

Istanbul CSO Planning Group 1st Conference Call

June 22, 2009 / 9:00 – 10:00 am

MEETING NOTES

PARTICIPANTS:

Andrew Kircher (WB – East Asia / Central Europe Region)
Baquer Namazi (Hamyan Iran NGO Resource Center)
Danica Popovic (Center for Liberal-Democratic Studies)
Edith Grace Sempala (WB – Civil Society Team)
Ekaterine Tsereteli (Heinrich Boll Foundation)
Ela Hasanođlu (Turkish Education Volunteers Foundation)
Feyziye Günaydın (Turkish Education Volunteers Foundation)
Filiz Demirayak (WWF/Turkey)
Guggi Laryea (WB – Brussels Office)
Ibrahim Makram (CEOSS)
Ivan Blokov (Greenpeace Russia)
Jeremy Mark (IMF – Civil Society Team)
John Garrison (WB – Civil Society Team)
John Ruthrauff (InterAction)
Kristyn Schrader (WB – East Asia / Central Europe Region)
Mamata Pokharel (WB – Civil Society Team)
Nathaniel Don Marquez (ANGOC)
Nneka Okereke (WB – Civil Society Team)
Rebecca Steel (TRIALOG)
Tilla McAntony (IMF – Civil Society Team)
Tunya Celasin (WB – Ankara Office)
Vladimir Ivanov (Business Technologies Development Center)
Warren Nyamugasira (African Monitor)
Yelena Kudryavtseva (UNIFEM/Regional Office for CIS)

The first conference call with the CSO Planning Group was held with the purpose of introducing the Planning Group members (many of whom have never met) and discussing its planning role for civil society participation during the 2009 WB/IMF Annual Meetings in Istanbul. Other agenda items were: to review the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Planning Group, to begin discussion ideas for civil society activities at the Annual Meetings, and to plan a possible meeting in Istanbul in mid-July.

13 of the 18 CSO representatives on the Istanbul CSO Planning Group joined, together with World Bank and IMF staff from Washington DC, and country offices in Turkey and Belgium. The other five were either not available or had problems connecting. Several participants were cut off during the call due to technical problems, which we will try to improve next time. *John Garrison* (World Bank) chaired the meeting.

Bank and Fund staff welcomed CSO participants and thanked them for having agreed to be on the Planning Group, thus helping to ensure a more robust and substantive civil society participation at the Annual Meetings. A civil society colleague who was part of the Singapore AMs planning group three years ago provided a brief account of that experience, and what lessons we could incorporate into the Istanbul process.

The first point covered was to review and discuss the Terms of Reference for CSO Planning Group. There were several suggested changes to the ToR, namely that the issue of ‘building trust’ between the Bank/Fund and CSOs, and the voluntary nature of the planning group be included in the ToR. It was also suggested that one of the goals of this CSO planning process was to promote greater transparency at the Bank and Fund, and that this should be added to the TOR.

Next, Bank and Fund staff briefly outlined the events planned for the Annual Meetings. This includes the Civil Society Policy Forum, a Townhall with the Bank President and Fund Managing Director, Program of Seminars, and youth events. CSO participants had questions about the events such as how the Program of Seminars and the Civil Society Policy Forum were related, and what kind of youth events have taken place at previous Annual Meetings.

CSO participants then raised a number of points related to the proposed events. It was hoped that the extensive preparatory phase involving civil society would make the Policy Forum more focused, especially on aspects where the Bank, Fund and civil society can work together with a poverty focus. It was stressed that the current economic crisis, and exploring innovative approaches to provide ‘voice to the poor’, should be among the major issues for discussion at the Annual Meetings. Topic suggestions for the youth events included “youth and volunteerism,” “youth and employment,” and “youth and entrepreneurship.”

The Bank and Fund also inquired whether the CSO participants would be available to attend a possible planning meeting in Istanbul on July 14 and 15. The purpose of the meeting would be to give members of the Planning Group an opportunity to meet each other and discuss in more details their ideas for civil society events at the Annual Meetings. There would also be the possibility of a meeting with Turkish government officials, as well as a tour of the Conference Center.

Most of the participants indicated their availability to attend the planning meeting on July 14 and 15, and offered several agenda items to be considered at the that meeting. These included: press access for CSOs during the AMs, how CSO protests and stunts would be handled by the police,

and whether there will be a civil society working space with computers and printers. It was also suggested that it would be good idea if the CSOs on the planning group had a chance to meet separately as a group prior to the July 15th meeting in Istanbul, so they could try to develop a common agenda.

At the conclusion of the conference call, a list of the decision made and next steps were identified:

- Suggested changes to the ToR – such as the issue of ‘building trust’ between the Bank/Fund and CSOs, and the voluntary nature of the planning group – would be incorporated.
- On promoting greater transparency, it was agreed that the Bank would post the ToR and list of participants of the CSO Planning Group on the Bank’s web site in order to be transparent about this planning process.
- Participants will send via email any other comments they might have on the Terms of Reference circulated.
- The Bank will send out meeting notes, and get in touch with colleagues who could not participate in the conference call, in order to plan the logistics for the July 14 - 15 meeting in Istanbul.
- It was also agreed that it would be a good idea for the CSOs to meet amongst themselves prior to the July 15 meeting. The Bank agreed to propose a meeting time as part of the agenda.