



PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK ON THE WORLD BANK

OECD High-level Parliamentary Seminar - "The OECD at 50: Better Policies for Better Lives"

24 February 2011

The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PN oWB) on 24 February 2011 attended a High-level Parliamentary Seminar hosted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The seminar discusses several key themes which are linked to PN oWB's work strategy for 2011.

Green Growth

Simon Upton, Director, Environment Directorate, OECD, presented the OECD's Growth Strategy on achieving a greener economy. This strategy will provide policy recommendations and practical tools to help OECD and partner countries identify how to move efficiently toward greener growth. It will seek to address key environmental challenges related to climate change, loss of biodiversity and the ecosystem, sustainable use of resources and sustainable materials management. Mr. Upton insisted that in order for the strategy to be effective, it has to be integrated by the Ministries of Finance of countries. The Strategy will consider a wide range of policy areas, including fiscal, innovation, trade, consumer, competition, with a key focus on key sectors such as energy, transport, agriculture and fisheries. The strategy will look at international cooperation and financing mechanisms, as well as taxing and regulatory systems. The OECD will continue to refine green growth indicators and improve the way in which we measure societies' progress. Presently, it uses 30 indicators, 20 of which area measurable. The Green Growth Strategy will be presented at the Ministerial Meeting of the OECD in April/May 2011. The OECD Council Meeting at Ministerial Level is the annual landmark event of the organisation, where designated government ministers review the OECD's activities and decide on its work strategy for the following year. Once approved at the Ministerial Meeting, the Green Growth Strategy will be mainstreamed across the OECD's work programme, including country reviews, to help monitor progress and provide further guidance on implementation.

During the discussion participants suggested that international agreements might be too difficult to implement as they include several areas, and that sectoral agreements might be more efficient. Furthermore, participant voiced their concern that national instruments might not be sufficient to deal with a transnational issue. They also pointed to the high level of investment needed to implement the Green Growth Strategy.

The OECD Anti-Bribery Convention

Christine Uriarte, General Counsel, Anti-Corruption Division, Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, OECD, spoke about the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention. Since the convention came into force, there has been a change in foreign business in adhering countries. Previously companies from those countries could claim tax deductions for bribe payments. This has all changed but there is still uneven implementation of the convention, which leads to unbalanced conditions among the 38 Parties to the Convention. The Conventions seeks to achieve the incorporation of 'corporate liability' into the criminal code of all its signatories. Parliaments have an important monitoring role after implementation.

Participants stressed the need for cooperation and Networks between different groups to combat bribery, including private companies. They also called on all G20 countries to sign on to the Convention and considered that criminal sentences for bribery should be comparable to other economic offenses.

The Seoul Development Consensus and the OECD

Jon Lomoy, Director, Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD, spoke about the Seoul Consensus and progress on MDG. In November 2010, G20 Leaders agreed that tackling development gaps was part and parcel of their cooperation to promote strong, sustainable and balanced growth. They endorsed the Seoul Development Consensus for Shared Growth, identifying nine key pillars (infrastructure, private investment and job creation, human resource development, trade, financial inclusion, growth with resilience, food security, domestic resource mobilisation and knowledge sharing) where action and reform are most critical to promote growth in developing countries and reduce development gaps. As of now, progress on MDGs remains uneven especially in the domains of maternal and infant health in Sub-Saharan Africa. The role of the OECD in the Seoul Consensus is to provide analytical support and contribute with its implementation.

At the upcoming 4th High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea, Ministers and specialists from developed and developing countries will take stock of what has been achieved so far to improve aid effectiveness and set out the necessary steps to ensure that better aid translates into better lives in partner countries. Parliamentarians have a vital role to play in increasing aid effectiveness by holding their own governments to account for commitments made in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.

The discussion for this period was led by Jeppe Kofod, PNoWB Board Member, who stressed the role of Parliamentarians in the Multi-Action Plan, which came about from the Seoul Consensus. Many of the principles of the Paris Declaration such as good governance and ownership have to include various groups as part of the process, including Parliamentarians as they have important oversight and accountability functions. Parliamentarians in countries which are new development partners also have to be involved in the discussions. Effective development requires policy coherence between various issues ranging from trade to environment. These policies are often decided by Parliaments. In the run-up to Busan, Parliamentarians have to be involved from the early stages of the process. In addition, considering the importance of Parliamentarians in international development, capacity building in countries where Parliaments are weak has to remain a top priority.

This year, PNoWB is working with the OECD and partner organizations to ensure that Parliamentarians are an integral part of the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. PNoWB, together with other parliamentary organisations, will provide input from its members for the outcome document of the High Level Forum. Furthermore, PNoWB has taken the lead to organise a parliamentary event in Busan, to ensure that Parliamentarians are present, and can voice their concerns and ideas at this important event.

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