



Partenariat statistique au service du développement à l'aube du XXI^e siècle

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Minutes of the Interim Steering Committee meeting

Monday 5 March 2001
14:00 – 18:00, New York.

Attendance

Chairman : Guest Charumbira
PARIS21 Secretariat : Mary Strode
Matthew Sudders

Developing Country Representation

Arab Region : Hasan Abu-Libdeh
Asian Region : Paul Cheung
English Speaking Africa : Ben Kiregeyra
French Speaking Africa: Lamine Diop

Donor Representatives

Japan : Hiroaki Fujisawa
Netherlands : Pieter Dorst
Ronald Luttikhuisen
Norway : Marit Strand
Switzerland: Raul Suarez de Miguel
United Kingdom : Tony Williams

International Organisations

EU Commission : Helena Figuera
IMF : Lucie Laliberté
OECD : Enrico Giovannini
Anne Harrison
Paul McCarthy
World Bank: Misha Belkindas
Graham Eele
UNFPA : Richard Leete

Apologies: Mr Kudabayev – Kyrgyzstan
Philippe Pommier – France
Stephen Browne – UNDP

Summary of discussions

1. The meeting commenced with introductions, Chairman's remarks and a translation of the French representative's comments on the first draft of the Business Plan. (Translation of comments available and will be circulated).
2. The meeting discussed the tension between giving priority to PRSP countries and strengthening regional groupings in the poorest regions of the world in order to develop local and sustainable capacity. The duration and future of the Secretariat was also discussed. The Netherlands noted that PARIS21 was also in the interests of donors, as without timely, accurate, reliable statistics it was impossible to find information which supported the expenditure of resources on development assistance. All those present noted the considerable achievements of the first 15 months of the initiative. The UK emphasised PARIS21's advocacy, facilitation and influencing roles and suggested that we should measure the success of the Secretariat in terms of the operational activities it influences.

There was general agreement around several key purposes of PARIS21;

- Using advocacy to convince funders of statistics to continue and strengthen funding of statistics and information in development
- Co-ordination of donors
- Information sharing

In addition some participants stressed that PARIS21 could/should;

- Undertake pilot projects
- Work through regional organisations for implementation and coordination
- Aim for a decentralised secretariat

Paul Cheung stressed that PARIS21 achieving any of the following would make a significant contribution in Asia;

- Coordinate donors to increase efficiency.
- Contribute to statistical capacity building through developing the professionalism of statistical offices. More clarity is required on how PARIS21 would contribute to capacity building in this respect.
- Advocate to country politicians the need for funding for statistics to reduce donor reliance.

3. Mary Strode presented a summary of the development architecture in which PARIS21 works, the role of the secretariat and some obstacles to the effective achievement of the goals of the consortium. There was general agreement that the current workplan was over ambitious for a two professional person secretariat and that greater participation by all partners in PARIS21 was needed. World Bank is appointing a PARIS21 co-ordinator to help take the work forward. Use of the umbrella of UN country offices to support country action was suggested. In addition clarification of the focus of secretariat activities was required.
4. There was a long debate about the respective priorities of the secretariat and the resources committed to support PARIS21 (mainly through the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building). Netherlands felt that secretariat activities should focus on priority countries (i.e. PRSP) which would be in line with the Netherlands/UK money pledged via the TFSCB. UK noted that PRSP, UNDAF countries were a priority in the early press release (Nov 99) of PARIS21. The same document also pointed to the eventual need to work wider than PRSP countries; i.e. the focus on PRSP countries was an entry point and a priority for PARIS21, not a boundary. It was noted that not all money to support PARIS21 would pass through the TFSCB, nor were all donors exclusively interested in PRSP countries.
5. The duration and future of the Secretariat was discussed. There was general agreement that the Secretariat should aim to pass on its responsibilities to other organisations, particularly at the regional level and should not become a heavy superstructure. A timeframe was viewed as necessary although no agreement was reached on its length. Members noted that a cultural change was needed in all actors in PARIS21 for the initiative to be successful. Professor Kiregeyra mentioned that a sea change

was needed, 50 years of statistical capacity building in Africa had resulted in little, if any, increase in capacity. There were early signs in East Africa of shifts in attitude towards statistics and capacity building, which showed clear benefits of a PARIS21 approach. Members asked for greater clarity on the role and purpose of the consortium, secretariat and interim steering committee. It was proposed that 6 key points need to be addressed by the Business Plan and supporting documentation for PARIS21. Those points are:

- Goals and Mission statement for PARIS21
- Governance of the Consortium and ToRs for the Steering Committee
- Mandate, remit and structure of the Secretariat
- Options for the future of PARIS21 (location, host organisation and management)
- Relationship to partner agencies and respective responsibilities for each level of work
- A costed workplan for the Consortium and the secretariat, together with a plan to obtain financing.

6. In addition members noted the need for a clear, concise summary document (max 3 pages) which could be used to gain time bound support for the initiative from donor organisations.
7. It was proposed to set up a group of “Friends of the Chair” to take forward the work following the meeting and to take an active role in redrafting the documents. Some developing country representatives had no problems with the documentation, other representatives suggested rearrangement of the materials, However the majority requested greater clarity and focus on what was to be achieved and how, giving a number of options for the committee to choose from.

The following members agreed to join the group:

- Paul Cheung
- Hasan Abu-Libdeh
- Raul Suarez de Miguel
- Tony Williams
- Pieter Dorst
- Graham Eele
- Marit Strand
- Ruth Weisebach
- Chair – Guest Charumbira

The chair subsequently requested the Secretariat to assist the group where necessary.

8. The meeting agreed the following;
 - a) the workplan for 2001 as presented in the Draft Business Plan, with the addition of a workshop for Arab States in the third quarter of 2001;
 - b) the workplan to be circulated to partner agencies to obtain assistance with its implementation;
 - c) the timetable for formalising the Governance structure as presented in the draft Business Plan;
 - d) the appointment of a manager to manage the PARIS21 Secretariat;
 - e) the “Friends of the Chair” should complete their work within 6 months in order to report to the October Consortium meeting.