

## **Co-Chair's Summary of Joint Facilitation Committee Meeting October 28, 2003**

1. The new World Bank-Civil Society Joint Facilitation Committee (JFC) convened on October 28, 2003 in Washington, DC, with participants from 14 networks of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and senior managers from the World Bank (WB) including President James Wolfensohn, Managing Director Mamphela Ramphele and regional and thematic vice presidents. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Ramphele and Kumi Naidoo (Secretary-General, CIVICUS). A list of the participants and observers attending the meeting is attached.
2. Ms. Ramphele welcomed the participants and said the meeting was occurring at an important time in international development and an important time for the WB, shortly after the Annual Bank/IMF Meetings in Dubai. Ms. Ramphele outlined the key messages included in Mr. Wolfensohn's speech to the Ministers attending the Annual Meetings, particularly the need for "a new equilibrium" between rich and poor countries.
3. Mr. Naidoo noted that the CSOs involved in the JFC saw the meeting as part of a process with significant challenges ahead, one needing much more dialogue and consultation on the part of civil society. He stressed the diverse nature of civil society around the globe, and emphasized that the CSOs at the meeting did not make the claim to represent global civil society, but rather they see their role as facilitators working to create more effective and relevant ways in which the Bank engages with civil society. He outlined the process to date in establishing the JFC, and the role which CIVICUS assumed as secretariat in late 2002. He acknowledged that although CIVICUS had attempted to get diverse voices from civil society involved in the process, there were many groups not present at the meeting which may have deeper knowledge of the WB than those present. He said that it would be important to put mechanisms in place to consult more widely in civil society. He also reiterated that there are a range of efforts where civil society engages with the WB, and thus the JFC initiative should be seen as complementary to those existing venues.
4. During the discussion, it was agreed that the civil society participants in the JFC are not intended to represent all of global civil society. As a transitional body, the JFC will expand participation to additional civil society networks and expand its outreach and consultation mechanisms. The CSO participants and the WB both emphasized the need, in particular, to reach out to more Southern-based civil society networks and invite them to join the process.
5. Ian Goldin, WB Vice President for External Affairs, Communications and UN Affairs, outlined the main messages contained in the draft WB paper entitled "*Issues and Options for Improving Engagement Between the World Bank and CSOs.*" He said the paper analyzes why the WB values civic engagement, how civic engagement is being mainstreamed in the WB, and the key issues and

challenges the WB faces in improving the quality of its engagement with civil society. He agreed to post the paper on the WB website, and he invited CSO comments before the paper is finalized and presented to the WB Board.

6. David Reed of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) presented a proposal on the need for the WB to learn from past experiences in engaging civil society, and to develop stronger guidelines and new mechanisms for engagement. He outlined a possible work program for the JFC which would focus on strengthening CSO engagement with national governments and with the WB. The proposal centered around in-country assessments of past CSO engagements in Bank core business areas, to be accompanied by capacity building activities and public dialogues, leading to adoption of a new WB policy on engagement. There was significant discussion among the participants of the pros and cons of this approach.
7. The participants also devoted some time to the discussion of the structure of the JFC itself. The participants agreed that the JFC is a consultative and transitional body to facilitate greater space for dialogue and engagement between the WB and civil society. The participants also discussed how the JFC could add value to existing mechanisms for engagement by 1) improving the quality of WB-CSO engagement; and 2) providing space to address global development challenges.
8. The World Bank and civil society participants agreed that the JFC should *facilitate* the following areas of activity:
  - a. An assessment of current and recent WB performance in respect to how effectively Bank-civil society interactions have impacted Bank development work, in order to produce forward-looking recommendations for improving Bank policy and practice by learning from both successful and ineffective experiences. The selection of focus areas will be determined after wider consultation within civil society. The assessment would be an independent, CSO-managed study, with the WB providing access to its information. The WB and CSO participants agreed to jointly review, and consider how to operationalize, the outcomes of the assessment.
  - b. Capacity-building of CSOs, particularly CSOs in developing and transition countries, for more effective engagement and advocacy vis-à-vis the WB and national governments to promote sustainable development. There will be further discussion on what skills, tools, and methodologies may be needed to support this goal.
  - c. A series of public policy dialogues linked to other CSO-WB engagement and review processes. These public forums should encompass contested development issues as well as areas of common interest (such as recent challenges to multilateralism and the need for increasing Official Development Assistance flows). Specific themes will be identified after wider consultation.

9. Mr. Wolfensohn said that the Bank encouraged the group to look at possibilities for complementary action on scaling up efforts to reduce poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals through development assistance, and also on securing the resources necessary to do this.

A more detailed report on the meeting will be prepared and circulated shortly.