

FOCUS SESSION 28:

Using Country Systems and Measuring their Strength: What's Next?

16 April 2014, 11.45 – 13.00h, Diezmo 2

Objective:

The session explored two related topics: how to improve efforts to strengthen country systems through better measures, and how to expand the use of country systems, which has been set as the default approach by the Busan Partnership agreement. Two new initiatives were announced in this framework: an “i-challenge” to develop better indicators and “country dialogues for strengthening local systems”.

Participants:

- Mr. Veda Ballomoody, Member of Parliament, Mauritius
- Mr. Neil Cole, Executive Secretary, CABRI
- Mr. Nick Dyer, Director General for Policy and Global Programmes, DFID, UK
- Mr. Claver Gatete, Minister of Finance, Rwanda
- Mr. Moeketsi Majoro, Minister of Development Planning of Lesotho
- Ms. Ursula Müller, Director-General, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany
- Mr. Vivek Srivastava, Lead Public Sector Specialist, World Bank
- Mr. Alex Thier, Assistant to the Administrator for Policy, Planning, and Learning, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), US
- Mr. Maatia Toafa, Minister for Finance and Economic Development of Tuvalu
- Mr. Steve Pierce, Special Coordinator for Development Effectiveness, USAID (moderator)

Key issues discussed:

- **The need to broaden the understanding of country systems beyond PFM and procurement:** The discussion stressed the need to move from fiduciary to non-fiduciary systems in order to deliver results. The panel promoted a holistic approach to the use of country systems, including monitoring and evaluation systems involving Parliaments and Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs).
- **The importance of using country systems to strengthen transparency and accountability:** Putting aid on budget was identified as crucial in order to

strengthen transparency and accountability in partner countries. It gives the opportunity to Parliaments as well as SAIs to closely monitor disbursements as well as the results achieved. Participants called on donors to involve broader stakeholders in their engagement with countries and to avoid parallel systems.

- **The need to build partnerships and trust:** Participants called on development partners to take more risks, particularly in Fragile States, and on partner countries to increase their leadership, in particular the Ministries of Finance, to encourage donors to use the country systems. In this context, the importance of building partnerships and trust was underlined.
- **The need to invest more in systems in order to sustain development results:** The panel stressed the importance of strengthening systems and institutions, including statistical systems, in order to increase the use of country systems as well as sustain development results. In this context, participants pointed out to the importance to better link the strength and the use of country systems.
- **The need for additional indicators to measure the strength of country systems:** The participants agreed that there is a lack of data to measure the strength of country systems beyond PFM and procurement systems. Additional indicators are needed in particular to cover the strength of public administration and civil service systems, the participation of the citizens, and the role of media.

Main conclusions and next steps:

Building on the key issues and challenges discussed, the participants presented two new initiatives (included in the annex of the Mexico High-Level Meeting Communique) in order to make progress on using and measuring the strength and of country systems:

- The '[iChallenge](#)' is an effort to crowd source ideas from the public for better indicators to measure the strength of country systems. The iChallenge is part of the '[Indicators of the Strength of Public Management Systems](#)' (ISPMS) project that is coordinated by the World Bank in cooperation with the [Effective Institutions Platform](#).
- [CABRI](#) (the Collaborative African Budget Reform Initiative) was also given the opportunity to present the joint CABRI-US initiative developed in the framework of the [Effective Institutions Platform](#) to support country dialogues on using country systems to reflect country priorities and contexts and move forward on global commitments related to the use of country systems.