

Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Project Board

The Support to the Sierra Leone Constitutional Review Project

UNDP Conference Room, 11th April 2014

Summary

The 2nd Project Board meeting for *the Support to the Sierra Leone Constitutional Review Project 2013 – 2014* was held on 11th April 2014 at 10.00 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 Law Officers' Department, the Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), DFID, EU 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 which he said was to review performance on the constitutional project and to agree on priorities for the next quarter; he then introduced Ms. Elizabeth Solomon, Peace and Development Adviser, a new member of the UN team.

2. CR Project and Progress Report

The Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), Mr. Sanaullah Baloch thanked members for attending the meeting at short notice and apologized for the time change for the meeting.

The CTA then took members through a power point presentation on the CR Project and progress made so far. He said that a lot of questions had been asked about the composition of the CR Committee and informed that a map on the composition of the Committee was available on the CRC website.

2.1 The CTA explained that at the 1st Project Board Meeting, it was agreed that more than 52% of the CR budget be devoted to outreach, civic education and public consultation, but after consultations with DFID, alteration in some budget activities were made to support media outreach component. Currently nearly 60% of the total budget is dedicated to civic education.

Highlighting achievements of the 1st quarter, the CTA said

- CRC and staff were capacitated, the resource centre and the committee room revamped
- One UNV for Events Management and one for Website Development had been assigned to the Secretariat
- A 70 page Consultation Strategy had been developed and would be available on the CRC website the following week

- Sub-committees have finalized their consultation plan which includes thematic issues and questions, list of stakeholders and detailed operation plan.
- Both working documents, 1991 constitution and Peter Tucker report, have been synchronized and produced as a combined and reader-friendly document.
- CRC website visited by over 30,000 people to date
- Another major achievement was the introduction of the monthly newsletter; the 1st edition was a 2 pager test copy, the 2nd a 10 pager and the 3rd a 20 pager comprehensive newsletter. The newsletters and the website are being shared with other Constitutional Review Commissions by the UN as best practices.
- Coordination meetings with strategic stakeholders were held; a 2 day conference with women, 1 day conference with Parliament and with the Media respectively.
- Civil Society Organizations had come on board to carry out civic education campaigns
- SLBC, WANEP, OXFAM/50-50Group, NCD signed partnership agreement with UNDP to support CRC and carryout civic education on pertinent thematic issues.

The CTA mentioned a missing component was the printing of copies of the constitution for which GoSL was responsible. He promised however that 5000 copies would be made available the following week.

2.2 The CTA also informed about plans for the 2nd quarter which included among other things, consultations with the youths, traditional and religious leaders. Additional technical assistance he said would be provided for the secretariat and staff, together with some training for the Technical and Legal Associates.

2.3 The CTA added that proposals from Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), OXFAM and WANEP had been selected to do public consultations and carry out civic education campaigns. He said several proposals were received from other CSOs but lacked the component of disseminating and collating information. He then gave a brief summary of the four civic education projects to be undertaken by SLBC, WANEP, OXFAM and NCD.

2.3.1 SLBC aims to increase media coverage on the activities of the CRC by using the television station to broadcast one hour weekly live shows, TV dramas and videos. The radio will air discussion programmes in the local languages on the CRC 2 to 3 times a day. SLBC would link with Airtel and Africell to send sms around the country. CRC would feature 2 to 3 times daily on TV or radio with effect from 22 April.

2.3.2 WANEP's project titled "Reaching the Last Mile" is geared towards transmitting civic education in remote and bordering districts.

2.3.3 OXFAM's project is strategically programmed and targets several central districts; coupled with civic education activities OXFAM's project also includes organizing focus group discussions and producing position papers on women and land rights and natural resources.

2.3.4 NCD's project is a geographical outreach that will cover 50 constituencies; NCD will target the Executive, Legislative, Judiciary and Local Government. NCD will cover areas where there are no radio

stations and where small NGOs would find it difficult to undertake civic education activities. NCD will hold town hall meetings on thematic areas using its outside broadcasting van.

2.4 The CTA informed that there were plans for international experts to be contracted and that the UN Country Team was willing to cooperate and provide assistance.

2.5 The CTA pointed out that despite the achievements, the resources and timeframe of the project, pose serious challenges. He mentioned that the technical sessions of the CRC were held in Freetown and at one such meeting the previous day, the Attorney General informed that H E the President had agreed to allocate and release more funds for the process.

3. Questions, comments and answers

The Chairman CRC, Justice Edmund Cowan thanked UNDP for the support, especially for the services of the CTA which he said had been invaluable. Half way through the programme unfortunately he said, there is a change of Executive Secretary: nonetheless, the CRC continues to make progress. The various Committees were ready to start their tour of the provinces, and state institutions like the National Electoral Commission, the National Commission for Democracy, the Human Rights Commission, the Office of National Security and the Political Parties Registration Commission had agreed to assist the CRC by letting their staff and facilities up country. The Chair stated that government had made available 11 vehicles and 2 buses and that the CRC was in dialogue with the government to make more funds available.

Justice Cowan intimated that CRC were not much in the picture of what the CSOs would be doing; he stressed the importance of liaising and coordinating. Justice Cowan also pointed out that the people could not effectively review the constitution without them having a copy of it, and emphasized that it was important for the constitution to be made available before the CRC goes up country.

Justice Cowan commenting on the CTA's presentation, affirmed that NCD and SLBC were government institutions and not CSOs; he noted that WANEP was covering the border districts but wanted to know how Bonthe would be covered. He said he had received concerns from Parliamentarians and intimated that it was important to keep them on board as at the end of it all it is they (Parliamentarians) who would pass the vote; when the Committees go up country, the Parliamentarians should be there to hold dialogue with the people. Justice Cowan therefore wanted to know how engaged the Parliamentarians were and how people would be able to make a submission.

The CTA replied that all the stakeholders including the academics would come on board. He stated that anyone who intended to engage the CRC should submit a proposal. He added that the communication strategy will soon be in place which will advise on how to disseminate information in addition to the TV and radio.

Justice Cowan intimated that the CRC would rely on the UNDP for assistance in sending CRC members on study tour to other countries where constitution reviews are taking place.

Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, UNDP Country Director reassured the CRC Chair that the UN was with the CRC and extended gratitude to DFID, EU and the UN Peace Building fund for funding the programme.

Mr. Lothar Jaschke, EU, referred to a saying “if you want to travel fast, go alone, if you want to travel far, go together”, and stated that the support from EU had been endorsed and that the payment would soon be effected. He enquired however how the sub groups of the CRC fed into the plenary.

Ms. Lucy Hayes, DFID said it was good to learn that the Committees had started going up country and that the relationships had improved. Ms. Hayes remarked that the timing of the programme was quite challenging but that it was encouraging to note that other government partners had provided support. She asked whether the CRC was optimistic that it would succeed, and how the communication strategy would be communicated to maximize participation with the Committees now going up country.

Justice Cowan replied that the CRC was optimistic it would succeed although it was challenging; the new Executive Secretary he said was getting up to speed.

The CTA then explained the civic education and public consultation process from the communication strategy. He also mentioned that:-

- Africell and Airtel would send text messages to various regions two days in advance whilst community radios would make announcements during their programmes.
- It was cost effective to use government institutions for the civic education campaigns as they already have assets and other stuff unlike some CSOs.
- The Parliamentarians had been invited to a parliamentary consultation and they would be invited to various sessions rather than holding exclusive meetings for them.
- Questionnaires around thematic issues had been developed, available on website, and that the Committees would take the public submission forms with them when going up country for consultations.

Ms. Valnora Edwin, CGG thanked the CTA for the comprehensive update. Ms. Edwin wanted to know how riverain areas would be accessed and whether the support to the CSOs was one-off; she enquired why OXFAM an international NGO was selected instead of a local CSO. She informed that people had been asking for the constitution in all the consultations undertaken so far.

Ms. Melrose Kargbo, UNWomen commented on the availability of the constitution to people who are not lettered as the process needs to be inclusive at all levels. She suggested that some sections be highlighted to enable people make input. Ms. Kargbo informed that UNWomen had just concluded CEDAW in Geneva with concluding comments and mentioned that UNWomen has a document on gender which could be used with women organizations to have a consolidated report to the CRC. She suggested that there was need to get NGOs and INGOs to include Constitutional Review in all their engagements. She commended the CR gender workshop held in Bo.

The CTA clarified that CRC members were at liberty to use whatever methods they could to reach the riverain areas and that it was totally dependent on the members and the secretariat to ensure that all

the areas were reached. He went on to say that there were still some applications pending. The applications were expensive and contained no mechanism for disseminating civic education. He said he had a meeting with the CSOs who gave a presentation on their proposals; the CSOs were then given the opportunity to redo their projects to include means of disseminating and collecting information. OXFAM's project he said was based on women, and OXFAM agreed to form a consortium with the 50/50 group and other small organizations. Gender mainstreaming he added was key in the constitutional review.

Justice Cowan reminded that there were other aspects like disability issues to focus on in the CR, and intimated that CRC needed to play the balancing act to incorporate all the disadvantaged groups; he advised that the constitution be treated holistically.

The CTA informed that both working documents have been shared broadly with UN agencies, experts and international organizations for peer review, and that there has been positive response so far. He also emphasised that all UN agencies have been requested to share their work, documents, tools and manuals in their area of expertise to enrich CRC members' understanding on relevant issues.

CTA also offered support and assistance to link UN agencies with CRC and more particularly he invited UNWomen to come forward and capacitate CRC members on women rights and gender related issues.

Ms. Lucy Hayes, DFID wanted to know if the proposed dates for the committees' tour up country were final.

The CTA replied that depending on resources, there would likely be a change in the dates. The Deputy Secretary and two teams were already up country.

Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, Chair, concluding said many issues had been raised and would be looked into especially "the Last Mile" which covers everywhere. He said the CTA would take back to the CRC on outreach. He asked that the 18 women at CRC be capacitated to play more roles. He informed that he had asked the Staff Association to meet with the CTA to see how its members could serve as ambassadors of the CRC. Mr. Mukerjee also informed that the UN Country Team was arranging for CR Chief Technical Advisers from African countries to come to Sierra Leone to share experience with the CRC.

Mr. Mukerjee asked that the CRC website be hyperlinked to the website of other members.

The next meeting of the Project Board will be in July 2014.

Ms. Martina Kroma

Ms. Lucy Hayes

Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee

Mr. Sanallah Baloch

Attendance list

1. Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, UNDP Country Director, Chair
2. Justice Edmond K Cowan, Chair, Constitutional Review Committee (CRC)
3. Ms. Martina Kroma, Solicitor General, Law Officers' Office
4. Ms. Valnora Edwin, Campaign for Good Governance (CGG)
5. Ms. Lucy Hayes, DFID
6. Mr. Patrick Senesie, DFID
7. Mr. Lothar Jaschke, EU
8. Ms. Melrose Kargbo. UNWomen
9. Mr. Mohamed Abchir, Deputy Country Director Programmes, UNDP
10. Mr. Sanallah Baloch, Chief Technical Adviser, CRC, UNDP
11. Ms. Elizabeth Solomon, UNDP
12. Mr. Edward Kamara, UNDP
13. Mr. Samuel Palmer, UNDP
14. Ms. Manjia Kobba, UNDP
15. Ms. Gloria Thomas, UNDP