

THE EFFECTS OF THE PVO AMENDMENT BILL ON COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY

A POLICY BRIEF

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Issue



- GoZ announced plans to amend the existing Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) Act to prohibit money laundering and prevent non-state actors from participating in political activities.
- If approved, the Act will have a significant impact on public-sector operations, particularly those of smaller organizations engaged in community-based charitable work in marginalized groups. Some of its provisions have been deemed illegal and arbitrary, making it hard for many organizations to get formal registration and operate.

Who is affected?

- The bill largely affects local organizations and charities such as community philanthropy foundations focusing on physical and social needs, charity, legal aid, animal welfare, and resource mobilization.
- Religious organizations, statutory institutions, political organizations, and educational trusts are among the entities exempted from the Bill's requirements. The amendment if passed will affect the governance and operations of civil society organizations including those currently registered as Trusts.
- However, in its current form, the PVO Bill jeopardizes the independence and activities of volunteer organizations.

The Bill negatively affects the following SDGs:

- SDG 1 on ending poverty.
- SDG 2 on ending hunger.
- SDG 4 on providing quality education.
- SDG 6 on provision of clean water and sanitation and affordable and clean energy.



Possible effects



- Trusts registered with the High Court without registering as PVOs will be prohibited from fundraising through a sworn declaration.
- PVOs will be prohibited from engaging in political activities although the Bill does not define what these political activities involve.
- A PVO deemed to be conducting political activities will have its registration canceled.
- The state will have the power to summarily dissolve any Trust that is deemed to be critical of the government.

What must be done?

- **Option One:** Suspend the Ongoing Consultations and Consult on a New Bill
- **Option Two:** Recognize categories/ subsectors of organizations within civil society.
- **Option Three:** Promote the Establishment of a Peer-Led Council for Registration of CSOs.