Civil Society Engagement E-newsletter February 2007

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1. Spring Meetings of the World Bank and IMF: Initial Information for CSOs - The Spring Meetings of the WB and the IMF will be held on April 14-15. As in previous years, a program of Policy Dialogues for accredited CSOs will be organized by WB's Civil Society Team in cooperation with other teams across the Bank and IMF. These dialogues will be held between Thursday, April 12 and Monday, April 16. Please note that all CSOs who wish to participate in these dialogues as well as in all open official Spring Meetings events over the weekend, will need to obtain accreditation. The accreditation process will, once again, be fully automated and online. Details of the accreditation requirements as well as initial information on the planned Policy Dialogues for CSOs, are available on the World Bank’s Civil Society website: www.worldbank.org/civilsociety. If you have any questions about the Spring Meetings, please send an email to: civilsociety@worldbank.org.

2. Government of Liberia Partners Forum - The Government of Liberia Partners’ Forum was held at World Bank Headquarters on February 13 -14, 2007. The meeting was co-hosted by the World Bank, the United Nations, the United States Government, and the European Commission. The objectives of the Forum included reviewing progress made by the Government on the reform and reconstruction agenda, and discussing financing needs to enable the Government to meet pressing reconstruction and development challenges. Several representatives of Washington-based civil society groups attended the Forum as observers. A small civil society delegation from Monrovia also attended and actively participated throughout the discussions. More

3. G8 Climate Change Dialogue Moves to Washington - On February 14, more than 100 legislators and government officials from the 20 largest energy consuming countries attended the Legislators Forum on Climate Change on Capitol Hill. Keynote speakers at the Forum included former World Bank Chief Economist, Sir Nicholas Stern, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz among others. Stern says the Bank can play a key role in “showing what can be done in terms of adapting and reducing carbon emissions through the right kinds of investments and economic activities, helping build the right kind of incentive structures.” The Bank’s Investment Framework for Clean Energy and Development provides a strategy towards that goal. Remarks by President Wolfowitz at the Forum

4. MIGA’s Proposed New Disclosure and Social and Environmental Sustainability Policies: An Invitation - MIGA shares the World Bank Group’s strong commitment to supporting projects that contribute to environmentally and socially sustainable development. To improve the agency’s transparency and development impact, as well as to ensure consistency across World Bank Group institutions, MIGA is proposing to adopt a new disclosure policy and new social and environmental policies and performance standards, in line with those adopted by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in April 2006. The IFC’s new policies were arrived at after a rigorous consultative process involving governments, industries, and civil society organizations. MIGA is proposing to adopt IFC’s new policies and standards with minor variations to take account of the differences in the business lines of the two institutions. You are invited to comment on MIGA’s proposals via MIGA’s online commentary tool, which includes access to the draft new policies. The facility will be available from February 21, 2007, for a period of at least 60 days. Participants will have until midnight on April 27, 2007, to submit comments. A summary of the main findings will be published subsequently on MIGA’s website.

5. The Global Partnership for Disability and Development - The Global Partnership for Disability and Development (GPDD) is a dynamic new initiative to accelerate inclusion of people with disabilities and their families into development policies and practices. The GPDD was formed to increase collaboration among development agencies and organizations to reduce the extreme poverty and exclusion of a substantial number of children, women and men with disabilities living in poor countries. This population includes those born with disabilities and people who become disabled through wars and other violence, traffic or work injuries, diseases, disasters, and other causes. The GPDD has a Task Force comprised of 12 representatives from developing country governments, disabled people’s organizations, civil society, development institutions, and donor agencies. The Task Force met in New Delhi, India the week of Feb 29 for a planning session. Civil Society organizations are encouraged to go to the GPDD website, www.worldbank.org/disability/gpdd and sign up to become a
partner. We are also recruiting member organizations who have a commitment to the inclusion of disabled people in their work and wish to become more involved with the GPDD. For those who have such an interest please contact us and we will provide you with further information to become a member.

6. Senior Staff Announcements - Thomas Patrick Zgambo has been appointed as the Ombudsman of the World Bank Group. Mr. Zgambo, joins the Bank from Coca-Cola Enterprises where he established and managed the Ombudsman Office with an employee base of 75,000. His appointment will be effective February 26, 2007. Hasan Tuluy has been appointed as the Chief Operating Officer, of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. His appointment is effective end-March 2007. Geoffrey Bergen has been appointed as the Country Manager for Chad. His appointment is effective on March 2007. Frannie A. Léautier, Vice President of the World Bank Institute, has informed management of her decision to leave the Bank to pursue other interests. Rakesh Nangia will be acting Vice President for WBI beginning March 16, 2007. Managing Director Juan Jose Daboub will lead the search for Ms. Leautier’s replacement.

NEWS FROM THE WORLD BANK’S REGIONAL DEPARTMENTS

Africa (AFR)

Bank’s Top Africa Region Official Visits Sudan; Urges Progress in Implementing Peace Accord

Hartwig Schafer, Acting Vice President for the Africa Region, visited Sudan from January 13-16 to take stock of progress in implementing the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and in carrying out recovery and development programs funded by two Multi-Donor Trust Funds. Mr. Schafer said, “We are seeing real progress in carrying out the programs funded by the trust funds, though the challenges of restoring basic services and rebuilding infrastructure are considerable.” He added that the Bank is augmenting its staff in Sudan, particularly in Juba, to strengthen support to the Government institutions responsible for implementation of the programs. To date, the two trust funds—a National Fund and one for South Sudan—have committed about $227 million to 14 projects aimed at restoring basic services, establishing government functions, and rehabilitating infrastructure. More

Multi Sectoral AIDS/HIV Project Additional Financing Grant To Consolidate Gains From Initial Investments

On February 1, The World Bank's Board approved a US$10 million additional financing grant for the Rwanda Multi-Sectoral HIV/AIDS Project which is part of the Multi-Country Action Program against HIV/AIDS in Africa (MAP). The main expected outcomes by project completion are: (i) an additional 250,000 persons tested nationwide or a cumulative number of roughly 700,000; (ii) another 3.0 million condoms distributed to target groups or a total of 15 million; (iii) a cumulative number of 5,000 patients on ARV therapy; (iv) a cumulative number of 27,000 Orphan Vulnerable Children benefiting from payment of school fees; and (v) an additional 580 sub-projects financed for grass root associations, raising the total to over 1200. More

East Asia and the Pacific (EAP)

NGOs Implement Largest Conservation Project In Indonesia

Two NGOs are implementing the largest site-specific conservation effort in Indonesia -- the Aceh Forest and Environment Project (AFEP). The NGOs are the Leuser International Foundation (an Indonesian NGO) and Fauna & Flora International (the world's first environmental NGO). AFEP is being financed by a $17.5 million grant from the Multi Donor Fund for Aceh and Nias and is supervised by the World Bank. The immediate aim of the project is to protect the Leuser and Ulu Masen forest ecosystems from illegal logging during the reconstruction process. Through community consultations, the project aims to strike an appropriate balance between protecting forests and providing economic benefits to local communities. The project directly supports communities in the rehabilitation of forests as part of the reconstruction process. It will further raise public awareness on forest conservation through information campaigns.

World Bank to Provide Over US$4 Billion in Credits to Vietnam Under New Partnership Strategy

On February 6, The World Bank's Board announced that it expects to provide over US$800 million a year in long-term interest-free credits to support Vietnam over the next five years as it builds on its development achievements of the past 15 years. The immediate aim of the project is to protect the Leuser and Ulu Masen forest ecosystems from illegal logging during the reconstruction process. Through community consultations, the project aims to strike an appropriate balance between protecting forests and providing economic benefits to local communities. The project directly supports communities in the rehabilitation of forests as part of the reconstruction process. It will further raise public awareness on forest conservation through information campaigns.
years. This represents more than US$4 billion in support for Vietnam from 2007 to 2011. Launching the World Bank’s Country Partnership Strategy for Vietnam, the new regional vice president for East Asia Pacific, Mr. Jim Adams, said Vietnam stood out as an example of a development model that has lifted millions of people out of poverty while ensuring the benefits of its vibrant market economy are fairly evenly distributed across society. Vietnam’s poverty rate dropped from around 58 percent in 1993 to around 20 percent in 2004. 

Europe and Central Asia (ECA)

World Bank Group and IMF Statement on Kyrgyz Government Decision on Debt Relief - The World Bank and IMF are ready to propose the Kyrgyz Republic’s participation in the debt relief initiatives to their Boards of Directors if the new cabinet re-affirms its commitment to the government’s reform program and its desire to seek debt relief through the HIPC and MDRI initiatives. In any case, the Bank and Fund stand ready to continue supporting the Kyrgyz Republic in its development efforts regardless of the government’s decision on participation in these debt relief initiatives. 

Accessing Carbon Finance to Address Global Warming - In January and February 2007 the Government of Uzbekistan together with the World Bank conducted a series of events on Carbon Financing. The carbon finance workshop had a high attendance spanning a broad cross section of Ministries and potential project developers. The workshop introduced participants to the carbon market, the role of the World Bank in supporting the Kyoto Protocol, and how eligible countries and enterprises could benefit from the carbon funds managed by the World Bank. The workshop also included sessions specific to the Designated National Authority (DNA), recently established in the Ministry of Economy, to assist them in implementing the Kyoto Protocol. After the workshop, a two-day clinic was conducted for registered project developers interested in pursuing carbon finance projects. The World Bank team provided technical assistance to the registered clinic participants on processing and documentation requirements of carbon finance projects.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

Argentina: World Bank Approves US$126.7 Million to Improve Vital Road Network in the Province of Santa Fe - On February 13, The World Bank’s Board approved a US$126.7 million loan to Argentina to improve transport conditions of a strategic road network that links the Province of Santa Fe with regional and international markets. The project will also foster the effective economic integration of the provinces in Argentina’s Center Region. This region, which includes the provinces of Córdoba, Entre Ríos and Santa Fe, currently accounts for 20 percent of the Argentine population, 30 percent of exports, 40 percent of total agricultural and livestock activity, and 25 percent of Argentina’s GDP.

Dominican Republic Launches National Food Fortification Program to Reduce Vitamin and Mineral Deficiency - On February 15, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance and key international partners launched a national food fortification program aimed at dramatically reducing the rates of iron and vitamin A deficiency in Dominican Republic women and children, as well as the number of babies being born with serious physical defects. The Caribbean state received grant funds in the amount of US$1.88 million from the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), for which the World Bank serves as trust agent. The GAIN grant will be part of a wider program, worth approximately US$13.45 million where producers and consumers also contribute to overall costs.

Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

World Bank Supports Emergency Service and Community Development Needs in West Bank - On February 2, Mr. Rafiq Al-Husseini, Chief of Staff of the President of the Palestinian Authority and the World Bank’s Managing Director Juan Jose Daboub signed an agreement for the administration of a US$25 million grant for project support to the West Bank and Gaza. The 3 projects support access to basic social and economic services in poor and marginalized communities in the West Bank and Gaza, including solid waste collection, street lighting, wastewater and electricity services, and health services. They will also provide temporary job opportunities to unemployed Palestinians, and help sustain reliable mechanisms for delivery of emergency social services.

World Bank Managing Director Acknowledges Vision for Reform, Governance and Transparency in Kuwait

As part of his first working trip to the Middle East and North Africa region, Juan Jose Daboub, World Bank Managing Director, joined by Dr. Merza Hasan, World Bank Executive Director for Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Oman, Qatar, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, and Ms. Daniela Gressani World Bank Vice President for
the Middle East and North Africa Region, concluded a 2-day visit to Kuwait. "This is my first visit to Kuwait and I am very impressed with the social and economic developments that Kuwait has been able to achieve over the past decade," noted Dr. Daboub. "We have a growing partnership with Kuwait and look forward to expanding the scope of our cooperation," he added. More

South Asia (SAR)

Pakistan: World Bank Supports Earthquake Affected Areas with Additional US$138 million
On February 13, the World Bank approved a US$138 million credit to the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) to complete housing reconstruction in areas struck by the earthquake of October 8, 2005. The additional financing to the Second Poverty Alleviation Fund Project, is designed to help finance Stage two and three house reconstruction payments to the approximately 90,000 currently eligible households. It will also finance community level infrastructure such as link roads and water and sanitation services for earthquake affected communities. More

On February 13, the World Bank Group, released a new report, Doing Business in South Asia 2007. The report covers eight countries in the World Bank's South Asia region and examines 12 major cities in India, six in Pakistan, and four in Bangladesh. Within India, Hyderabad has the most business-friendly regulations. Mumbai is in 11th place, ahead of Calcutta. Typically, large urban centers such as Mumbai and Calcutta have a high volume of business, so regulatory and administrative bottlenecks create serious congestion. Karachi is at the top in Pakistan, while Dhaka ranks best in Bangladesh. More

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM THE WORLD BANK

Making Finance Work for Africa
Making Finance Work for Africa presents a coherent policy approach that addresses African priorities and can work in African conditions. It challenges the applicability of some conventional views on a range of issues from securities markets and banking regulation to the organization of microfinance institutions. The authors identify promising trends from across sub-Saharan Africa and pinpoint shortcomings. More

World Manga: Passage 5: Girls Education
Teenage orphan Rei survives by his wits and guts on the mean streets of the world. His fortunes seem to look up when he meets a mysterious stranger who offers to help him achieve his dream of becoming the greatest martial artist ever... But Rei's trainer is more interested in developing his mind, spirit, and - ugh! - heart than his thrashing, raging, fighting moves! And Rei's master turns out to be a real animal! More

UPCOMING AND ONGOING GLOBAL EVENTS/DISCUSSIONS

Youth aged 18-25 are encouraged to submit essays on how corruption affects their lives. Deadline to submit entries is March 15, 2007. Entries can be submitted in English, French, and Spanish. Questions on the competition can be directed to Anna Kuznicka at akuznicka@worldbank.org, or Pierre Girardier at pgirardier@worldbank.org.

Education and Youth Employment Ideas Competition Launch
The World Bank in partnership with Ministry of Education and Science and private sector is launching an ideas competition, called Development Marketplace aiming at promoting youth employment and improving the relevance of skills of labor market entrants. Deadline for submissions is April 15, 2007. The application form, eligibility and evaluation criteria can be obtained on the World Bank Bulgaria web page.

The World Bank Launches the 2007 Small Grants Program -Moldova
On February 1, the World Bank Office in Moldova launched the 2007 Small Grants Program focused on “Civic Engagement for Rural Youth”. Civic engagement, defined as citizens interacting with the public sector, civil society organizations and private sector to strengthen mechanisms for inclusion, accountability and participation in order to enhance and influence development outcomes, is a relatively new direction on the social development agenda of the World Bank. Criteria and application materials can be obtained at the World Bank Country Office in Chisinau, or downloaded directly from the Bank’s website at www.worldbank.org/md. Deadline for submission is March 15, 2007.

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The Newsletter is produced by the Civil Society Team of the World Bank (WB) in collaboration with other WB units. This newsletter highlights some of the many policies, programs, and initiatives of the WB which may involve or be of interest to CSOs. We welcome your comments and feedback to make this newsletter as useful as possible. You can subscribe to the Newsletter using a new registration page: http://www.worldbank.org/civilsocietyengagementnewsletter/. Please share your comments on the Newsletter with us: civilsociety@worldbank.org. All past issues of the Newsletter can be found on the WB site on Civil Society Engagement at: http://www.worldbank.org/civilsociety.