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Reducing Poverty through Improved Infrastructure

MCA-Vanuatu Steering Committee Meeting No.08b

Type of Meeting: Steering Committee Meeting

2pm, 12th August 2009 (Continued from 5th August 2009)

MCA Vanuatu Conference Room

Board Members:

Present:

Chairman, DG Prime Minister's Office, Simeon Athy
Director General, MIPU, Wilson Tari Vuti
Director, Public Works Department, Allen Faerua

MCC Representative

Chris Cookson, MCC-V Resident Country Manager

MCA Vanuatu Program Management:

Johnson Wabaiat, Program Director MCA

Absent:

Gregoire Nimbtik
Russel Nari, DG, Lands
Wilson Tari Vuti, DG, MIPU

Quorum present? No

PROCEEDINGS:

The meeting was called to order at 2.00pm by the chairman.

Welcome by Chairman

The SC Chairman welcomed all members and representatives present at the meeting and outlined the Agenda Items for discussions as detailed below. The Steering Committee met on 5th August and resumed 12th August to complete agenda items 7, 9, and 10. Item 9 was deferred to the July SC meeting. The 12th August meeting failed to achieve a quorum. It was agreed to proceed and that minutes will be circulated by flying minutes and outcomes will be confirmed with all members.

Agenda Cont....5th August 2011:

- 7. Director's Report**
- 8. MCA-Vanuatu Data Quality Audit**
- 9. Any Other Business**
- 10. Establishment of Fixed Dates for SC 2009 Meetings.**

7. Director's Report

The Director provided an update on recent progress.

- a. SC Minutes: Concerns were expressed about the continuing lack of Steering Committee (SC) minutes. Program Director reported that he is working with his team on a major catch-up and the interim Administrative Officer will be assigned to take the minutes.
- b. 2009 Performance Plans: The SC were advised that the Director and SC Chairman had signed off on the Director's final performance plan for 2009 and Tony Sewen and Catherine Malosu have signed off on their performance plans with Director Johnson.
- c. MCA-V vacancies: The SC was informed that an interim Administrative Officer was in place and the contract position and second ESI Officer position will be advertised on the weekend. The Director outlined his review of the position descriptions and the SC delegated him the authority to complete these.
- d. Customs and Engineering Support Unit (ESU) Vacancies supporting the compact: The Director reported on his meetings with Customs, PWD, and PSC to finalize all the processes to fix up the 2008 recruitment of the ESU and Custom officers funded by MCA-V. He expects everything to be signed off by early September. Costs will be included in the next Disbursement Request Package (DRP).
- e. DRP and FY2010 Disbursement Targets: The Director reported on the process of setting realistic and achievable targets, and trying to catch up on the road-works. Tony has prepared a schedule to compact end and will work on this with Mr. Euscher when he returns from leave. The SC discussed the importance of securing and increasing the Government's commitment to road maintenance and to plan ahead to retain and fund MCA-V and the Engineering Support Unit after the compact ends.

- f. Implementing entity Agreement with the State Law Office: Johnson is still working with the State Law Office on the IEA and plans to complete this early September.
- g. Contractor Performance Reports: There was a very positive discussion about the process of contractor performance reports. MIPU and PWD in particular welcome this process. MCA-V anticipates finalizing these reports by October. PMA is coordinating the process.

9. MCA-V Data Quality Audit:

M&E Officer provided a report on the Data Quality Auditor (Mary Strode)'s second mission. Her first report was completed in July 2007. Mary's second report is expected later this week and will be circulated to SC members, together with how MCA-V plans to respond to her recommendations to improve monitoring and evaluation data collection arrangements. The SC discussed regulatory avenues for requiring better reporting re new hotel rooms, and Tony was requested to explore these further. Allen Faerua advised that he has met with the people who designed and manage the government's Financial Management Information System (FMIS) with a view to incorporating PWD reports into FMIS for improved reporting. The SC agreed that it was important to collect good data on the impact of the roads, and suggested that the office work with VIPA to identify new developments planned for both roads.

10. Other Business

- a. Director Johnson reported on the recent incidents of potential preferential treatment/gratuities with the road-works, where the contractor and field staff may have made decisions on disposal sites or camps with people they knew. The Director outlined MCC's fraud and corruption policy and the Design and Build contract sections on preferential treatment. He advised the Steering Committee of actions taken to undo the arrangements and ensure this all parties understood the requirements. The SC Chairman congratulated the Director for his handling of this matter, and MCC for their assistance. They asked that the lessons learned be applied to Santo. Allen strongly agreed and reported that over 8 years after the completion of the Japanese sealed road, PWD and other GoV departments are still dealing with complaints of preferential treatment and requests for compensation.
- b. An update on the utilities issue was provided. Mr. Euscher has reported that 8 of the 32 power poles on the Efate Ring Road may need to be re-located as a safety and road sustainability matter. Time is a problem, and the attitude of UNELCO is not positive to the advice from the State Law Office that the utility owner must relocate at its cost. There may be land acquisition issues. The Director was instructed to provide one month's notice to UNELCO. It was noted that UNELCO on Santo has been helpful and has worked to relocate poles.
- c. Quarries: The situation with quarries, royalties, and the Quarry Association was up-dated. Director Johnson is working with all the relevant GoV agencies including the Commissioner of Mines, Lands, and State Law Office to ensure everyone is clear about

their roles and the legislation and to put up a combined and consistent front to avoid inflated prices and resolve land disputes. It is a complex and time-consuming process. Again, the biggest problems are on Efate.

- d. The SC discussed concerns with the FA's performance against the Fiscal Agent Agreement. How well is the FA Agreement understood? A working group of Simeon, George and Johnson are continuing to meet with the FA to make their requirements clear and to explore options for further improving compliance.
- e. The SC agreed on a schedule of monthly meeting dates for the remainder of 2009. The next SC meeting will focus on the DRP and follow-up to MCC's Frances Reid's recent visit, including progress reports to the Council of Ministers. The SC noted that the Director has arranged a planning session on 19th August to discuss lessons learned, eligibility scorecard, success stories, road maintenance strategy, compact closure, second compact.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.30pm.

Certified by:

Secretary, MCA-Vanuatu

Acknowledged by:

Chair of the Steering Committee