other forms of support or both (Sogge,2003).

4.3 Challenges in policy making

The many challenges in policy making partly explains why most policies in poor countries are not reviewed as and when required. Furthermore, policies are usually formulated but implementation remains a challenge thus most policies are said to be ineffective as they are not implemented to address the needs of society and environmental challenges. Some of the major challenges in policy making in Zambia include those briefly discussed below.

 (i) Inadequate funds:

Policy making is an expensive venture given the extent of activities and the expertise required hence in most cases government does not have adequate finances to either formulate or review the policy as and when required. This means that most policies required to manage the environment have not been reviewed nor new ones formulated for some time due to inadequate financial resources. In this context, some policies are outdated as they do not address the aspirations and needs of society. This also partly explains why policy making is dependent on external sources of financing (Malcom, 2014). Given the flux of the global economy, there expanses of time when the financial and technical availability support through bilateral and multilateral assistance diminish or is channelled to development programmes or countries that considered to more important strategically. The unavailability of such support has the potential to undermine a country's policy and legislative ability to meet environmental challenges and the sustainability or initiation of new environmental resources management programmes.

(ii) Government bureaucracy and inadequate sector information

The *g*overnment takes a long time to approve a policy due to its inherent internal bureaucracy (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2008). In some cases, some institutions that associate with government systemically get affected by government bureaucracy. Additional to bureaucracy is the inertia and capacity of the public service system. This means that policy review does not move with time as there are delays in different bureaucratic layers responsible for approving the policy. One of the bureaucratic factors emanates from endemic and regular changes in the ministers and their top civil servants (called Permanent Secretary in the Zambian public service) which have contributed to delays in the policy approval process. This entails that delay in policy making affect the management of the environment as emerging socio-economic and environmental challenges are not addressed when they emerge before their impacts become severe. What this means is that each time there is a change of government, policies that are pending from the previous regime are shaved off or the process of review has to be started in order to align them to the development agenda of the political party in government. Again, each time there is a change of ministers or permanent secretaries, policies take long to be approved because the incoming ministers or permanent secretaries have to study, understand and approve the policies and then decide after some time.

Policy making requires up to date and reliable information on the sector and related sectors. Such information should be available to both the stakeholders contributing to the policy and the consultants employed to draft the policy. Thus, adequate and reliable information among stakeholders on environmental management help in facilitating the identification and assessment of alternative courses of actions. This entails that adequate, reliable and easily accessible information is the most important tool in environmental policy making and subsequent policy implementation and review as Jones and Muphree (2004) have alluded to this too.

(iii) Conflict of interests

Conflict of interests is a major challenge in policy making in Zambia. This means that powerful stakeholders, for instance, those who speak the loudest were heard at the expense of those who were not vocal during the policy making process. This means that the weak and vulnerable stakeholders are particularly discriminated and thus end up with policies which are not comprehensive. Additionally, this leads to a policy containing aspects of interest to the vocal ignoring or partially addressing issues of importance to those that are not vocal.

(iv) Weak linkage between research and policy making

Weak linkages between research and policy making were a big challenge in policy making. Gaps in policy making are identified and addressed through research. Thus, policy recommendations are made for a possible review of existing policies or creation of new ones. However, most researchers operate outside or on the margins of policy making. They are unconcerned with the policy making applications as they focus on scientific discovery, analysis or critique. Professional associations and pressure groups, for example, can use many different mediums to disseminate research findings and make them relevant and publicly accessible.

4.4 Stakeholders and their contributions

Stakeholders can be categorized as primary and secondary stakeholders with primary stakeholders being, those people and institutions that affect and are affected directly (Kagwa, 2008). While secondary stakeholders represent those indirectly impacted upon. Many stakeholders have been identified due to the complexity of the sector in that so many people as well as institutions rely on the environment in one way or the other. Thus a diversity of stakeholders raises the challenge of incorporating their diverse interests as all may have a vital role to play in the management of the environment to ensure sustainable environmental management (Kagwa, 2008). Some of the identified primary stakeholders and their roles in policy making in Zambia include those highlighted in Figure 5.
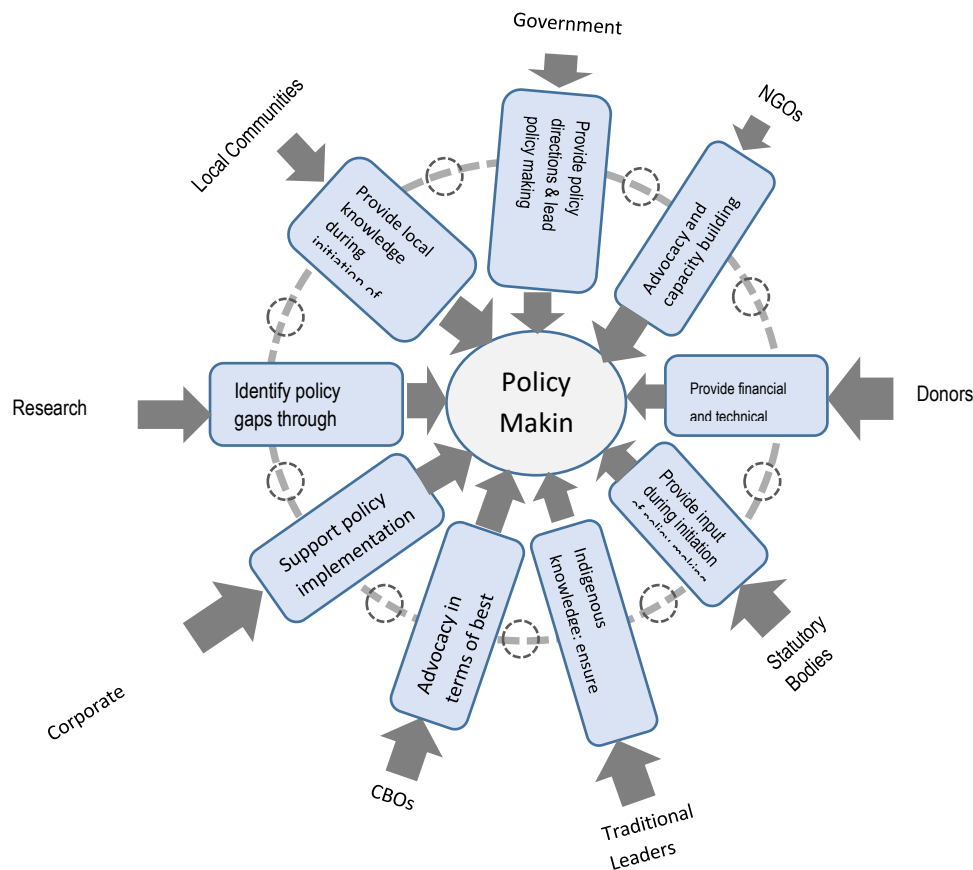
Figure 5: Role of stakeholders in policy making.

The arrows indicate their effecting role on the policy making process. The larger broken cycle is the interaction between and among them outside the policy making process. The smaller cycles are the areas of common interest that result in their interaction.

5. CONCLUSION

This research was carried out in order to understand the role donors play in policy making in the environmental management sector in Zambia. Therefore, this research was intended to provide information on the challenges associated with policy making and the role of donors in policy making. The study has also contributed to the body of knowledge on this subject since not much research has been done on the subject of the role of donors in policy making in the field of environmental management in Zambia. In light of this observation, it is envisaged that the results of this study would fill some gaps and at the same time make modest contributions to knowledge.

Another researchable area which needs further attention is factors which enhance donor participation in environmental management in Zambia. Another area of interest is to investigate the effectiveness of donor aid in environmental management in Zambia.

Some of the limitation to the study was long distances covered to reach the respondents. Furthermore, some respondents were not very open to release certain information for fear that they would be reported.

6. CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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