



Obiageli Ezekwesili (World Bank) at the National Assembly of Cameroon



New World Bank Group Environment Strategy

### FIELD SURVEY OF COUNTRY OFFICES' WORK AND PARLIAMENTARIANS

**M**ain findings of the survey regards **Frequency and types of interactions**.-When asked how frequently their office interacts with parliamentarians or their staff, 42% of respondents indicated 'several times per year', 20% 'monthly' and 18% 'weekly'. In recipient countries, these interactions most often take the form of consultations on the Bank-led Country Assistance Strategy (77% of respondents in recipient countries organize such meetings). In donor countries, meetings with a group of parliamentarians are most prevalent (71%). Overall, meetings with individual parliamentarians are most common (71% of respondents). Most often, Country Directors or Country Managers engage with parliamentarians (78%), closely followed by external affairs staff (74%). **Positive and negative outcome**.-Most Country Offices are positive about their interaction with MPs: interaction led to better informed parliamentarians and a better relationship with and support from Members of Parliament. **Guidance and strategy**.-86% of respondents would appreciate guidance on how to engage with parliaments and MPs (8% doesn't and 5% doesn't know) and 80% declare that it would be helpful if a 'home' was created within the Bank with expertise and knowledge on parliamentarians. Best practices and sharing of experiences are most

often mentioned as useful guidance. **Parliamentary organizations**.-Most Country Offices believe that working with parliamentary organizations can be helpful for their engagement with parliamentarians. Quite a few respondents see parliamentary organizations as a way to share knowhow and experiences at a global or regional level, while they focus on the national situation themselves. **Trends**.-The frequency and types of interaction remain similar, but involvement in CASs (and PRSPs) seems to be on the rise (CAS: inclusion of parliamentarians is 76% in 2009 vs 62% in 2004). While in 2004, 27% of Country Offices had developed a communications plan or strategy for working with parliamentarians; in 2009, 74% has a (communications) strategy in place. Another change is that in 2004, 40% of Country Offices were never contacted by parliamentarians, while in 2009, only 8% of respondents report that parliamentarians do not approach them at all.

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### FROM THE REGIONS

Please find below a selection of activities undertaken by country offices over the last month.

**Cameroon** - On December 15, The World Bank Vice President for the Africa Region, Ms. Obiageli Ezekwesili, met with Parliamentarians at the National Assembly of Cameroon where she had discussions with the Finance and Budget Commission



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of the Parliament. This meeting provided an opportunity to Ms. Ezekwesili to discuss the role of the National Assembly in ensuring effective public finance management in Cameroon, including vetting and monitoring the national budget execution. Prior to the meeting with Parliamentarians, the Bank presented and discussed its recently completed analysis of the "Fiscal Policy for Growth and Development" of Cameroon, jointly chaired by the Minister of Finance and the Regional Vice President. Representatives of the Government of Cameroon, civil society, academia and development partners took part in this presentation as the report argues that the Government has the capacity to use fiscal policies as an effective instrument to address the legacy, governance, and distribution issues that are constraining growth, while providing basic services and necessary public goods to the population.

For more information, please contact [hbateg@worldbank.org](mailto:hbateg@worldbank.org).

**D****enmark** - On January 25 the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Danish Parliament invited fellow MPs from the Nordic and Baltic Parliaments for a joint meeting on issues related to the World Bank. The initiative to the meeting - a first of its kind - was taken by Danish member of the Board of the PNoWB, MP Jeppe Kofod. It was agreed that MPs from the Nordic and Baltic countries should regularly share information on World Bank issues, and meet annually to focus on issues of particular

interest, possibly under the auspices of the Nordic Council. The meeting was opened by Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee Marion Pedersen and Danish Development Minister Ulla Tørnæs. At the open meeting in the Danish parliament, also attended by CSOs, Swedish Executive Director on the Board of the World Bank, Anna Brandt, presented Nordic and Baltic priorities in the World Bank Group. Water, Energy and Transport Director Jamal Saghier of the World Bank's Sustainable Development Network gave an overview of the Bank's efforts in providing access to renewable energy. He also invited participants to comment on the new Energy Strategy for the World Bank Group, currently under consultation. The Bank's Country Manager to Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Thomas Blatt Laursen briefed participants on the impact of the financial crisis in Eastern Europe, and the World Bank's efforts to address the crisis. Sr. External Affairs Counselor Jakob Kopperud shared information on the upcoming IDA16 replenishment. For more information, see <http://www.worldbank.org/ida>.

**B****angladesh** - The South Asia and Commonwealth SE Asia Parliamentary Benchmarks Workshop took place in Dhaka from January 25-29, 2010 hosted by the Parliament of Bangladesh. This regional workshop, organized in partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and UNDP, forms part of a larger international process aimed at developing greater consensus around

parliamentary benchmarks and standards. This activity brought together the Speakers, Clerks and or parliamentary representatives from parliaments in South Asia, Malaysia and Singapore to critically examine the Global Benchmarks for Democratic Governance. The aim of the Workshop was to adapt the Global Benchmarks to the specific needs and circumstances of parliaments in the South Asia region and Commonwealth Southeast Asia; and ensure the input of South and Southeast Parliament is captured and presented to the upcoming Global Conference on Parliamentary Benchmarks, scheduled to take place in March 2010

**G****ermany** - World Bank Vice President for Concessional Finance and Global Partnerships (CFP) Axel van Trotsenburg met with the German Parliamentary Development Committee (AWZ) on 16 December 2009 in Berlin. Mr. van Trotsenburg was the first member from the Bank's senior management team to engage with the new German MPs and government (including State Secretary for Economic Cooperation and Development, Ms. Gudrun Kopp) since the September 2009 parliamentary election. On invitation of Ms. Dagmar Woehrl, Chairperson of the Development Committee, Mr. van Trotsenburg presented the World Bank's work during the financial crisis, the role of IDA, and outlined how the Bank is adapting and reforming as an institution to tackle new challenges. Nearly all of the 24 Committee members from the five main parties were present. Is-



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sues raised by MPs in a Q&A session following the presentation included a broad array of topics, such as changes to the IDA16 allocation system, the IFC's support for fossil fuel projects, aid effectiveness and results, as well as transparency. The Development Committee welcomed Mr. van Trotsenburg's proactive engagement with MPs, and requested that further meetings between the Bank's management and MPs take place also in the future.

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## SELECTION OF UPCOMING ACTIVITIES FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS

For more information on these activities, please contact [mtixeront@worldbank.org](mailto:mtixeront@worldbank.org). E-courses can be found on [www.parliamentarystrengthening.org](http://www.parliamentarystrengthening.org).

### *Consultations on Country Assistance Strategies (CAS)*



The World Bank regularly engages parliamentarians and other constituencies during consultations on the Country Assistance Strategies

(CAS). The Board should be reviewing the CASes from Kosovo (Interim Strategy Note) and Jamaica in February; and from Cameroon and Pakistan in March. In all these countries, members of parliament were involved in CAS consultations. Tunisia plans to carry out dissemination of its Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) report during the months of February and March. As part of this, depending on support from the government, the country office also plans to organize a second session with Parliamentarians (the first session took place in June when the Country Office consulted with MPs on the strategic orientations of the CPS as part of its preparation).

### *2 February: Annual West Africa Workshop for PACs*

Organized in partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Parliamentary Centre in Africa this seminar will focus in particular on the role of Public Account Committees (PACs) and Supreme Audit Institutions in West Africa in overseeing public procurement.

### *3 February: Workshop for Belarus MPs on aging and pension reform*

As a part of a technical assistance program on improving targeting accuracy of social assistance programs and ensuring pension system sustainability. Arranged together with DESA (United Nations Secretariat), the event is aimed to promote Parliamentarian

awareness of aging population and its implications for the pension system as well as the pension reform options

### *5 February: Residential Summer School for PACs, Beechworth, Australia*

This regional EAP workshop organized in partnership with La Trobe University, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Centre for Democratic Institutions, aims to bring together Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Clerks of Public Accounts Committees (PACs), and representatives from Supreme Audit Institutions to highlight international good practice, share experience and develop Action Plans for reform.

### *February: Effective Parliamentary Committees Course*

This course, delivered in partnership with the Centre for Democratic Institutions, aims to provide practical guidance to committee clerks and staff on how to conduct more effective parliamentary committee inquiries. It is designed for professional parliamentary staff in the EAP region and forms a component of WBI's broader efforts to strengthen the capacity of parliamentary staff.

### *February-Indonesian Public Accounts Committee Course*

Held in partnership with the Centre for Democratic Institutions, the workshop aims to build the capacity of both chambers of the Indonesian



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Parliament to engage more constructively in the budget process. A key component of this program will be the training of local training institutions that will be able to provide ongoing capacity support to the parliament as it seeks to enhance its role in the budget process.

## *March-E\*Learning: Parliament and Governance of Extractive Industry*

The aim of this E\*Learning course is to build the capacity of Members of Parliament to provide constructive political oversight over the entire extractive industry value chain. This training course is designed for Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff in all regions.

## *2-4 March: Global Indicators Conference in Paris*

The World Bank Institute (WBI) and the UNDP are organizing an International Conference on Benchmarking and Self-assessment for Democratic Legislatures in partnership with the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). This conference is part of a larger, long term process in which several inter-parliamentary organizations have developed standards and assessment frameworks for democratic parliaments.

## PUBLICATIONS

### *Global Economic Prospect 2010*

The global economic recovery that is now underway will slow later this year as the impact of fiscal stimu-



lus wanes. Financial markets remain troubled and private sector demand lags amid high unemployment, according to the new report from the World Bank. Global Economic Prospects 2010 warns that while the worst of the financial crisis may be over, the global recovery is fragile. It predicts that the fallout from the crisis will change the landscape for finance and growth over the next 10 years. More information on [www.worldbank.org/gep2010](http://www.worldbank.org/gep2010).

## NEWS

### *New Environment and Energy Strategies*

The World Bank Group is preparing new Environment and Energy Strategies to be submitted to the Executive Board late 2010 and early 2011 respectively. The Environment Strategy has begun the consultation process (October 2009 until February 15, 2010) while the Energy Strategy will begin its consultations early in 2010 (February until June 2010). As

part of the global dialogue, members of the Strategy team visited Bonn (Germany) on January 25-26, Oslo and Copenhagen on January 27 and 28. The Environment Strategy will articulate a set of principles and propose an approach for achieving the environmental sustainability of the WBG's portfolio while the Energy strategy will guide the World Bank's efforts to reduce poverty by helping developing countries meet their energy needs in a way that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable. More information on [www.worldbank.org/environmentconsultations](http://www.worldbank.org/environmentconsultations) and [www.worldbank.org/energyconsultations](http://www.worldbank.org/energyconsultations)

### *World Bank fully supports debt relief for Haiti*

The World Bank fully supports debt relief for Haiti. In June 2009, the World Bank, along with the IMF and other donors, granted Haiti \$1.2 billion in debt relief through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Since 2005, the World Bank's financial support for Haiti (\$363 million) has been carried out through grants. This does not include the \$100 million in grants announced on January 13, 2010, in response to the earthquake. Currently, Haiti's debt to the World Bank, which is interest-free, is about \$38 million—about 4% of Haiti's total external debt. Due to the crisis caused by the earthquake, the World Bank is waiving any payments on this debt for the next five years and at the same is working to find a way forward to cancel the remaining debt. More information on [www.worldbank.org/haiti](http://www.worldbank.org/haiti)