

Minutes of the 5th meeting of the Project Board

The Support to the Sierra Leone Constitutional Review Project

UNDP Conference Room, 29th April 2015

Summary

The 5th Project Board meeting for *the Support to the Sierra Leone Constitutional Review Project* was held on 29th April 2015 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, and the United Nations (UN Women and UNDP).

The main item on the agenda was review of progress on the Constitutional Review Project and presentation of the 2015 Annual Work Plan.

1. Opening remarks

The Chair, UNDP Country Director, Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee in his brief opening remarks welcomed all to the 1st Project Board meeting for 2015 and stated that despite the Ebola restrictions, the project was able to make headway.

Self-introduction by members present, followed.

The Chairman CRC, Justice Edmund Cowan in his own opening remarks first of all thanked UNDP and its partners for the tremendous support given to the CRC. He said he was quite pleased with the level of cooperation with UNDP that had resulted in the project achieving so much – for instance, public consultations were held up country with the Paramount Chiefs and Local Councils. The Chair, CRC stated that although the government had extended the life of the project to March 2016, members needed to be cautioned that time was not in our favour.

Members of the Commission the Chair said were embarking to travel to all parts of the provinces to hold consultations with the people, and that the CRC needed to take cognisance of the constitutional happenings in the country; then together with the people should be able to produce a credible constitution that would move the country forward.

2. CR Project and Progress Report

The Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), Mr. Sanaullah Baloch welcomed the DFID representative Ms. Samina Bhatia to her 1st Project Board meeting and went on to give the progress report through a power point presentation.

The CTA informed that there were challenges with the civic education and public consultation processes as a result of the Ebola restrictions, but that the project managed to forge ahead. There was initially low

response from the membership but later members became more attracted and gradually the momentum built up. There was increased participation from the women and political parties as well.

With regards progress made in 2014, the CTA stated that a 160 page detailed report on CRC's activities was available on the CRC website.

CRC Sub-Committees: The sub- committees working independently and were encouraged to carry out activities based on the work plan. In spite of the Ebola, the sub-committees managed to hold consultations with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and various institutions.

CRC Secretariat: The Secretariat which was under resourced is now fully functional with up to date modern facilities. UN Volunteers, interns, Legal support and Drafters are embedded in the Secretariat to support the staff.

Website: The website is very functional – regular editions of the newsletter produced and posted on the website. The U Tube channel also active with about 38 videos on.

Civil Society (CSO) engagement: CSOs are also engaging in public consultation – Citizens for Constitutional Change (CCC) targeted the students. National Commission for Democracy (NCD) translated the constitution into five languages and did eighty two video shows. Oxfam concentrated on gender related issues whilst Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) carried out radio programmes.

The CTA also reported that there were engagements with key stakeholders like the women and political parties whilst the sub committees had consultations with MDAs and also held expert meetings. There were 115 institutional consultations and 31 expert meetings. In March 2015 some institutions were encouraged to partner with CRC and as a result, the CRC partnered with Office of National Security (ONS), National Electoral Commission (NEC), Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone (HRCSL), National Commission for Democracy (NCD) and Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) to train District Coordinators.

The climax of the public consultations will be the nationwide consultation by the CRC which should start on 4th May 2015. The Commission has organized four teams to meet the people in all the regions of the country.

2.2 Financial delivery: The CTA reported that 99% of the project's budget for 2014 was expended, and that the 1st instalment of the EU contribution of USD892,857.00 was received in April 2015.

2.3 Next steps: The CTA presented a brief timetable of events for May to October as follows:-

May – June = Nationwide consultation; **June – July** = compilation of position papers etc. and production of 1st draft report; **July – August** = Presentation of 1st draft to CRC plenary; **August – September** = 2nd draft reviewed; September – October = Final draft/report compiled, reviewed and submitted to CRC plenary and GoSL.

The CTA also presented the CRC sub-committee work plan for April to August 2015.

2.4 Challenges and opportunities: The CTA informed that the CSO civic education component had resumed and that more resources were needed to reenergize the process. The CRC nationwide consultation plan also facing constraints due to limited resources. Concerning constitutional referendum, CTA emphasised the need for allocation of generous resources to educate, sensitize and mobilize masses to participate in the referendum process.

He also requested the partners to allocate more resources to expand and extend the civic education component of the project.

The CTA then presented the 2015 Annual Work Plan for the Republic of Sierra Leone Constitution Review Programme.

Note: For detailed presentation, please see Annex A, and for CRC's 1st quarter report for 2015 please see Annex B

3. Questions, comments and answers

Ms. Valnora Edwin, CGG not physically present at the meeting, sent her comments via email. Ms Edwin expressed concern about the consultation plan, noted that there were constraints for resources, but suggested that two consultations be held per district instead of one. She asked that additional funding be made available to CSOs and NGOs so that they could complement the work of the CRC. Ms. Edwin also requested that qualified researchers be co-opted to support the sub-committees, and that the public information and communications strategies be strengthened.

Mr. Marbey Sartie, UNWomen, urged that adequate resources be made available so that gains made over the period would not be lost.

It was clear from discussions that CSOs and CRC needed more resources. It was suggested that the Peace Building Fund could be tapped for funding, and it was also decided that the UNDP Country Director and the Chief Technical Adviser do a presentation to the international community in a bid to mobilize more resources.

Mr. Marbey Sartie, UNWomen requested that more funding be made available for engendering the constitution.

Justice Edmund Cowan in his closing remarks thanked UNDP and the donors for the cooperation received in moving the process forward adding that he was convinced the constitutional review would go the way it should go.

With no other business, the meeting ended at 12.50pm.

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. Samina Bhatia, DFID
5. Mr. Marbey Sartie, UNWomen
6. Mr. Moses Sichei, UNDP
7. Mr. Sanallah Baloch, Chief Technical Adviser, CRC, UNDP
8. Ms. Manjia Kobba, UNDP
9. Mr. Helal Uddin, UNDP
10. Ms. Gloria Thomas, UNDP

ANNEXES

ANNEX A – Power point presentation

ANNEX B – CRC 1st quarter 2015 progress report