

Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Project Board

The Support to the Sierra Leone Constitutional Review Project

UNDP Conference Room, 31st July 2014

Summary

The 3rd Project Board meeting for *the Support to the Sierra Leone Constitutional Review Project 2013 – 2014* was held on 31st July 2014 at 11.00 am in the Conference Room UNDP's office, 55 Wilkinson Road, Freetown. The meeting was chaired by the Country Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee and was attended by the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC), DFID, EU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The main item on the agenda was progress report on the Constitutional Review Project.

1. Opening remarks

The Chair, **UNDP Country Director, Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee** welcomed all to the meeting; he welcomed particularly Mr. Samuel Coker, Executive Secretary CRC to his 1st Project Board meeting.

Mr. Samuel Coker replying said he was very happy to be at the meeting. He was grateful to UNDP for partnering with CSOs and doing a good job on public sensitization and consultation.

2. CR Project and Progress Report

The **Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), Mr. Sanaullah Baloch** thanked members for attending and stated that the two previous Project Board meetings were held in January and April, but this one was a bit delayed due to his travel to Budapest for a Seminar on Constitutionalism in Africa.

The **CTA** explained through a power point presentation, achievements of the project in the 1st and 2nd quarters. He stated that during first quarter Civic education and Public Consultation Strategy was developed for all sub-committees; the 1991 Constitution and the Peter Tucker Report were combined into an easily readable document. Very effective coordination/consultation meetings were held and engagements with the political parties, youth, media, women and Parliamentarians were also very successful.

In the 2nd quarter, CRC had consultations and outreach with MDAs, printed 10,000 copies of the combined document, submission forms and promotional materials. The Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) the **CTA** said were on board and he will combine report on their activities and share with partners. There was coordination/consensus building with political parties, youth and CSOs; the 1st meeting of CSO and CRC was held on 30 July 2014, monthly meetings to be held till December 2014. The activity with the Paramount Chiefs was postponed.

Presenting the financial report, the CTA informed that delivery was more than 52%. 81% of DFID's and 20% of UNDP's funds have been expended. Depending on situation concerning Ebola epidemic, 2nd tranche payment to the CSOs will be effected shortly.

The CTA informed that by February 2015, a draft constitution should be ready to share with the government. He added that the project was able to surmount the financial and political risks, and that ambiguities were reduced as a result of consultations with the institutions. The outbreak of Ebola he said would cause delays and impact on the project.

3, Update from CRC

Mr. Samuel Coker, Executive Secretary, CRC, informed members that the CRC had been working round the clock; he said there were challenges but they were trying to maintain cohesiveness in the process. The CRC has had civic education and public consultation in the western area. The CRC has had a lot of support from local leaders up country: the issue of land management, gender, gender, child rights and disability have been hammered home in the submission forms.

Mr. Coker went on to inform that GoSL was challenged with finances. He said CRC had developed a tentative time table to do public consultation in 149 chiefdoms, but with the public emergency, CRC would have to rethink how to meet the people in the provinces. Committee members however embarked on civic education campaign for major stakeholders.

GoSL provided some funding – over four billion Leones, lodged in CRC account. GoSL's funds were used to procure vehicles and refurbish the secretariat.

The CSOs have coordinated with the secretariat and have produced a lot of promotional materials. The partnership between the CSO and CRC was going on well; to date the CSOs had participated in over 15 activities. Over 40 organizations had submitted position papers to the CRC. The public submission forms are reviewed as the issues emerge. CRC would need to clarify whether CRC public consultation would qualify as essential public gathering.

3. Questions, comments and answers

Mr. Moses Sichei, UNDP wanted to know what the threshold to warrant inclusion in the constitution was.

Mr. Samuel Coker, CRC replied that popular view did not necessarily warrant inclusion, the CRC members and drafters he said would have to critically look at the issue in order to be able to make a decision.

The CTA added that the sub committees would come up with validations, then the plenary with 2/3rd majority would approve. CTA intimated that with funding and support consensus will be built with in the CRC on critical recommendations.

Mr. Tom Ashwanden, EU stated that the EU has had a lot of bottlenecks with funding due to the Project Officer's illness, but promised to unlock the bottlenecks in the coming weeks. The use of submission forms he said needed some amount of literacy and asked what the CRC was doing to address the illiterate population. He said it was crucial for consultations to take place in the provinces and asked what the plans for consultations were. Report on the constitution should have a right space development approach.

Ms. Lucy Hayes, DFID congratulated the CRC on its achievements and commented that managing people's concerns was a big issue. She suggested that people's concerns be documented and taken forward, and enquired what the plans for public consultation were. Ms. Hayes also requested a risk table from the CRC and plans on how the CRC intended to mitigate those risks, and asked CRC to flag up any technical gaps where support would be needed. She also wanted to know how much money was left for consultation.

Mr. Patrick Senesie, DFID commented that that the way the report was presented portrayed the fact that everything was fine and rosy, he asked that CRC prepares a list of challenges whereby maybe donors could assist.

Mr. Samuel Coker, CRC, replied that the main challenge was illiteracy. He said the CSOs were to move out into the villages; for every CSO/CRC engagement in the rural areas, the radio stations and the abridged version of the constitution produced by the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) are used. Mr. Coker added that the CRC had engaged the traditional leaders and had requested them to list down the concerns of the people and forward to the District Council offices.

Mr. Coker informed that there were plans for consultations in the provinces, and a tentative plan to meet with the traditional leaders. He took note of the fact that the report should have a developmental approach; the MDAs he said were very critical. He promised to develop a risk table.

The CTA thanked EU for the support. He mentioned that the 40%/50% illiteracy was evident and it was for that reason NCD was selected as a partner. He informed that NCD developed seven videos and are to do open broadcast to communities. He further mentioned that due to the delay of funds for public consultation, CRC has been encouraged to focus and engage stakeholders based in Freetown rather than wait for government funds.

Ms. Lucy Hayes, DFID wanted to know update about experts and peer review process.

The CTA replied that the United Nation's Mediation Standby Team agreed to send constitutional experts in the area of gender, the executive and natural resources to support the process. He said that International Legal Resource Centre of American Bar is also working on comprehensive review of the 1991 constitution. He thanked Ms. Hayes for contacting Oxford University for expert review.

Ms. Hayes informed that the annual review of the CRC will be done in September. The review would mean DFID bringing in a DFID staff to measure the log frame; the exercise is to start on 8 September

2014. She asked that meetings be arranged with partners, and informed that annual reviews were public documents and will be shared on DFID's website.

Mr. Patrick Senesie, DFID, asked to what extent the CRC had involved the Parliamentarians.

The **CTA** replied that there was an engagement with Parliamentarians on 31st March 2014; the report he said was available on the CRC website and March edition of the newsletter. He said different thematic committees will meet with the various committees in Parliament.

Chair, Mr. Sudipto Mukerje, informed that he had a meeting with members of the CRC sub committees who objected to the fact that there was a lot of funding for the CSOs and not for the CRC. The Paramount Chiefs he said were concerned that the constitutional review would likely tamper with their rights. He had a meeting the day the timeline for civic registration process would be done in time for the voter registration in local Council elections and the Referendum in 2015.

The **CTA** replied that it was for that reason the CSO/CRC partnership was instituted. He said he had informed the CRC that according to the project document funding CRC is not part of the project. He explained that due to the initial delay due to the government funds and now because of Ebola the CRC work will be affected. There might be room for extending the mandate of the CRC.

Mr. Samuel Coker

Ms. Lucy Hayes

Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee

Mr. Sanaullah Baloch

Attendance list

1. Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, UNDP Country Director, Chair
2. Mr. Samuel Coker, Executive Secretary, Constitutional Review Committee (CRC)
3. Ms. Lucy Hayes, DFID
4. Mr. Patrick Senesie, DFID
5. Mr. Tom Ashwanden, EU
6. Mr. Moses Sichei, Deputy Country Director Programmes, a.i. UNDP
7. Mr. Sanaullah Baloch, Chief Technical Adviser, CRC, UNDP
8. Mr. Helal Uddin, UNDP
9. Ms. Gloria Thomas, UNDP

PROJECT BOARD MEETING – SIERRA LEONE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROJECT

Thursday 31 July 2014

ATTENDANCE SHEET

No	NAME	INSTITUTION/POSITION	EMAIL	TEL. NO
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