

World Bank – Civil Society Global Policy Forum

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

OBJECTIVES

- Promote a substantive and thoughtful policy discussion between CSO leaders and Bank managers/staff on the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) and on other important development topics of mutual interest.
- Analyze lessons learned on Bank – civil society engagement over the past years and discuss ideas for improving this in the future, including possible new standards and framework for global Bank – civil society dialogue.
- Promote greater mutual understanding of underlying positions/views and foster improved relations between the Bank and civil society.

NATURE / SPONSORSHIP

- Public and multi-stakeholder event with representatives from civil society, governments, Parliaments, donor agencies, and private sector
 - Civil Society (NGOs, trade unions, social movements, foundations, youth, academics, faith-based groups)
 - Governments (Bank Executive Directors, government officials,)
 - Parliamentarians
 - Donor Agencies (multilateral, bilateral)
 - Private Sector (Corporate Social Responsibility, Socially Responsible Investors)
- Sponsored by the Bank as an event open to a broad-spectrum of CSO networks, particularly from developing countries.
- Proposed Name: *World Bank – Civil Society Global Policy Forum* (CS Forum)

AGENDA

- Two-track event combining both a “thematic” discussion around Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), and a “relations” discussion about Bank – civil society engagement as well as other specific topics.
- Each track would occur on different and consecutive days, have distinct methodologies suited for each type of discussion, and different audiences. The first thematic day will attract a broader audience of government officials and donor agencies, while the second relations day may attract a more limited number of participants largely from the Bank and civil society.
 - The day prior to the Forum will be set aside for the CSOs to meet on their own for last minute discussions and preparations before engaging the Bank.
 - The first day of the Forum on the PRSs would follow a methodology composed of a plenary session and working groups geared to promoting in-depth discussion and debate on the given topic. CSOs would be invited to prepare case studies and papers.

- The second day of the Forum will focus on WB-CS relations and other specific issues CSOs may want to discuss (i.e. debt, trade, MDGs.) beyond the overarching theme of the first day. This discussion on WB-CS relations will be framed in part by the presentation of an independent Issues and Options paper being prepared by the Joint Facilitation Committee (JFC) CSOs, and the recent Bank paper on its relations with civil society.

PLANNING METHODOLOGY

- The Bank will set up an informal planning group composed of Bank staff and CSOs. The CSOs will help Bank further define Forum objectives, agenda, themes, participants, outreach strategy, and reporting.
- The plans for the Forum will be amply disseminated via email and the Bank's website, in order to ensure transparency and openness.

PARTICIPANTS

- Approximately 160 participants including CSOs, WB, government, donor agencies, and private sector:
 - 80 CSO representatives (50 from Southern countries with expenses covered by Bank and 30 from Northern countries) identified by CSO and WB members of steering group;
 - 25 Bank staff including senior managers, country and sector directors, and staff;
 - 30 Government officials and Executive Directors (or senior ED staff); and
 - 25 Donors such as IMF, other MDBs, bilaterals, UN agencies.

DATE / LOCALE

- April 20 – 22, 2005 (a few days after WB/IMF Spring Meetings)
- The Forum will be held in Washington, DC, but since the Forum is conceived as a two-track event with somewhat different participants we will be holding the prior and first days at a nearby location and the second day at Bank headquarters.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Specific ideas and recommendations on ways to improve stakeholder participation, programmatic effectiveness, and poverty impacts of the PRS process at the country level.
- Greater clarity and acknowledgement of the differences and commonalities between the Bank and civil society around key development issues.
- Agreement on an improved standard of engagement between the Bank and civil society geared to promoting improved policy dialogue and operational collaboration.
- Identify and discuss mechanisms and proposals for improving Bank – civil society policy dialogue and CSO engagement in Bank programs, project lending, technical assistance, and capacity building activities.