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Reducing Poverty through Improved Infrastructure

MCA-Vanuatu Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Type of Meeting: Special Steering Committee Meeting

15th September 2009

MCA Vanuatu Conference Room

Board Members:

Present:

Chairman, DG Prime Minister's Office, Simeon Athy
Director General, MFEM, George Maniuri
Director, DSPPAC, Gregoire Nimbtik
Acting Director Lands, Richard

MCC Representative

Chris Cookson, MCC-V Resident Country Manager

MCA Vanuatu Program Management:

Johnson Wabaiat, Program Director MCA
Hans Euscher, Project Management Advisor
Catherine Malosu, ESA Officer

Absent:

Wilson Tari Vuti, DG, MIPU

Quorum present? Yes

PROCEEDINGS:

Compact Closure:

The Steering Committee (SC) reviewed interim MCC guidance on compact closure. DG Maniuri stated that it seemed straightforward and similar to many closing processes for large projects. Project Director Johnson was asked to lead the drafting of the first compact closure plan and to finalize budgets to the end of the compact so that the SC could ensure all funds were well expended.

The SC discussed the Government's obligations, including the ongoing salaries of the Engineering Support Unit (ESU) officers once MCA-V funds conclude. As permanent public servants, these salaries are to be included in the 2011 budget from April 28, 2011. The need for ESU officers to continue to be available to support the close of the design and build contract was noted. This may involve tasks into middle or late 2012.

Director Johnson and the Fiscal Agent were asked to draft a paper of all obligations, policies and costs which the Government would need to consider.

Prime Minister's Visit to New York and Discussions with MCC:

The SC reviewed Vanuatu's eligibility scorecards and determined that the Prime minister needed a further briefing on Vanuatu's performance and 2009 progress.

Road Safety:

The SC discussed a draft discussion paper: "A Roadmap for a Vanuatu Road Safety Campaign", dated September 2, 2009. The SC noted that an increase in speed and road accidents generally follows major road improvements. The SC noted examples of strategies which are used to increase road safety and reduce the effects of road accidents:

- Infrastructure improvement: standards for road design, construction, maintenance, signage, markings, lighting, speed mitigation measures, identification and mitigation of accident black-spots.
- Speed limits: an urgent issue confronting MCA-V is the absence of any legislated speed limits for general vehicles on the upgraded Efate Ring Road and the Santo East Coast Road. MCA-V believes that this can be rectified by a simple amendment to the Road Traffic Act which currently only establishes speed limits for heavy vehicles. The upgraded roads are not designed for speeds in excess of 80kms per hour and safe travelling requires that this be the maximum speed limit.
- A longer-term and realistic update of road traffic and safety legislation to introduce additional road safety features in an affordable and appropriate manner, eg for use of seat-belts, avoidance of drink-driving, over-loading of trucks, riding in open trucks.
- Traffic police enforcement: improved equipment and training and enforcement and rescue skills. Driver training and testing. Vehicle testing and inspection.

- Records and reports of road accident statistics and research of causal factors and impacts.
- Improved coordination, training and equipment of emergency services and medical response teams.
- Road safety awareness kits for use in pre-school, schools and lifelong education.
- Poster, song, and cartoon competitions on the theme of road safety.
- Regular media (TV, radio, newspapers) features. In many countries quite graphic and disturbing coverage of accidents are used to “shock” people into awareness of the impact of speed and carelessness on the road, and in the dangers of drink/drug driving. Often, young people are specially targeted, as the statistics demonstrate that they are most at risk. Sponsors may agree to carry road safety messages on their products, e.g. mobile phones.
- Declaration of Road Safety Days, Years and other national events.
- Road safety conferences and provincial and national summits.

The SC noted that many agencies as well as the general public have an interest and a role in road safety. MCA-V, was set up by the GoV with a special function to facilitate a whole of Government commitment to implementation of the Compact .and is able to facilitate coordination and collaboration. MCA-V expressed concern at the extra workload this may involve.

The SC commended MCA-V and MCC for its initiative in preparing this excellent report and strongly endorsed the paper. The SC mandated MCA-V to continue to move forward on the recommendations. The SC decided on the following actions:

- To give priority to the immediate contributions it can make to road safety: interim speed limits, new traffic safety signs, speed hazards, use of weekly media update, etc. In particular, that MCA-V seek broad support for urgent legislative change in 2009 to establish the speed limit for the Efate Ring Road and the Santo East Coast Road at a maximum of 80km per hour on the open road and a maximum of 30km per hour through villages and near schools, clinics, stores and sporting areas.
- That MCA-V facilitates discussion about road safety with its Stakeholder Committee, Steering Committee, and other relevant agencies including the key line ministries and donors and development partners to collate views to prepare a policy initiative on a national road safety campaign and 2010 road safety budget for the Council of Ministers.

The SC suggested that Gregoire Nimbtik assist with re-drafting the paper into the format for a Council of Ministers' paper.

That PWD be requested to continue to strengthen its road maintenance program and include road safety aspects of maintenance in its training and contract requirements for community and small-scale road maintenance contractors.

Other Business

- October- December Disbursement Request Package:

Director Johnson and Catherine Malosu explained some changes which had been made to the conditions precedent report, following discussions with MCC. A revised conditions precedent referral letter is being prepared.

- Steering Committee Minutes:

The SC commented on the continuing lack of SC minutes. The office was directed to complete one set each day and have these ready for SC approval by October 8, 2011.

- Letter from MCC's Alan Pearson:

Chris Cookson asked if MCA-V intended to discuss or respond to the letter from the fiscal director Alan Pearson. It was agreed that the letter be forwarded again to Director of Finance and Program Director for action.

Certified by: _____ / _____
Secretary, MCA-Vanuatu

Acknowledged by: _____ / _____
Chair of the Steering Committee