

Minutes of the 4th meeting of the Project Board

The Support to the Sierra Leone Constitutional Review Project

UNDP Conference Room, 15th October 2014

Summary

The 4th Project Board meeting for *the Support to the Sierra Leone Constitutional Review Project 2013 – 2014* was held on 15th October 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), the Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), DFID, and the United Nations (UN Women and UNDP).

Report on progress on the Constitutional Review Project was the main item on the agenda.

1. Opening remarks

The Chair, UNDP Country Director, Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee welcomed all to the meeting and stated that he was happy that meetings continue to take place despite the current alarming ebola situation in the country. The Constitutional Review Project Chair considered one of the projects as critical and advised for an ongoing engagement with it. The project has taken advantage of a lot of radio time combining constitutional review with ebola. The Chair mentioned also that during this difficult period, UNDP exercises its duty of care towards all categories of its staff.

Introduction of all present followed.

The Chairman CRC, Justice Edmund Cowan in his opening remarks stated most of the stumbling blocks the CRC initially encountered had been cleared - the financial problem with the government has been settled, the problem with UNDP and the CSOs has also been resolved. Justice Cowan informed that work with the sub committees was on going, although bulk of the CRC activities is done in Freetown at the moment. He informed that he had written to the Attorney General to bring to his notice the fact that the project would not be able to meet its deadline. He also informed that he had a meeting with DFID and the latter raised legitimate concerns about postponing the referendum; the Chair CRC was optimistic the referendum would not be postponed. He said there was a lot of awareness on the process, radio and television programs on the constitution were on, and training sessions for the Sub-Committees was on going, . He was happy at the pace things were moving and thanked UNDP and other partners for sponsoring the process.

2. CR Project and Progress Report

The Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), Mr. Sanaullah Baloch thanked members for regular attendance at the Project Board meetings, and went on to give the progress report through a power point presentation.

The CTA briefly summarized the 1st and 2nd quarters' activities, and went on to highlight the 3rd quarter's achievements and challenges. He informed members that the priorities for the project were shifted – stakeholders' meetings and strategic planning meetings with the Sub-Committees were held; the committees were encouraged to identify local experts for technical sessions.

2.1 The CTA pointed out that the CRC process had attracted a lot of attention; requests for constitutional review were sought from international experts, to which the American Bar Association responded with a brilliant paper. Other achievements includes the development of the master matrix comprising of the Peter Tucker report, the 1991 Constitution and the constitution.

Interns contracted by National Youth Commission (NAYCOM) have been deployed to CRC Secretariat to record and analyse data into the master matrix, video and television programmes reprogrammed to YouTube channels for international and diaspora feedback.

2.2 Highlighting the challenges, the CTA informed that the CSO civic education component has been suspended and the funds frozen; the plan for the nationwide consultation overturned; visits to the CRC website decreased as a result of the shift in national and international priorities;

2.3 Reporting on financial progress, the CTA informed that USD 1,090,514.32 had been disbursed whilst USD 24,997 was under commitment; he also briefed on the Micro Credit Grants disbursed to some NGOs.

2.4 For next steps, the CTA informed that activities in the project has been reprogrammed for January 2015. In this regard, he advised for a request to be made for the project to be extended to January 2016.

Note: For detailed presentation, please see Annex A, and for CRC's 3rd quarter report please see Annex B

3. Questions, comments and answers

The Chair, UNDP Country Director thanked the CTA for a wonderful presentation and stated that the ebola crisis should be addressed constitutionally, and that UNDP and Office of National Security should come up with a standardized operational procedure.

The Chairman CRC affirmed that the crisis was been addressed constitutionally. He intimated that the PPRC, NEC, NCD and other government parastatals have offered to assist the CRC as these organizations(already mentioned) all have presence in the headquarter towns, and have been engaging on previous meetings with people up country.

Mr. Mohamed Abchir, Deputy Country Director UNDP stated that he was impressed by the quality of work done on the project, whilst the Country Director intimated that he had requested for the CTA and the Chair CRC to sell out the project at HQ

Mr. Richard Carter, DFID congratulated the CTA on the scope and quality of the report. He suggested it would be useful to look at the best and worst case scenarios. One of the success stories he said was the huge volume of documents acquired in various formats, in light of that, he asked for clarification on the process of synthesizing contrasting/opposing views.

Ms. Valnora Edwin, CGG reminded that in terms of timeline, there were the issues of census and boundary limitation which should be taking place next year. She was of the opinion that the programme currently was centralized in Freetown, and suggested that organizations out of Freetown be targeted as well.

Ms. Baidu Massaquoi, UNWomen suggested that the CRC TV programmes be broadcast all over the country.

The CTA replying said that the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) in its proposal for civic education for the CRC had planned to do outside broadcasting such as at community cinemas. He said videos has been developed in five languages and an abridged version of the constitution has been developed. Different organizations have manifested interest to assist the CRC in civic education. The District Constitutional Coordinating Committee will train on thematic areas and the public submission forms. Individual feedback the CTA said had been very little, due to the fact that the CRC was unable to carry out public consultations. He informed that drafters had been engaged and they were trying to involve less international inputs.

Justice Cowan maintained that the views of the lay man on the streets will be captured. Organizations like MARWOPNET, UN Women, Women's Forum, Youth Commission, Political parties etc. has held workshops in this regard.

Mr. Samuel Coker, Executive Secretary, mentioned that there are plans to engage IRN (Independent Radio Network) the network of radio stations around the country, to air programmes on the process.

Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, Chair, commended the CTA for the tremendous amount of work done despite amidst Ebola outbreak in the country.

Justice Edmund Cowan thanked UNDP, DFID and EU for their support and very cordial working relationship and to UN Women for making strong commitment to the process. He expressed special thanks to the CTA for all his hard work.

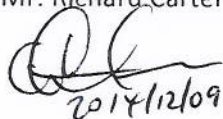
With no other business, the meeting ended at 12.55pm.

Justice Edmund Cowan

Mr. Richard Carter

Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee

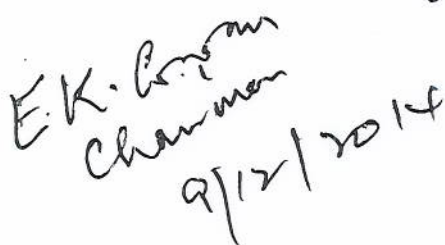
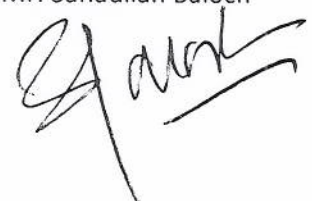
Mr. Sanaullah Baloch



2014/12/09



10/12/14



E.K. Cowan
Chairman
9/12/2014

Attendance list

1. Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, UNDP Country Director, Chair
2. Justice Edmond K Cowan, Chair, Constitutional Review Committee (CRC)
3. Mr. Samuel Coker, Executive Secretary, CRC
4. Ms. Valnora Edwin, Campaign for Good Governance (CGG)
5. Mr. Richard Carter, DFID
6. Ms. Baindu Massaquoi. UNWomen
7. Mr. Mohamed Abchir, Deputy Country Director Programmes, UNDP
8. Mr. Sanaullah Baloch, Chief Technical Adviser, CRC, UNDP
9. Ms. Manjia Kobba, UNDP
10. Ms. Gloria Thomas, UNDP

ANNEXES

ANNEX A – Power point presentation

ANNEX B – CRC 3rd quarter progress report