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DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE  
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**Working Party on Aid Effectiveness**

**DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE JOINT VENTURE ON PUBLIC  
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

**Held on 4 - 5 July 2007 at the OECD in Paris.**

*This draft summary is submitted FOR APPROVAL at the next meeting of the Joint Venture on Public Financial Management.*

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**DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE  
JOINT VENTURE ON PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

**Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda**

1. The Co-Chairs, Anthony Hegarty (World Bank) and Riccardo Maggi (European Commission) welcomed participants to the eighth meeting of the Joint Venture on Public Financial Management.

**Item 2: Adoption of the summary record**

2. The summary of the last meeting of the Joint Venture [DCD/DAC/EFF/M(2006)10/PROV] was adopted pending minor amendments to the list of participants.

**Item 3: PEFA performance measurement framework**

3. The PEFA<sup>1</sup> Secretariat (Franck Bessette) updated members on ongoing work including:

- The Monitoring Report (2007) outlining the roll-out of PEFA assessments, their regional distribution and qualitative assessment.
- Implementation of the Training Strategy highlighting the training undertaken and the strategy going forward.
- The PEFA Work Programme including the Monitoring Report and the Training plan, and the focus on new emerging topics (such as links with Corruption and implementation at Sub-National Level).

4. In the ensuing discussion, members expressed strong support and commitment to the PEFA framework and appreciation for the PEFA Secretariat's work. While welcoming apparent improvements, members also stressed the fundamental importance of further advances in the availability of the assessments, their quality and their comparability across time and countries. Members also expressed support for guidance on links between the PEFA framework and other emerging topics such as service delivery, corruption, and sub-national PFM systems. Further training more targeted to government officials was also welcome. Finally, members expressed concern that the assessments may not be replacing other diagnostic instruments.

5. The PEFA Secretariat noted how current processes are attempting to respond to these concerns and underlined the importance that continued collaboration with the JV would have in this respect. Taking part in reference groups at country level was indicated as the best way to ensure continued collaboration and involvement on specific PEFA exercises. Information on the use of PEFA studies by individual donors would also be welcome (with the World Bank signalling a current capacity development initiative focusing on examples of mature PFM reforms that have delivered sustainable improvements in performance).

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<sup>1</sup>Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Programme (PEFA)

#### Item 4: Fiduciary risk and the use of country systems

6. The United Kingdom (Caroline Rickatson) informed members on the conclusions and recommendations of the Informal Consultative Meeting on Donor Approaches to Fiduciary Risk which was held in London on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2007. Different approaches to defining, assessing, monitoring and mitigating fiduciary risk when using country systems were discussed and a broad consensus was reached regarding the importance of strengthening country systems to manage risks.

7. The Chair (EC) asked members to reflect on how to expand the remit of the discussion beyond General Budget Support so that a wider array of donors and practices could be included. Highlighting the importance of this topic (including as a deliverable for the Ghana HLF), the ensuing discussions focused in particular on:

- *Extent of Use of Country Systems* – members stressed the need to acknowledge the use of arrangements which only make a partial use of PFM systems. For each donor and each partner country, such arrangements have different implications in terms of the expected impact of an increased use in country systems. As partner country participants stressed this could well be positive but also negative. Clarity on the arrangements used, their motivation and their impact for the partner country would therefore be most welcome. In this context, the World Bank brought to members' attention the paper on the use of country systems which was recently discussed at the Board level with a particular focus on deepening the use of country PFM systems.
- *Role of PEFA* – Members underlined the dual role of the PEFA assessment as a monitoring tool and as an instrument for strengthening sequencing and prioritisation with respect to: the reform programme; conditionality and capacity development programmes. From this point of view, the importance of ensuring a locally agreed comprehensive process for the annual monitoring of PFM reforms (in-between PEFA assessments) was noted. Finally, the importance of the relationship between PEFA and the emerging topics mentioned above was reinforced.

8. In summing up, the Chair noted the importance of drawing on a number of examples to identify Good Practices and cross-cutting themes. It was also suggested that a session of the next JV-PFM meeting could focus on the possible use of the PEFA framework as a tool to identify vulnerabilities for corruption.<sup>2</sup>

#### Item 5: PFM reforms – Country case studies

9. Three case studies documenting the implementation of PFM reforms in partner countries were presented.

10. First, Riccardo Maggi (EC) informed members who could not attend about the main outcomes of the JV-ESAAG<sup>3</sup> event that took place in Mozambique following the 2007 ESAAG Annual Conference (26-28 February 2007). The meeting had highlighted a clear buy-in from partner countries regarding the importance of strengthening PFM systems. The comparison of reform experiences from the point of view of partners and donors highlighted the following key factors:

- *Importance of people in any successful reform.* Strong political commitment behind the process was crucial as well as sectoral champions during implementation.

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<sup>2</sup>Members were directed to Bill Dorotinsky's Chapter in: *The Many Faces of Corruption: Tracking Vulnerabilities at the Sectoral Level* (Campos and Prahdan, 2007)

<sup>3</sup> Eastern and Southern African Association of Accountants General (ESAAG)

- *Complexity of reforms.* PFM Reforms are often part of a broader set of reforms undertaken with limited knowledge about impact and feedback from both the formal and the informal components of the system under reform. As a result of this complexity, managing political leaders' expectations is crucial to the success of the reforms. In this regard, a clear strategic direction coupled with a piecemeal incremental approach is preferable to a detailed action plan.
- *Technical solutions.* Technology cannot solve by itself PFM problems but can contribute to advances. At times, however, technological innovation can work against a successful reform programme. The challenges related to Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) implementation must be recognised (notably recurrent and maintenance costs associated with IFMS). Focus should be on affordable and adapted technology rather than off-the-shelf costly software packages.
- *South-South dialogue.* Strong support emerged for regional knowledge networks to strengthen dialogue relating to PFM reforms.

11. For donors attending the meeting, it was clear that the focus must now shift to implementation and disseminating these lessons at the country level in particular focusing on three key aspects:

1. *Managing expectations and including realistic time frames.* Exercising restraint vis à vis diagnostics, privatisation, and conditionality in PFM is important. Particular focus should be on internal incentives including dissonance between the time needed for PFM reform and the time allocated by donors to show results as a prerequisite to engagement with the country concerned.
2. *Technical Assistance.* A clear message related to restraint in pushing for best practice and promoting the commercial interests of donor-based firms.
3. *Support South-South dialogue.* CABRI received strong support and calls were made to increase the use of regional consultants and more adaptable technologies.

12. Responding to the need for lessons learned in this area, the Chair (World Bank) invited members to participate in the World Bank organised Fiduciary Forum in Washington D.C. in March 2008 which focuses on both procurement and financial management.

13. The second presentation was given by the IMF (Pierre Ewencyk) on the IMF's experience in rebuilding fiscal institutions in post-conflict countries. The presentation drew from the IMF's Occasional Paper (No.247, December 2005) on the experiences of the Fiscal Affairs Department in 14 post-conflict countries. The presentation focused on a number of key areas:

- *Consistency across post-conflict countries.* Key processes (legal and regulatory framework; strengthening fiscal authority and administration and expenditure management) and objectives were needed consistently across countries.
- *Lessons learned* for both policy design (sequencing was especially important) and implementation (flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and conditionality as an important signalling mechanism of the pace of reforms).
- *Decentralisation* is not perceived as a priority for the IMF in post-conflict situations where strengthening central systems is crucial and where decentralisation is both politically and technically challenging.

14. In the ensuing discussion, members shared their experiences in other Fragile States. One member noted the importance of sequencing and in particular with the establishment of a sound treasury system prior to broader PEM reforms. Members also shared a number of questions and concerns:

- *Country Systems* – what are the experiences and best arrangements to safeguard the use of funds in these instances?
- *Political Decision-Making process* – PFM reforms do not take place in a political vacuum and feasible options are often constrained by the desire to support the political dynamics of post-conflict transitions. How can these interactions be analysed and taken into due account?
- *Decentralisation* – recognising the need to strengthen the central government level in a state with weak legitimacy, at what stage does decentralisation become a priority so that aid is not only captured at the central level?
- *Urgency of support* – members stressed the importance of the rapidity of donor support in post-conflict situations where TA and project-based support are not always available immediately. In this instance they noted the need to use country systems to channel urgently needed funds.

15. Third, Burkina Faso (François Zoundi) briefed members on their PFM Action Plan. The presentation focused on the following:

- The implementation of the Action Plan for PFM resulting from both internal and external diagnostics combining local and international expertise and adopted in February 2007.
- The main objectives include the Millennium Development Goals, the implementation of the Paris Declaration, economic integration with regional bodies, and decentralisation.
- The main principles include buy-in from all actors involved, strong prioritisation, partnership, and a single steering committee driving the process.
- Expected results include improved domestic financing, revenue mobilisation, capacity. These priorities are reflected within 10 programmes, and 25 sub-programmes (2007-2015) with a budget of US\$ 123 million financed through general budget support but also through project and basket fund arrangements.
- Indicators are designed and based on the PEFA framework.

16. In the ensuing discussion, members expressed appreciation for Burkina Faso's Action Plan whilst outlining a number of concerns regarding:

- The multiplicity of funding mechanisms and impact on transaction costs.
- Complexity of the Action Plan including a significant number of priorities and sources of funding.
- Unclear linkages between the PEFA indicators and Action Plan.
- The focus on international best practice and the use of international consultants in drawing up the Action Plan.

17. Burkina Faso noted that whilst harmonised funding would be preferable, it was important to engage non-GBS donors in the process. In this sense, alignment was more of a priority than harmonisation. It was also noted that a reflection group is currently engaged in better articulating the Action Plan indicators with the PEFA indicators.

#### **Item 6: 2006 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration**

18. The OECD Secretariat presented an overview of the key findings of the 2006 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration and presented the challenges ahead prior to the Accra High Level Forum in September 2008. The survey results focused on the predictability of aid; accountability of aid; and its cost-effectiveness. The challenges ahead included the need for both in-year and a move towards multi-annual predictability; the importance of domestic accountability institutions; the credibility of the budget; and mutual accountability between donors and partner countries. Corporate level incentives were also highlighted focusing on the need for leadership, acknowledging the costs and benefits of collaborative work, the creation of incentives for collective gains and the need to review the procedural and legal framework.

19. Members expressed strong support for the 2006 Survey and made a number of comments relating to the:

- Low correlation between the quality of country systems and use by donors of country systems.
- The need to unpack the declared use of country systems in the case of non- General Budget Support instruments.
- Possible risks posed by a certain lack of uniformity of methodology applied across countries and participation of all donors in the survey.
- Challenges of alignment for those donors focused on funding anti-corruption endeavours, and strengthening non-executive institutions such as the parliament, as well as civil society organisations.
- Importance of focusing on donor corporate incentives.

20. Whilst acknowledging some of these challenges, the OECD Secretariat noted that Middle Income Countries reflected only a small number of countries in the Survey; and that the Survey was not designed as an instrument to facilitate cross-country comparison. The Secretariat informed members that the window of opportunity for undertaking the second round of the Survey would be between January and March 2008.

#### **Item 7: Putting Aid on Budget**

21. The UK (Peter Dearden) informed members of the Aid on Budget project on behalf of the Strategic Partnership with Africa and CABRI. The presentation focused on:

- The importance of putting aid on budget as shown in the findings of the 2006 Paris Declaration Survey (improving national ownership, increased transparency and accountability; and improved fiscal-monetary management).
- The process and components of the SPA-CABRI Putting Aid on Budget Project including potential challenges in conducting the study, and case selection.

- The role of the JV on PFM including: comments as feedback to consultants, comments on the inclusion of case study material in the literature review; the facilitation of inputs from donors at both HQ and country level; and an engagement with the draft Synthesis Note and Good Practice Note.

22. Members welcomed the CABRI-SPA project and expressed particular support for leadership by partner country institutions. In the discussion, members asked how they could best contribute and assist with the study and noted that since progress on aid on budget was also measured by the Paris Declaration and by PEFA, reconciling and comparing results could be useful.

23. The Chair invited members to provide comments on the Inception Report [Room Document 2] to Peter Dearden (p-dearden@dfid.gov.uk) by **July 13<sup>th</sup> 2007**. It was agreed that the JV on PFM would be further engaged in this study at the next JV meeting when a draft Synthesis Report and Good Practice Note will be available for discussion. It was also agreed that Stephen Lister (team leader) would be invited to the next JV on PFM to discuss the results of the study.

#### **Item 8: Linkages with other processes**

24. In this item Steven Freer was invited to brief members on the work of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The purpose, products and services, partnerships (both national and international) were outlined in detail.

25. Members requested further information on the following:

- *Benchmarking system and process* – how it was undertaken and how best practices were defined.
- *CIPFA's activities* in not only Anglophone but also Francophone countries.
- *CIPFA members* –whether members moved to the private sector or remained in the public sector following receipt of CIPFA qualification.

26. In response, CIPFA noted that its benchmarking process was mostly undertaken in the UK collecting detailed information about costs of activities within PFM; CIPFA covers mainly Anglophone countries; and CIPFA members do not tend to move to the private sector.

27. Under this item, the Chair (World Bank) updated members on the Exposure Draft 32 currently being discussed in Montreal. The World Bank (Sanjay Vani) noted that the revised ED32 had been issued for comments.

28. In the ensuing discussion, members supported ED32 as a standard to enhance accountability in external assistance. However, some members noted that the report on ED32 was currently only available in English which posed a significant challenge to Francophone countries.

29. The Netherlands (Henk van der Vegt) updated members on work currently being undertaken on the Functioning of Fiscal Decentralisation for Service Delivery. The study is currently being tested in Ghana and will be rolled out to between 5 and 10 partner countries.

30. In the discussion that followed, members expressed support for the study and asked how they could contribute. The Chair (EC) proposed that the Terms of Reference for this study be circulated and deadline for comments set so that JV members wishing to comment could do so.

**Item 9: Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness**

31. The OECD Secretariat updated members on the preparation of the Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in September 2008. The Secretariat focused on the proposed agenda, the structure and organisation of the event over three days (2-4 September). More specifically, the contributions to the JVPFM could be twofold:

- a report synthesising key lessons and messages; and
- participation in the organisation of one or more roundtables at the HLF

32. The proposed structure of the report could be as follows:

1. **Using** country PFM systems.
2. **Assessing** country PFM systems.
3. **Managing risk** when using country PFM systems.
4. **Strengthening** country PFM systems.
5. Putting **aid on budget**.

33. The suggested timeline for finalising the report is as follows:

- Concept Note circulated by the 1st of October 2006.
- JV comments by mid-October.
- Discussed at WP-EFF in November 2007.
- Interim Report delivered by March 2008.
- Final Report delivered by June 2008.

34. Members expressed support for the report and its general remit. In the discussion that followed a number of comments and suggestions were raised including:

- The need to build on existing workstreams such those relating to managing risk in the use of PFM systems and Capacity Development;
- Ensuring that the report will feed into the 'Accra Agenda for Action' through the identification of specific targets for action and practical 'Do's and Don'ts'.
- Seeking partner country consultation and engagement by drawing upon ESAAG, CABRI and other regional networks. In this context the possible organisation of a regional seminar seemed to be broadly supported.

35. Members suggested that a future JV on PFM meeting should be held in a Partner Country to ensure a wider consultation. Following these discussions, it was agreed that a Concept Note would be

prepared outlining the report and its main objectives by October 2007. Members would be requested to comment electronically by mid-October.

**Item 10: Other business and next steps**

36. It was suggested that the next meeting of the Joint Venture would be held in December 2007.

**List of Participants for the Eighth Meeting of the Joint Venture on Public Financial Management (JV-PFM)**

**4 – 5 July 2007, OECD Paris**

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