

PARIS21 – Follow-up to Joint UN/OECD/WORLD BANK/IMF Follow up to Senior Expert Meeting on Statistical Capacity Building.

NOTE OF TASK FORCE MEETING PROCEEDINGS – 9 MARCH 2000

1. CONCLUSIONS

- 1.1. The Meeting noted that the first two meetings of *PARIS21* were opportunistic, and had limited the participation from developing countries. A reality check with partner countries was required.
- 1.2. Those at the New York Meeting were to comment on the minutes of the meeting by 15 March 2000. (N.B. These have now been circulated)
- 1.3. The participants were to comment by 24 March on the DFID outline project proposal circulated at the meeting. The revised draft project proposal would be circulated in draft form by 31 March, and would be followed up by a meeting of donors prepared to contribute resources to the project. The donors would include those who intended to participate, but were unable to do so this year due to existing commitments. The meeting would agree the project proposal, commit resources and agree steps towards practical implementation.
- 1.4. Another meeting was needed soon to maintain momentum. This would be in Europe or Africa and should include funded participants to enable greater partner country participation.

2. PROCEEDINGS

- 2.1. Mr. Tony Williams – (Chief Statistician, DFID) chaired the meeting.
- 2.2. Ms. Mary Strode of the *PARIS21* Secretariat presented the *PARIS21* rationale and process. The consortium is to promote well co-ordinated and effective statistical initiatives, in the short-term to take advantage of the PRSP/CDF/UNDAF process. In the longer-term the aim is to establish mechanisms covering all countries wishing to develop well-managed statistical systems and an evidence-based culture of setting and monitoring policy.
- 2.3. Mr. Richard Leete (UNFPA) presented the report back of the *PARIS21* meeting held in New York on 28 February.
- 2.4. Mr. Roger Edmunds (DFID) presented an outline project proposal “Support for National Information Strategies in Support of Poverty Focused Development Strategies”. This outline proposal suggested providing support to 28 countries reaching a HIPC2 decision point this year.
 - This support would assist a process of developing a prioritised information strategy;
 - Help countries to make use of existing information in the PRSP process;
 - Bring data to the centre of the development process by bringing policy makers, statisticians and planners together to discuss the information needs of poverty reduction strategies and the macro-economic framework.
- 2.5. Mr. Eric Swanson (World Bank Development Data Group) facilitated a debate about the role of the task forces and the possibility of e-mail discussion groups and information networks.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Project Proposal

- 3.1.1. There is a tension between seizing the momentum offered by the PRSP initiative in the short-term and developing full country ownership with long-term Statistical Capacity Building. Too much emphasis was being put on PRSPs and indicators (Norway, France &

International Statistical Institute) and not enough on Poverty Reduction Strategies owned by countries or the CDF process (UNDP, Norway).

- 3.1.2. There was concern that the process was moving ahead too quickly. This was unrealistic (Eurostat) and may lead to prescription rather than country ownership (Norway).
- 3.1.3. The outline proposal lacks the link between the long-term and the short-term, the terms of reference for the task forces and the project proposal need to be clearly linked (Switzerland).
- 3.1.4. Country ownership was needed. There was a need for an immediate reality check amongst stakeholders in partner countries. Donors need evidence of country commitment and ownership to the project, donor agencies should not take the lead (Germany, UNDP, South Africa, FAO).
- 3.1.5. The two-stage approach proposed by DFID was endorsed. Those who cannot commit resources this year should be able to enter the project next year (Switzerland).
- 3.1.6. There was a positive response by participants who wished to engage in the *PARIS21* process linked to existing initiatives (Norway, Eurostat, UNFPA, France, Switzerland, Germany, UNDP, FAO, Indonesia, UK).

3.2. **Current Statistical Capacity**

- 3.2.1. Information was required on country specific needs, what is the current status of statistical capacity, what data is available and how could best use be made of it? (South Africa).
- 3.2.2. Indicators of country statistical capacity were needed (including salaries, funding of statistics, data availability etc.), and training should not be forgotten (France).

3.3. **Building on Current Initiatives, Capacity and Structures**

- 3.3.1. Adding to the hierarchy should be avoided. The work should build on current regional bodies e.g. Afristat, West African Commission, SADC etc (France, South Africa).
- 3.3.2. Existing work, current initiatives and those in the pipeline should be used; these can fit into the *PARIS21* work at the country level. The amount of resources required might be less than indicated in the project document if existing projects and resources can be fitted into the framework. Guidelines should be developed for donors to work co-operatively with partners and NGOs (Eurostat, Switzerland, UNFPA).
- 3.3.3. The UN Resident Representative system could be used to co-ordinate country activity, or assess the current status of statistical and information systems (UNDP). Other donors had in country resource persons who might be used.

3.4. **Operation of *PARIS21* and Task Forces**

- 3.4.1. *PARIS21* needs to move forward quickly on establishing a network of *PARIS21* participants, at the regional, international and country level (UNFPA, Switzerland).
- 3.4.2. Task Force 1 - To interact immediately with the process of principle setting and best practice for interaction with PRSP and the UNDAF. The outline advocacy paper drafted by DFID could be submitted to the Task Force for further development.
- 3.4.3. Task Force 2/3 to follow in slower time – make use of best practice and master planning experience e.g. UN, DAC and other guidelines. Norway is to prepare a document on best practice and twinning.

3.5. **Co-operation**

- 3.5.1. Co-ordination – *PARIS21* web site clearinghouse was needed to share best practice (UNFPA).
- 3.5.2. There is a need to interact with other initiatives such as the Committee for African Statistical Development.
- 3.5.3. Guidelines needed on how the partnership is to operate (UNFPA) and to clarify the difference between consortium members and members of task forces (Indonesia).

4. TIMETABLE FOR PROJECT

The following indicative timetable for the proposal distributed at the meeting by DFID was agreed;

- 4.1. Detailed comment to *PARIS21* secretariat from meeting participants, and from bilateral & multilateral institutions by 24 March 2000
- 4.2. Draft Document circulated by the end of March 2000
- 4.3. Meeting of Donors to agree project and form Project Management Committee – April 2000
- 4.4. First Regional Seminars in Africa - Mid-July 2000
- 4.5. Country implementation starting - July 2000.