

## **DRAFT**

### **Working Group III – Development Management and Citizen Engagement**

New York, 18 April 2012 (conference roomDC-2 19<sup>th</sup> floor)

This report is intended to inform the plenary session of CEPA on the substantive issues addressed by the members of CEPA and the United Nations Secretariat (specifically the staff of UNDESA/DPADM/DMB) who participated in the working group session on Development Management and Citizen Engagement, held as part of the programme activities of the 11<sup>th</sup> session of CEPA. The report includes in part 1 a summary of the proceeding and in part 2 it lists the main conclusions and recommendations.

#### **1. Proceedings**

The working group was attended by the following CEPA members: Hyam Nashash, Peter Anyang' Nyong'o (Chairperson), Vitoria Dias Diogo, Joseph Dion Ngute, Meredith Edwards, Pan Suk Kim, Mushtaq Khan, Marta Oyhanarte, Margaret Saner and Jan Ziekow.

In addition, participants included representatives of the Ministry of Public Service of Cameroon, the Department of Public Service and Administration of South Africa, the American Institute for Public Administration (ICAP), and the World Islamic Sciences and Education University (WISE).

Also the following staff of DPADM/DMB attended the meeting: Elia Armstrong, (Acting Chief, DPADM/DMB), Peride Blind, Xixin Cai, Angela Capati-Caruso, Vyatcheslav Cherkasov, Ulrich Graute, Anni Haataja, Arpine Korekyan, Patricia Penuen, Valentina Resta and DPADM/ DMB Interns: Erica Calderon and Fabio Shida Fukuda.

##### *1.1 DPADM/DMB Presentation and ensuing discussion*

The collaboration between CEPA and DPADM/DMB during 2011 was briefly introduced in the morning plenary session. The important contributions made by CEPA members and observers were acknowledged with gratitude by the Secretariat.

The working group began with a presentation from the Secretariat team in which participants were welcomed and an overview and update for 2011 was provided on the core functions and activities of the DPADM/DMB Branch:

- Advocacy and normative support
- Research and analysis,
- Knowledge sharing and training
- Advisory services in the field

In relation to the first function, advocacy and normative support, the Secretariat described the work done as a follow up to the recommendation made by CEPA at its 10th session to “assist countries to enhance participatory governance institutions with a view to making the public administration more open, transparent, accountable, and responsive to citizens in all countries, with particular emphasis on the transition in the Arab region”. The latter element was achieved through the outputs of a seminar on challenges and opportunities of participatory governance in North African Countries organized in partnership with ECA, ESCWA and the Kingdom of Morocco. The presentation recommended CEPA members' involvement in the Seminar follow-up action. Members agreed that the needs in the Arab region are daunting, particularly in the transition phase after the Arab spring, and therefore sustained actions is needed; that resources can be raised through cost-sharing arrangement and partnership in the region; and that a sharpened role of the UN Country Teams

would be advisable in terms of advocacy with concerned Member States and to leverage additional financial resources.

In terms of the impact of DPADM/DMB action, it was mentioned that Jordan developed an action framework with the anti-corruption commission based on the seminar's guidelines and recommendations. Also the Algerian Economic and Social Council and other participants including the Algerian centre for national studies and analysis for population and development requested DPADM to submit the Rabat seminar report "to all stakeholders and the States with a timetable for implementation and targets for each country followed by a system of monitoring and evaluation".

The presentation also referred to the role of DPADM/DMB as part of the Divisional action in support of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) through the UN Trust fund project including a Secretariat established under DESA responsibility. The importance of knowledge sharing was highlighted but also the limitations of using ICT tools for engaging people in decision-making and assessing government action in developing countries with low literacy levels. CEPA members were briefed on the successful elements of this initiative which focuses on how developing countries can make use of the Internet for attaining development goals. Also the partnership with the private sector for the provision of training on site was seen as a great advantage in addition to knowledge sharing. Advice was provided on the need to integrate and avoid overlapping of activities among the Branches (e.g. activities carried out on e-government).

In relation to the second function, The Secretariat went on to describe findings of the UNPACS research and analysis on citizen engagement for development management. In particular, information was provided on the analysis of

modalities adopted by 193 UN Member States for including citizen engagement in their constitutions. Participants were also informed of further research steps planned for the rest of the year i.e. compilation of information on relevant legal norms and participatory governance institutions, mechanisms and modalities as well as the e-participation index. CEPA's support on UNPACS was sought in terms of strengthening the conceptual framework adopted by the Secretariat and a search for correlations between citizen engagement and countries' economic and social development.

Feedback on this area agreed with the research conducted so far. However CEPA members also emphasized the need to look at issues more complex compared to those found in legal documents, including the importance of: adequate structures, leadership, trust, willingness to share power and to enable as well as allow participation. Reference was made to institutional economics which argues that the way individuals organize themselves can determine the outcome of their action. Without organizational pressure, things will not happen just because they are in a constitution. Different organizational structures as the basis of engagement will lead to different results so the country context is critical. An additional layer of complexity is added in developing countries where most of the structures are informal. And when even political parties operate informally, a different set of formal institutions might have more impact than those emerging based on constitutional provisions. Some members advised that not only the constitution but also the process leading to its formalization is important in terms of citizen engagement.

The conceptual difference between government- led citizen engagement and citizen-led participation (referred to as civic engagement) was emphasized by some members. In this regard, the Arab spring was quoted as an example of action driven by people without affiliation to parties or formal structures.

Although generalizations cannot be made and mapping informal organizations cannot be done, providing examples from success stories - even within less formalized structures - can be highly effective.

Overall, there was general agreement that DPADM/DMB has started well on its research and analysis work but there is also need to improve citizen engagement frameworks. There is a need to define indicators on informal institutions, economic correlations, etc. and then provide information on the instruments that are effective in a specific context. Research is needed to understand better informal structures. Members also referred with appreciation to the existing guidelines and toolkits developed by DPADM/DMB. The Secretariat expressed awareness of the difficulties, due to limitations in its resources to map all existing complex aspects highlighted by members and proposed that these could be captured on an index (based on existing work) as opposed to an inventory of what is “out there”. Members strongly recommended leveraging on the work already done in this regard by OECD and EU countries.

In relation to the third DPADM/DMB function - knowledge sharing and training – the presentation informed the working group of the planned development of toolkits on open government and citizen engagement. It was suggested that the guidelines on citizen engagement could be combined with earlier toolkits developed by the Division. Work done by the OECD and UNDP could also be incorporated to produce a toolkit. CEPA members and observers were invited to participate as peer reviewers of this analytical work. The discussion emphasized the need to build on other toolkits already available and to develop a distribution and communication strategy to put them to good use. It was suggested that value of toolkits could be measured by surveying their users.

There was also a view that their impact needed measuring but there is difficulty in quantifying essentially qualitative aspects.

An important discussion ensued on whether and in what way there could be a measurement of the link between citizen engagement and development outcomes e.g. national development strategies (available to the UN). There is a need to ascertain the nature of this link between development management and citizen engagement and for knowing how and where this generates a positive impact because of endogenous settings (as opposed to external imposition). It was suggested that DPADM/DMB could analyze why participatory mechanisms do and do not work. It was recommended that the toolkit should help convey the message to those who need it most, what works in terms of how to engage or what engagement mechanisms to use, with which groups in society and when in the policy process. Peer review of processes is a good idea as by reviewing one learns. It was also proposed that DPADM/DMB could serve as a "clearing house" of engagement initiatives building up evidence based lessons on what works in what circumstances.

The final functional area, technical advisory services, is provided upon demand by Member States. Some examples of the said services included:

- Strengthening Economic and Social Councils
- Rebuilding public administration after conflict in Chad
- Supporting decentralization of governance in Morocco and implementation of poverty reduction strategy in Mali

The discussion on this topic emphasized the need to use resource persons from developing countries, including managers and leaders to share practical context-based experience. Once more DPADM was invited to leverage on

partnerships, in particular it could liaise with the Conference of Ministers of Public Administration, UNDP – particularly on its work on rebuilding government after conflict - and academia. The Secretariat was also advised to work on institutional and human resource capacity building for ESCs that tend to have weakness in their membership with excessive government influence, particularly in developing countries. Direct experience was shared by CEPA on the importance of looking at the composition of ESCs in terms of adding value to government policies and of many countries where an ESC is a way of legitimizing government policy through an ad hoc selection of members.

The presentation ended by looking at modalities to further engage CEPA members and observers including providing advice on the work of the Branch, contributing information, data sources, examples of good practice, advocacy, etc.

## **2. Conclusions and recommendations**

After clarifying the expectations on CEPA members' involvement in supporting UN' work to foster citizen engagement, it was agreed that CEPA's role is to provide substantive guidance and oversight to DPADM's work as well as advice on identifying financial and social resources to be tapped by the UN. It was also agreed that in future a valuable role of CEPA members was for them to brainstorm with the DPADM on critical issues over the horizon.

CEPA Members in the working group agreed on the following conclusions: There is a need to:

- Continuously look at of the impact of the Secretariat's activities; the expected impact would guide CEPA assistance to make proposals on prioritizing action of DPADM/DMB.
- Highlight links between development planning and development management and citizen engagement as evidence to justify action and ensure requests for funding.
- Systematically evaluate citizen engagement experiences that “work”.
- Related, tap national expertise on successfully engaging citizens.
- Analyze case studies of successful attempts at promoting citizen engagement (and if possible also those that have failed).
- Consider the importance that organizational structures matter in citizen engagement.
- Develop communication strategies to increase The Secretariat's outreach and impact.
- Consider the possibility of an overemphasis on the “electronic” element“: “E” might suit some people but not all. Who is involved in citizen engagement shapes the modalities and means through which this is done.
- Provide CEPA members with more specific information on the activities carried out by the Secretariat and involve them in working draft documents to enable them provide guidance and oversight and further collaborate in its work.

Based on the above conclusions CEPA members recommended that DPADM/DMB:

- **Investigate mechanisms for engagement that allow for the achievement of development outcomes and where possible measuring outcomes as a general direction of DPADM/DMB's work**



- **Analyze correlations between: the formulation and implementation of national development strategies and organizations for the engagement and democratic participation of citizens.**
- **Serve as a “clearing house” on ‘what works’ in terms of citizen engagement including making use of UNPSA cases, evaluate participation schemes in public administration and disseminating this information through UNPACS.**
- **Analyze engagement based on a disaggregation of citizen by gender, and other social groups.**
- **Ensure that e-government engagement mechanisms are seen as one of many effective ways to engage depending on who is being engaged and when in the policy process.**
- **Develop toolkits after testing them with potential users and then conducting outreach for their wide dissemination to maximize their use (African Peer Review Mechanism engagement instruments can be looked at as a reference tool)**
- **Carrying out outreach activities targeting other organizations/partnerships**
- **Continue to engage CEPA members particularly in finalizing outputs**
- **Follow up and support the initiative established as a result of the evolving situation in the MENA region.**

It was also agreed that Meredith Edwards, Mushtaq Khan, Pan Suk Kim (also on e-participation index), Hyam Nashash, Marta Oyhanarte, Margaret Saner and Jan Ziekow would assist DPADM/DMB to look at the UNPACS methodology document and the updated guidelines for citizen engagement.

Peter Anyang' Nyong'o and Margaret Saner agreed to share their experience on ESCs by participating in the finalization of the guidelines on participatory

governance institutions and other peer review action on technical cooperation action in this domain.

Members finally agreed on the following key message: **People centered governance matters for the post-2015 agenda.**