

Seventh Annual Conference of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank

Cape Town, South Africa

March 16-18, 2007

Background

- The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank was founded in May 2000 as an informal network of individual parliamentarians. Since then, PNoWB has grown to become an independent organization of over 800 parliamentarians from 110 countries. PNoWB mobilizes parliamentarians in the fight against global poverty, promotes transparency and accountability in international development, and offers a platform for policy dialogue between the World Bank and parliamentarians. The PNoWB has unique access to the World Bank and many PNoWB activities are undertaken in partnership with the World Bank, including its Annual Conference, which also doubles as its General Assembly.

Objectives

- This year, the Seventh Annual Conference of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB) will be held in Cape Town, South Africa on March 16-18, 2007 and will be hosted by the Parliament of South Africa. It will be jointly organized by the PNoWB, the Parliament of South Africa, the World Bank and the African Development Bank. This is the first time the annual conference is taking place in Africa, **reflecting Sub-Saharan Africa's prominence on the international development agenda.**
- It is a **unique platform for open dialogue** and debate on major development and poverty issues among legislators from around the world, heads of development agencies, and a wide variety of prominent development actors (CSOs, foundations, academics, the private sector, trade unions, etc.).
- The conference will give the participants—over 200 MPs from 100 countries—the opportunity to hear from, and **interact directly with a broad range of lead actors** in the development community including the leaders of countries and major multilateral, regional and bilateral agencies such as the President of the World Bank, the President of the African Development Bank, and the Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund. Guest speakers at past conferences have included Brazil's President Inácio Lula da Silva and Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

- The conference will take place ahead of major international gatherings such as those of the G8 and G20 and will thus be an **opportunity for parliamentarians to discuss the same issues they will raise and give input into the international agenda:**
 - **G20:** South Africa holds the Presidency in 2007
 - **G8:** the German Presidency has put strengthening global growth and Africa on the top of the agenda of the G8's Summit in June 2007
 - **World Bank/ IMF:** The agenda of the Spring Meetings in April 2007 will include progress on strategies related to governance and reform of the international financial institutions
 - **Global financing for development:** the World Bank's IDA 15th replenishment negotiations will be completed in 2007.

Proposed Topics

- The various partners have suggested the following topics to be included in the draft program that will be available end-January:
 - Making the case for aid (aid effectiveness, aid coordination and harmonization)
 - Transparency and governance
 - Fighting rural poverty (agriculture, basic services, rural development)
 - Reforming the International Financial Institutions (voice in IMF/WB, role of MDBs, new international aid architecture)
 - Evolving international trade and globalization (WTO Doha Round, emergence of "giant" middle income countries, long term perspectives)
 - Country ownership of economic reforms and growth (debt relief and sustainability, macro-economic and budget support, conditionality)
 - Achieving better health (HIV/Aids, malaria, better access to health services)
 - Promoting clean energy (climate change, investment framework)

Side Events

- The presence of a wide range of global leaders and legislators from around the world and the magnitude of the event have generated interest from many organizations to organize side meetings at the occasion of the conference
 - AWEPA, the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa, has expressed interest in organizing a regional seminar with parliamentarians to present and support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).
 - PNoWB will launch its Southern Africa regional chapter.
 - The World Bank and PNoWB will organize a seminar to describe their joint Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP) Program of Field Visits, supported by the Government of Finland.
- Local groups such as universities and civil society organizations might organize a public event during the Conference, benefiting from the panel of speakers and participants coming for the Conference.

Organization

- Although it benefits from the support of the other co-organizers, this is the PNoWB's annual conference. The Chair of PNoWB's Board and himself member of Parliament, Bert Koenders will send out official letters of invitation and the draft program in early February.
- As the host, the Parliament of South Africa is a key partner in the conference, working hand in hand with the co-organizers on its organization and direction.
- In addition to the co-organizers, a wide range of other organizations are associated in the preparation and organization of the event. Some of these are the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP).
- PNoWB annual conferences are traditionally organized into several keynote presentations from high-level prominent figures, and smaller overlapping workshops. Having parallel workshops allows participants to choose from a broader range of topics that may interest them and permit for discussions in small enough groups to come away with actionable next steps.