



## THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK

On The World Bank & International Monetary Fund

### **The Network's Ghana Chapter**

The Ghana Chapter of the Parliamentary Network was officially launched on 14 July 2011 by a group of Ghanaian Parliamentarians, led by Honorary Kwabena Appiah-Pinkrah, Interim Chairman. The creation of the Ghana Chapter was a natural next step taken by local parliamentarians wishing to render local and global politics in Ghana more transparent and accountable, notably in the field of aid delivery and donor funds' monitoring. In attendance of the launch meeting were 12 founding members of the Chapter, as well as representatives from the Ghana Audit Service, non-governmental organisation Transparency International, and the World Bank (WB) Country Office, including the WB's Country Manager.

The objectives of the Ghana Chapter are as follows:

- To facilitate relations between Parliamentarians, the World Bank and other multilateral organisations present in the country;
- To deepen Parliamentarians' understanding of poverty reduction strategies and the Millennium Development Goals;
- To deepen Parliamentarians' understanding of the workings of multilateral financial organisations and development partners;
- To involve Parliamentarians in World Bank country programmes, and to support the WB and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in knowledge-sharing;
- To engage in and provide advocacy, oversight and research from a local perspective, and towards realising those aspects of Ghana's development goals which depend on its relationship with the World Bank and the IMF; -To encourage and mobilise Parliamentarians to take concrete actions to challenge the present lack of transparency in the use of public funds;
- To seek to support Parliament leadership to compliment the workings of the both the Finance Committee and the Public Accounts Committee in concretising the role of Parliament in ensuring effective utilisation of public funds;
- To provide a platform for fostering good governance and transparency in development cooperation in Ghana, World Bank-funded programmes in the country, and within the Ghanaian legislature itself.

The Network's Ghana Chapter currently has 24 members – representing parliamentarians from across party lines and from across Ghana. The Chapter Secretariat is currently housed in temporary facilities in the Parliament in Accra, with a view to attaining their own office space for the purposeful use of PNoWB Ghana. Ghana members are resolute in working together as a non-partisan entity.

### **Activities**

Since its launch in July 2011, the Ghana Chapter has actively engaged its members in the planning of its next steps, which include:

- Organising a 'sensitisation workshop' in September 2011 to ensure Ghana members have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of multilateral institutions and their relationship with the government of Ghana. Representatives of the World Bank country office in Accra will participate in a series of parliamentary dialogues on good governance and development during the workshop;
- Prepare a delegation to attend and participate in the Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the IMF in Washington D.C., September 2011; and set up their own office space, independent from the Parliament of Ghana.

### **Relationship with the World Bank Country Office**

The Ghana Chapter finds its relationship and communications with the World Bank Country Office in Accra to be exceptionally good, and sees the local WB representatives as partners for cooperation in dialogue and knowledge-sharing. The current Chair, Hon. Kwabena Appiah-Pinkrah, has a thorough understanding of the workings of the local World Bank office, having served as a consultant for the organisation for many years.

In his speech at the launch of the Ghana Chapter, the World Bank Country Manager stressed the importance of continuous dialogue and transparency in the execution of development projects. He urged the Ghana Chapter to act as social auditors and provide the constructive feedback on its various projects.

Following the launch event on 14 July 2011, the Ghana Chapter has also secured the participation of World Bank representatives at their sensitisation workshop to be held in September. Additionally, the Chapter has requested financial assistance from the WB Country Office towards covering the transport costs for its delegation to the WB-IMF Annual Meetings in Washington D.C. in September 2011.

### **Demanding Increased Parliamentary Oversight and Increased Transparency in the Distribution of Aid in Ghana**

The Ghana Chapter has identified the need for greater transparency in aid distribution and improved monitoring of public funds as its principal challenges. Parliamentarians in Ghana currently exercise no oversight or scrutiny over the use of public funds, and members of the Ghana Chapter quote high levels of corruption as an undermining the legitimate and effective implementation of development programmes. As a first initiative, the Chapter seeks to mobilise parliamentarians to take concrete actions to challenge the current lack of transparency in the Government's use of public funds through knowledge-sharing. It also means concretising Parliament's role alongside the Government's Finance Committee and Public Accounts Committee and rendering the Government more accountable to Parliament. Following its founding meeting in July 2011, the Ghana Chapter will commence its work to overcome these challenges by holding a sensitisation workshop in September 2011 for its new members, representatives of the Government and representatives of international development organisations.

The Network's International Secretariat will continue to support its Ghana Chapter to ensure that its members can fulfil their role as Parliamentarians and create a strong legislative framework for managing the transparent and efficient distribution of aid funding in Ghana.

### **Concluding remark**

The Chapter has identified two key requirements for continued successful and robust dialogue between the Ghanaian parliament and the local World Bank country office. First, members of parliament must be more proactive in demanding engagement with the Bank. Second, the World Bank and other development partners should take full advantage of the opportunity that the Ghana Chapter presents to involve MPs in development cooperation.