

Cities Alliance

Medium Term Strategy 2008 – 2010

Restructuring the PAB

During its 2007 annual meeting, in Manila, the Consultative Group discussed the governance of the Cities Alliance. Consensus was reached on reconstituting the Steering Committee into an Executive Committee, with altered composition and functions. The discussions on the Policy Advisory Board (PAB) were less conclusive, and the matter was referred to the new Executive Committee, which met in Trondheim, Norway, in April, 2008. Once again, final decisions were deferred, and the onus was placed on the Secretariat to finalise a proposal for consideration by the Executive Committee.

Little progress was made during the course of 2008, largely due to significant staff shortages within the Secretariat. This discussion document will, therefore, be tabled at the forthcoming meeting of the Executive Committee in Barcelona in January 2009, immediately prior to the CG meeting.

The following proposal has been prepared by the Secretariat, and has been circulated to the current members of the Policy Advisory Board for their information, and for their comment.

The original motivation for addressing the issue, and identification of different options, can be found in Appendix A. The approved minutes of the Steering Committee meeting in Trondheim are attached as Appendix B.

Discussion

Due to the lack of consensus within the Consultative Group, and staff shortages within the Secretariat, decisions have effectively been deferred for a whole year. This has led to uncertainty amongst the members of the Policy Advisory Board (PAB) and, indeed, the Secretariat. During the same period, the Secretariat has been actively trying to lay the foundations for the implementation the Medium Terms Strategy (MTS), which is expected to make significant progress in 2009.

If the proposed work programme of the Cities Alliance is approved in Barcelona, we will see a significant increases in the generation of knowledge products by the Cities Alliance, as well as a new emphasis on advocacy activities. The proposed joint work programmes with UN-Habitat and UCLG, to name two examples, would both lead to increased knowledge activities, and advocacy.

While there was no consensus on the detail of the restructured Policy Advisory Board in Manila or Trondheim, the Secretariat believes that there was a clear majority in favour of an appropriately-constituted board that could assist the Cities Alliance's growing advocacy role, as outlined in the MTS.

There are a number of substantive areas in which advocacy by the Cities Alliance, and its members, could be crucial. These include:

- Constantly focusing on urbanization trends, and their implications, particularly in Africa and Asia. The burden of this advocacy should be to provide support to UN-Habitat's Campaign on Sustainable Urbanisation;
- Raising the profile of cities and slums, and urban development, amongst the main development bilaterals, with a particular focus on Europe. We anticipate that UCLG would take the lead in this campaign, but with very active support from the Cities Alliance;
- Representing the Cities Alliance at appropriate national and international fora – for example, in the role undertaken by the PAB Chairperson at the AfDB's 2008 Annual Meeting in Maputo;
- Participating in Cities Alliance missions, to specific countries, where there is a clear benefit to having an additional advocacy dimension to the mission. And
- Participating in new initiatives of the Cities Alliance, such as the proposed programme to promote **Land, Services and Citizenship** (initially in five countries) as part of the Cities without Slums Action Plan.

Reliable, consistent and well-informed advocacy support will become increasingly important to the implementation of the Medium Term Strategy (MTS), and the mission of the Cities Alliance as a whole. It will be an essential ingredient if the Cities Alliance wishes to increase its impact, and its visibility, and to significantly raise the profile of the challenges and the opportunities associated with urban development, in its wider context.

The secretariat recommends that the Consultative Group adopts a robust approach to advocacy, and supports the establishment of an appropriate structure (Advocacy Panel). This would have a number of immediate implications:

- ❖ Such a Panel would need to be adequately resourced. Typically, the annual budget allocated to the Policy Advisory Board was \$100,000 per annum;
- ❖ Such a Panel would have to be properly utilized, and have a clear mandate. Members of the previous PAB felt that their services and skills were not properly utilized by the Cities Alliance as a whole

- ❖ Such a Panel would require a different profile of members from the previous Policy Advisory Board.

Proposal.

In order to move forward, the Secretariat wishes to table the following proposal for the consideration of the Executive Committee, and Consultative Group:

A. The Current Policy Advisory Board

1. In light of the decisions in Manila and Trondheim, and the new role of the proposed Advocacy Panel, the current Policy Advisory Board be immediately disbanded;
2. To maintain continuity, and to work with the secretariat, the current Chairperson of the PAB be appointed as the first member of the Advocacy Panel;
3. All current and previous members of the PAB would be eligible to serve on the Advocacy Panel, if requested.

B. Composition, selection and operation of the Advocacy Panel

This proposal is aimed at the creation of a small and flexible Advocacy Panel, that can be used individually or jointly, as and when needed, subject to members' availability. It is proposed that members be required to commit to only one formal annual meeting, and otherwise be deployed as requested. The Secretariat would be obliged to keep Panel members fully up to date with relevant developments, and Cities Alliance information.

- I. The Advocacy Panel should be comprised of high-profile personalities, able to act as advocates for the Cities Alliance and its activities, and be able to generate interest and command support for urban development issues;
- II. The Advocacy Panel would work primarily with the Secretariat, but also be available to work with individual members of the Cities Alliance, as requested;
- III. The Advocacy Panel would comprise a maximum of seven members – one each from (i) Asia, (ii) sub-Saharan Africa, (iii) Latin America, (iv) Middle East and North Africa, (v) North America/Europe, and two additional members selected at large;

- IV. Nominations for Advocacy Panel members should be submitted jointly to the Chair of the Executive Committee, and the Manager of the Cities Alliance. Recommendations for membership of the Panel will be submitted by the Manager, for consideration and approval by the Executive Committee;
- V. Panel members would be nominated for a period of three years, renewable for a second term, upon recommendation of the Manager to the Executive Committee;
- VI. Panel members would elect a Chairperson, who would represent the Panel at the annual Consultative Group meetings;
- VII. The full Panel would meet annually with the Secretariat, to plan and programme the advocacy strategy.

Appendix A: Submission to the Consultative Group meeting, Manila, November 12007

3.0 Policy Advisory Board

In its' evaluation, Universalia noted that: *The original vision behind the Policy Advisory Board has not been updated to reflect changes in the Alliance and in the Board itself.*(Finding 22)

:The role of the PAB as reflected in the Charter,

28. The Policy Advisory Board (PAB) will provide guidance to the Consultative Group on key strategic and policy issues, and in supporting the implementation of Cities Alliance activities. Membership shall be drawn from preeminent urban experts in each region, and would include representatives of non-governmental and community-based organizations, the private sector, as well as the secretariats and/or programs of associations of local authorities. Responsibilities of the PAB will also include:

- (a) providing advise on specific issues related to city development strategies and scaling-up slum upgrading;
- (b) reviewing and commenting on the Cities Alliance strategy as reflected in draft annual work programs prepared by the Secretariat;
- (c) facilitating the engagement of local authority networks in building capacity to sustain and replicate the work of the Cities Alliance; and
- (d) evaluating the impact of the Cities Alliance work program through ex-post evaluation of selected activities.

The evaluation has created an important opportunity to properly discuss the role of the Policy Advisory Board (PAB). It would be fair to note that there has been a feeling of unease within some (if not all) members of the PAB, with a lack of clarity about the role of the PAB, which has been compounded by a feeling that its views are not paid adequate attention by the Consultative Group. Indeed, engagement with the PAB has increasingly devolved to the Secretariat, and the interface with the CG has been reduced to a minimum.

However, the PAB has played a very constructive role, in a number of areas.

- (i) First, individual PAB members have proven to be indispensable members on the field evaluation teams over the past three years, and have added enormous values in each instance;
- (ii) Second, individual PAB members have used their role to facilitate advocacy activities, such as the recent event in Brasilia in support of Brazil's upgrading programme;
- (iii) Third, individual PAB members have played excellent facilitating roles in the Cities Alliance annual meetings, adopting a high profile role in the PPF and (as in Washington in 2006) at the CG itself; and

- (iv) Finally, the most recent PAB meeting in Tunis must count amongst the most successful, providing an excellent platform for substantive and organizational engagement with the African Development Bank (AFDB). To a significant extent, the current PAB Chairperson was instrumental in helping the secretariat to facilitate the meeting,

Notwithstanding the above, and the excellent relationship between the PAB and the Secretariat, the role of the PAB remains unclear, particularly in terms of its relationship with the CG, the parent body which created the PAB. Examples include the consistent failure of CG members to nominate replacements for rotating PAB members, and the fact that PAB recommendations to the CG have generally elicited very limited action.

As is well known, by design the PAB comprises individuals of regional and international standing, each with very demanding and pressurized work commitments and lifestyles. Beyond token *honoraria*, they receive no remuneration for the time they make available to the Cities Alliance, which has been of real and tangible benefit to the organization as a whole.

There is an urgent need to clarify the role of the PAB, and to remove these ambiguities. This is, however, not a role for the Secretariat, but primarily for the CG, to whom the PAB is meant to report, and to respond. However, in order to take forward this discussion, the Secretariat has identified a number of possible options:

1. **Status Quo.** The PAB continues in its current role. However, this will require the Consultative Group to be very clear and specific about the role that it envisages for the PAB;
2. **Disbanded.** The role of the PAB is no longer seen as critical to the needs of the Cities Alliance, and the PAB is disbanded;
3. **Role change (1).** The PAB is seen primarily as a mechanism to give independent policy advice to the Secretariat. The Secretariat identifies a new mechanism to select PAB members. Within this option, there are a number of possible mechanisms for using the PAB, focusing less on formal PAB meetings, and more on the strategic use of individual PAB members in the regions / substantive areas of expertise and standing;
4. **Role Change (2).** The PAB disappears in its current form, but a small number of members (2-3) are invited to join the Steering Committee (itself re-designed to form more of an Executive Committee).

We believe these (and any other options) should be discussed by the PAB at the forthcoming Manila meeting, and reported to the CG meeting, with recommendations. We believe the CG members should also come to Manila prepared to have a full discussion on the PAB.

Appendix B: Minute of Executive Committee Meeting, Trondheim, Norway April 2008

Policy Advisory Board (PAB) – Roles and Results

At the Consultative Group meeting held in Manila in November 2007, despite a wide-ranging discussion that reflected different views on the role and utility of the PAB, there was no consensus on the final recommendation.

The Cities Alliance Manager presented the four options that were put forward in the Governance paper in Manila:

- a.) Continue with the PAB as is
- b.) Disband the Board
- c.) Change the role and functions of the Board as suggested by the 2006 Universal Independent Evaluation of the Cities Alliance
- d.) Role change—the PAB is disbanded, but some members join the Executive Committee.

Secretariat Position:

The Secretariat supports option (c), to change the role and function of the “board”.

In the background discussion paper on the Policy Advisory Board, of 26 March 2008, circulated by the Secretariat, it was put forward that the revised role of the PAB should be to assist the advocacy agenda of the Cities Alliance.

The PAB would no longer be required to have formal meetings, but would rather become a network of champions / advocates for the Cities Alliance;

The PAB members could be requested to undertake relevant functions / activities by any member of the Cities Alliance, or by the Secretariat; (all functions would need to be organized through the Secretariat);

The Secretariat also recommends that, in the event of this general proposal being accepted, consideration should be given to inviting past as well as current members of the PAB to again make themselves available to act as an advocacy network.

Policy Advisory Board Position:

In response to the Secretariat’s proposal, the Chair of the Policy Advisory Board stated agreement with the Secretariat’s recommendations, noting that the PAB members have diverse expertise, and a common passion for the CA mission. The Chair also stated that the current structure of the role of the PAB providing advice to Alliance practitioners is impractical. The Board supported option (c), a revised role, as well as the suggestion that they transform into an Advocacy Board or network.

The Board also requested that they convene yearly for a learning event that could be structured around a project, on-site. They also agreed that they would need a structured relationship with the Secretariat. The Board recommended to report back in one year's time on the progress of the network.

Executive Committee Decisions:

The Executive Committee agreed with option (c), a change in the role and function of the Policy Advisory Board. The Executive Committee asked the Secretariat to provide a Terms of Reference for the new network/board and individual members, requesting the Secretariat keep in mind the following:

- the purpose and goal of the board;
- the name of the board;
- the profile and representation (diversity) of the individual members;
- term limits;
- and budget.

It was agreed that a single, yearly gathering for a learning event at a think tank or possible project site would be appropriate rather than convening at the Consultative Group meeting, with the caveat that availability for the Public Policy Forum as well as ad hoc Cities Alliance member events be an option. The PAB's request to reconvene the group in one year to review its productivity was accepted.

The decision necessitates an amendment to the Cities Alliance Charter which will be tabled at the next Consultative Group meeting in Barcelona, Spain.