

**Meeting on the
Parliamentary Network on the World Bank
at the European Parliament
Tuesday, 4 October 2005**



Introduction

Ms. Monica Frassoni (MEP), the host of the event, stated the aims of the meeting as threefold:

- Updating MEPs and European Parliament Staff on the work of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank (PNoWB);
- Informing participants about the forthcoming PNoWB Annual Conference in Helsinki October 21-23 2005;
- Furthering discussions on the coordination of EU positions within the World Bank.

Presentation of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank

Mr. Bert Koenders (MP), the current Chair of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank and MP from the Netherlands Parliament, highlighted the key objectives of PNoWB as follows:

PNoWB aims to:

- Ensure accountability in the World Bank by facilitating and encouraging dialogue between parliamentarians and multilateral development institutions in order to promote greater transparency in the World Bank. To this end PNoWB members meet the World Bank President on an annual basis to discuss issues of accountability;
- Carry out advocacy by providing the PNoWB Members with a platform for coordinated parliamentary advocacy on international development issues;
- Network in order to encourage concerted action, early debate and exchange of information among parliamentarians on major issues of international development, finance and poverty eradication.

As regards the 6th Annual Conference of PNoWB in Helsinki on October 21-23 the meeting will be discussing amongst other things:

- How to implement the results of the recent UN Millennium Summit

- The Doha Development Agenda and forthcoming WTO Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong with WTO Director General Pascal Lamy.

Discussion

Points raised during the discussion that followed included the following:

- There is an interest in the European Parliament in monitoring how funds provided by the EU for activities that are solely implemented or jointly implemented by the World Bank are used;
- MEPs would like to start a dialogue with the Bank on the strategies that it develops for its client countries;
- The World Bank's mandate should be expanded to allow it to monitor and influence political issues like democracy, military spending, law and security, elections and election financing;
- There is a need for greater democracy and accountability on how decisions are taken within the World Bank;
- MEPs would like to have feedback on the results of the PNoWB Annual Conference in Helsinki.

World Bank Interaction with Parliamentarians – The Experience in Asia

John Roome, World Bank Operations Director for South Asia, outlined the following points in his presentation:

- The World Bank gives huge value to its dialogue with parliamentarians via the PNoWB and other networks;
- Discussions with Parliamentarians in Japan in particular has been very interesting with a good level of participation from Japanese parliamentarians at the highest level;
- It can be observed that parliamentarians from donor countries are increasingly demanding more information on the funds provided by their governments to the World Bank;
- The Bank is willing to work with these parliamentary groups. However the effectiveness of this work is dependent on how well the groups are organized. It should be recognized that in some countries the bureaucracy does not like the idea of the Bank discussing directly with parliamentarians.

EU Coordination in the World Bank

Stefano Manservigi, the Director General of DG Development, European Commission, included the following points in his presentation on EU coordination:

- EU Member States collectively have 35% of the votes in Bretton Woods Institutions, yet EU influence in these institutions has been small due to lack of coordination amongst EU Member States;

- EU Coordination in the Bretton Woods has however started with the weekly meetings of EU Executive Directors;
- In order to further EU coordination a framework for coordination should be established;
- The European Parliament has an important role to play in pushing for such action.

Discussion

Amongst the key issues raised in the ensuing discussion were the following:

- In order to further European coordination and accountability of the Bank:
 - The European Parliament should organise meetings after World Bank annual conferences to discuss their outcome with representatives of the Bank and the IMF;
 - The European Parliament should produce a synthesis of the reports by European national parliaments on the activities of the World Bank and the IMF;
- NGOs would like to be able to feed the results of their monitoring of the Bretton Woods Institutions into similar work being done at the European Parliament level.

Conclusions

- There is a clear interest in the European Parliament in finding out what the key issues are for the new President of the World Bank's strategy for the coming years.
- MEP Monica Frassoni together with PNoWB will organise a meeting with the MEPs who would be attending the PNoWB annual Conference, before the Conference to discuss issues of common interest to the European Parliamentarians.
- This report of the October 4 meeting will be sent to all participants of that meeting and other interested Members and Staff of the European Parliament.

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