



Consultative
Implementation and Monitoring
Council



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SUMMARY OF THE HIGHLANDS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

*Held at the Mt. Wilhelm Tourist Hotel, Kundiawa, Simbu Province
10-11 May 2012*

“How to Improve Accessibility to Quality Health and Education Services”

ORGANIZED BY:

CONSULTATIVE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING COUNCIL

SPONSORED BY:

**DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL PLANNING & The
AUSTRALIAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Introduction

The Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC) is a consultative body established by the government to ensure that dialogue, through on-going consultation processes, is sustained between government, private sector, civil society and the community at large and recommendations made to government are implemented. As part of the on-going dialogue process, the CIMC Secretariat organizes four (4) Regional and one National Development Forums annually to facilitate wider consultations.

The 2012 CIMC Highlands Regional Development Forum was held from 10th – 11th May 2012, at the Mt. Wilhelm Tourist Hotel in Kundiawa, Simbu Province. The forum comprised of speakers from a wide range of stakeholders, including private sector representatives, government officials, development partners, researchers and civil society organizations giving their perspectives on how they think accessibility to quality health and education services can be improved.

The Forum produced a set of action-oriented recommendations from a host of recommendations presented by the 200 plus participants that attended. These recommendations with those emanating from the remaining forums (once completed) will be pooled together and channeled formally to government through the Ministry and Department of National Planning and Monitoring.

Background

The Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC) was established by the National Executive Council (NEC) in 1998 (NEC Decision No. 46/1998) after the National Economic Summit of February 1998. The Private sector and civil society representatives who attended the Summit called for a consultative mechanism to be put in place so that recommendations made by the community would be followed up within government circles and implemented through law and policy. The Minister for National Planning, who is the Chairman of the CIMC, is meant to convey the views of civil society including the business community, to members of the National Planning Committee (NPC) and the NEC.

The CIMC Secretariat does this primarily through delivering opinions on the government's policy and legislative proposals, as well as to offer solutions on any technical problems relating to the implementation of its policies and programs.

The CIMC is administered by the Institute of National Affairs (INA) and reports to a Council made up of government, private sector and civil society representatives, and is driven by the need to bring together and secure consensus, responding to wider interest and not driven by any one faction or interest group.

The CIMC aims to meet the following objective(s):

- (a) To facilitate close policy dialogue, engagement and participation between civil society organisations, private sector and government agencies on development issues; and
- (b) To coordinate and monitor the implementation of NEC endorsed recommendations of the consultative forums and its Committees.

Theme of the Forum

The theme of the 2012 CIMC Development Forums is *“How to Improve Accessibility to Quality Health and Education Services.”* The selection of this theme was an equally collaborative process. A team of senior officers from CIMC met with the technical team from National Planning led by the then First Assistant Secretary (FAS) Policy, Joanna Kemp, to decide on the ideal forum theme. It was generally agreed that the theme had to be one that reflects current government priorities that in essence captures the seven (7) key enablers in the government’s key development plans. It is in view of this that the above theme was considered not only appropriate but relevant. Hence all forum proceedings plus the program were framed around this theme. The same approach is considered appropriate for the remaining forums.

Purpose of the Forum

The broad aim of this forum was to communicate ideas, interests and needs, from government, and that of the community including the private sector, NGOs and citizens relevant to the given theme. The CIMC is meant to deliver opinions on the government’s policy and legislative proposals, as well as to offer solutions on any technical problems relating to the implementation of its policies and programs.

The Forum sought to have stakeholders discuss key aspects of the task of delivering health and education services—including: central government plans and priorities, accessibility, quality, governance and management including transparency and accountability mechanisms, capacity building, training and resourcing, partnerships and networking, with the objective of advising government on strategies required to foster improved accessibility to quality health and education services in Papua New Guinea.

By engaging public servants in CIMC Forums and meetings, the community gets a better understanding of how the bureaucracy works, and what the functions of agencies are, as well as the constraints they face. In many cases it has also enabled government to talk across agencies and levels, as well as for people to network with others.

Attendance

The 2012 CIMC Highlands Regional Development Forum registered well over 200 participants. This large turnout was expected because most participants could easily travel in by road unlike other regions where participants have to travel either by sea or air which is quite expensive. A lot of awareness and groundwork had also been put forth for this forum. Participants ranged from private sector executives, government officials, development partners, researchers, civil society organization executives and members of the general public.

All relevant key Government Departments and Agencies were represented including National Planning, Health, Education, Communication and Information, and National Economic and Fiscal Commission (NEFC) except Treasury. It was also the second time in several years that the CIMC witnessed a high level delegation from the Department of National Planning led by Secretary, Dr. Peter Kora, and other senior members of his staff. The first time that this happened was also this year when the Secretary led a similar delegation including his Minister to the Momase Regional Development Forum held on 12th – 13th April 2012 at Divine Word University, Madang.

Presentations

Forum presentations ranged from central government policies, plans and priorities to budget allocations for health and education sectors (and experiences of accountability mechanisms) to provincial and independent perspectives on implementation of health and education plans and priorities at the provincial and district levels to development partner, private sector and NGO perspectives on health and education services delivery to information access reforms and innovative ICT strategies to improve accessibility to health and education services to the possibility of embracing the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model to improve accessibility to quality health and education services.

Evaluation feedback gathered indicated that the line-up of presentations was good. Just that timing was limited. Many participants said the volume of information presented was too much to be digested within the two day period. They suggested that more time be given for the forums. They claimed participants needed more time to fully digest the information to be able to meaningfully participate in such very important forums.

Key Issues

Two issues that featured prominently and that were key and central to all forum deliberations were accessibility and quality. The question of course was how could these be improved? Speakers and participants alike came up with their own versions of the various interventions that they thought could be considered and applied to improve accessibility to quality health and education services. A detailed list of the full recommendations that came about as a result would be compiled in the recommendations report in due course to be tabled at the National Development Forum in August.

For the purpose of this report, however, two points that came up very strongly were transparency and accountability, and innovation and creativity. The Forum strongly felt that in order to improve accessibility and quality in not only the delivery of health and education services but other basic services as well effective transparency and accountability mechanisms must be inbuilt into the public service management system. Public servants need to be held accountable for their performance. They need to account for every toea that is spent. They need to be at their toes every time. They need to make sure that essential services reach their delivery points and actually get delivered. If that cannot be done they need to be asked the why question. Complementing this was a strong call for information access reforms. Basic government information needs to be made easily accessible to the public. When citizens have access to information they will be empowered. Once empowered they can form groups like citizen watchdog (ombudsman) to demand improved services and hold service providers accountable for their performance.

Innovation and creativity was the other point that came up strongly. In order to improve accessibility and quality in the delivery of health and education services public servants need to be innovative and creative. They need to think outside of the box. The times of indulging in routine type work and saying, we used to do it this way or that way are over. Public servants need to get down to assess what works and what doesn't. They need to do away with what doesn't seem to work. They need to look at ways of improving what works to make it work better. The Simbu Provincial Education Division in that regard gave shining examples of the innovative approaches they have been undertaking in recent times. They say the National Outcome Based Education (OBE) Policy is a complete failure. Teaching children their own local languages is dwelling in the past. Why teach children languages that they are born with. Recent indications have been that students who come through this system have greater difficulty reading

and writing in English when at advance stages of learning. To address this, the Simbu Provincial Education Board has taken the initiative to write phonics for use in their schools. They have also been writing advanced syllabuses for high and secondary schools. To address the problem of teachers not taking up postings in remote schools, the Simbu Provincial Education Board has again gone an extra mile by venturing into a partnership arrangement with Madang Teachers College. Through that partnership the Simbu Provincial Education Board identifies grade 10 and 12 leavers in those remote areas to enrol at Madang Teachers College. As soon as these people complete their studies they return to teach in their own local communities.

Upcoming Forums

The 2012 Highlands Regional Development Forum which is the subject of this report has been successfully conducted. Still to go now are the New Guinea Islands (NGI), and Papua (Southern) Regional Development Forums and the National Development Forum. Table 1 below summarizes the remaining forums in terms of the venues, dates, and attendance.

Table 1: Summary of Venues, Dates and Attendance at the 2012 Development Forums.

Region	Dates	Venue	Attendance
Momase	12-13 April	SVD Auditorium DWU- Madang	150
Highlands	10-11 May	Mt. Wilhelm Hotel, Kundiawa, Chimbu Province	205
New Guinea Islands	7-8 June	Kimbe Catholic Diocese Hall–West New Britain Province	xxx
Papua (Southern)	1-2 August	Alotau International Hotel, Milne Bay Province	xxx
National Development Forum	22-24 August	State Function Room- Parliament House	xxx
Total			xxx

Funding

Funding for all our Development Forums come from the Government of Papua New Guinea through the Department of National Planning and Monitoring and the Australian Agency for International Development. The CIMC is sincerely grateful to these key agencies for their continued financial support over the years. Coordination of these very important Forums would not have been possible without their support.

Conclusion

The CIMC is a Papua New Guinea consultative body established by government to ensure that dialogue, through on-going consultation processes, is sustained between government, private sector, civil society and the community at large and recommendations made to government are implemented. Acting within its terms of reference (TOR), the CIMC has delivered the 2012

Highlands Regional Development Forum which was held on 10th - 11th May 2012, at the Mt. Wilhelm Tourist Hotel in Kundiawa, Simbu Province.

The Forum produced a set of action-oriented recommendations. These recommendations will be pooled together with those emanating from the remaining forums (once completed) and channeled formally to government through the Ministry and Department of National Planning and Monitoring. The CIMC is equally thrilled by the Department of National Planning's commitment to the CIMC process as demonstrated through continued funding support and its participation at the Forums.

Finally, the CIMC Secretariat conveys its sincere thanks and appreciation to the Department of National Planning and Monitoring and the Australian Agency for International Development for their funding support. The organization of this very important Forum would not have been possible had it not been for their generous funding support.

Authorized by:
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