



THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK

On The World Bank & International Monetary Fund

Parliamentary Network Activities in 2011 – 2012 and Ideas for the future

Overview

This document is a summary of the Network's activities between 2011 and 2012. It also tries to inspire ideas on how to better carry out the Network's missions in the coming years.

Field visits

The 'Parliamentarians in the Field' visits remain one of the most important activities of the PN. It is one of the most effective ways to encourage parliamentary participation in the Network and strongest marketing tools to recruit new members and to strengthen relations with Parliamentarians in the visited countries. Parliamentarians have mentioned on several occasions that they appreciate the field visit programme as being on location "is the one way to get people to care". PN needs to maintain this programme in the coming years, but mediatise it more widely than it has previously done. Individual impressions of Parliamentarians from the visits as well as the final report could be sent as opinion pieces to international development journals. Furthermore, PN should make sure that field visit participants are kept informed about specific follow-ups on the field visit and what measures have been taken to implement their recommendations. By showing PN members that their concerns during the field visits are properly addressed, they will think of them as useful, which in turn will give more credibility to PN as an organisation capable of bringing about change. For donor country parliamentarians, these field visits present an opportunity to see development cooperation in practice. Borrowing country MPs can use field visits as benchmarking exercises and opportunities to exchange views and experiences. The knowledge exchange during these field visits allows parliamentarians to share experiences and solutions to challenges from their own countries.

In 2012, the PN organised two field visits. The first was incorporated in the thematic conference on "Private Sector Development in Africa – Cornerstone for Sustainable Growth" conference, which took place 14 – 16 March 2012 in Rwanda. The first stop at the field visit involved the visit to the common custom office where Rwandan and Burundian authorities are working together on a 'one stop border'. The one stop border concept consists in reducing the time spent by traders and travellers in clearing their documents. The second stop was the Rwanda Development Board, a centralised office for business registration. The second field visit in 2012 took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka in November 2012. The three days of the visit were focused on a variety of development topics such as Sri Lanka's macroeconomic development, urban planning as well as public health in Sri Lanka, the changing schemes of Sri Lanka's development cooperation, Good Governance and Parliamentary Cooperation with Civil Society.

Regional conferences

In 2011, the Network co-organized a video conference with Parliamentarians from the MENA region, where the World Bank Country Director for the region, Mariam Sherman, briefed MPs on recent

activities in the region and answered questions from MPs. In the beginning of 2012, the Network organized a thematic conference on Private Sector Development in Africa, which took place in Kigali on 14 – 16 March 2012. Hosted by the Government and Parliament of Rwanda, the conference welcomed over 200 participants, including over 100 African Parliamentarians for a fruitful deliberation on how to strengthen the role of African MPs in ensuring a regulatory framework for private sector development in Africa, and using Rwanda to showcase an example of a success story in this area. It was an opportunity to share information on the theme of private sector development with Parliamentarians from across Africa so that they can push for reforms in their own countries. In this way, well functioning business policies can be applied throughout the continent, and, therefore, improve economic growth in Africa as a whole.

WB/IMF Spring and Annual Meetings

The WB/IMF meetings are a great occasion to increase PN's visibility before these two organizations. By bringing an important delegation of MPs to these meetings, PN shows its capacity to represent parliamentarians and to implicate them in an international dialogue on development. The focus during the meetings should be on discussions between MPs and technical or operational staff of the WB and the IMF, meaning the people responsible for designing and overseeing the implementation of projects. Meetings with the World Bank President and IMF Managing Director, or their immediate subordinates, are also important for purposes of visibility and direct engagement with international financial institutions. The meetings should also be an occasion for PN to plan cooperation and funding with these organisations for projects such as the field visits. The PN also aims to institutionalize a parliamentary workshop with the IMF and World Bank to ensure regular participation and MP input into development decisions. The Network participated in the Spring and Annual Meeting in 2011, and in the Spring Meetings in 2012.

Participation in additional high-level forums

The PN defends and criticizes multilateral financial institutions where necessary. High-level forums – such as the 2011 HLF-4 or the OECD Forum are an ideal entry point for increasing parliamentary participation in the development cooperation process. PN's active involvement in these forums – through preparation and publication of briefings, reports and outcomes – contributes to its visibility and parliamentary capacity building, which then enables better oversight and monitoring capabilities for aid effectiveness. The Parliamentary Network was represented at the 2011 High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, as well as at the OECD High Level Parliamentary Forums in 2011 and 2012.

Network Review

Network Review is a publication that plays an important role in strengthening the PN's reputation among international finance organizations such as the World Bank and IMF as well as among member countries. By having high profile contributors, the PN can show that it is an organization that is respected and valued in its field. The Network Review can also be a powerful tool for attracting new members to the organization and to create a permanent link to civil society, by encouraging the open transfer of information and contributing to effective development education. To do so efficiently, PN has to maintain a constant level of high-quality articles and writers. In 2011 and 2012, the Network Review has been distributed to PN members and partner organizations so that they can share it with a wider readership. The Network Review covers a wide array of PN

objectives, such as development education and maintenance of the link between civil society and Parliaments. More recently, the last Network Review focused on the topic of transparency in resource management.

Briefings and P&D Series

The briefings and P&D Series are one of the Network's main policy resources. These publications present current key issues in development cooperation, aid effectiveness and international financial institutions in a concise, clear and approachable manner for all members to access. Briefings can either be thematic, such as the Horn of Africa Situation Report and the P&D Series, or deal with a specific event, such as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) or the G20 meeting. However, as with Network Review, in the next year PN needs to ensure that these resources are put to good use and that they reach Parliamentarians. PN should envision not only posting these documents on its website, but sending them directly to its members when they are published. This will create a stronger presence of the organization in Parliaments, and create a habit among MPs for using the resources.

Consultations

The PN does not have the capacity for a full follow-up on consultations launched by the World Bank and by the IMF. While the PN realises that consultations are one of the most effective ways to involve parliamentarians in the work of the World Bank and the IMF, the Secretariat can mainly inform its members about the consultations through its website and mailing list and encourage them to participate as it did for the IMF consultation on fiscal transparency in 2012. Ideally, with a stronger staff, the Network could draft response documents and put them up for approval by the Board before submission, thereby ensuring a regular and substantial parliamentary contribution to the work of the World Bank and IMF. The Network will continue to explore ways to involve its members in the consultation process.

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