

ANNEX 5

Modalities of Participatory Processes: How Broad-Based Has Participation Been?

Many of the countries concerned had no tradition of participatory policy formulation (e.g., Albania, Cambodia, and Tajikistan). Others did have a participatory tradition or experience, but a separate participatory process was launched nonetheless, in order to comply with HIPC/BWI conditionality (e.g., Mozambique and Vietnam).

The participatory process was generally organized by the authorities according to modalities of their own choosing. However, in practice, donors—including the World Bank, but not the IMF (which rarely intervened in discussions on modalities of the participatory process) frequently had a strong influence on the process, primarily because they funded it, but sometimes also because the authorities themselves did not show much interest, at least initially (e.g., Nicaragua and Vietnam), and/or did not know how to proceed, especially in the absence of organized representation of civil society (e.g., Albania, Tajikistan, and Vietnam).

Who Participated?

In all the country case studies, good efforts were made to involve government stakeholders beyond the department coordinating the process, as well as the donor community. The involvement of civil society was generally more patchy. It is to be expected that country choices vary with respect to the involvement of specific interest groups (such as religious organizations and indigenous groups) according to their relevance in each country. However, the following crosscutting issues surfaced from both our case studies and broader evidence from outside sources:

- (i) Parliaments were generally not significantly involved.¹

¹In Ethiopia and Nicaragua, the authorities view parliamentarians as key stakeholders, but in the latter case opposition parties refused to engage for political reasons. In Guinea, Tanzania, and Vietnam, parliaments were given an opportunity to review the final document. This finding is consistent with those of external literature (see, for instance, Stewart and Wang, 2003).

- (ii) Criteria for selecting civil society representatives lacked transparency and/or a clear rationale, giving rise to criticism of poor representativity and pro-government political bias of the stakeholders chosen (especially in Guinea and Mauritania).
- (iii) The involvement of the business sector was often unsatisfactory, either because they were not called in to participate in the participatory process (in Tajikistan) or because they felt that the modalities of their involvement did not allow them any substantive role (in Albania, Mauritania, and Nicaragua), leading to their withdrawal. In some cases, however (Guinea and Ethiopia), private sector representatives were relatively satisfied with both their involvement and their contribution to the process.
- (iv) Involvement of stakeholders at the decentralized level was sometimes neglected (e.g., in Mauritania).
- (v) Also left out of the process in most cases were the poor themselves. As a result, some commentators have characterized participatory processes as opening up policy space only to the benefit of a technocratic elite expert in development issues, but little qualified to speak for the poor.²

These limits are echoed by the results of the survey of PRSP stakeholders, with government stakeholders and donors broadly agreeing that their respective interest groups were adequately consulted, and civil society in mild disagreement with that view.

How Was Participation Organized?

In most cases, several modalities of consultation were used in combination. The most commonly used

²See, for instance, Bretton Woods Project (2003).

Table A5.1. Summary Evaluation of the Types of Participation in Macroeconomic and Related Areas¹

| Country | PRSP Design Stage ² | | | | PRSP Implementation Stage ³ | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------|--|---|--|----------------------|---|---|
| | Information sharing? | Consultation? | Joint decision making? | Initiation and control by stakeholders? | Information sharing? | Consultation? | Joint decision making? | Initiation and control by stakeholders? |
| IEO case studies | | | | | | | | |
| Guinea | Partial | Yes | No | No | Limited | No | No | No |
| Mozambique | Yes ⁴ | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Nicaragua | Yes ⁴ | Yes | No | No | Yes | Partial | No | No |
| Tajikistan | Yes | Yes | No—but detailed recommendations by civil society | No | Partial | Limited so far | No | No |
| Tanzania | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Partial—some institutionalized feedback | No |
| Vietnam | | No ⁵ | No | No | | No ⁵ | No | No |
| OED-only case studies⁶ | | | | | | | | |
| Albania | Partial | Yes | No | No | Partial | No | No | No |
| Cambodia | Partial | Partial | No | No | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | No |
| Ethiopia | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Partial ⁷ | Partial ⁷ | No |
| Mauritania | Partial | n.a. | No | No | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | No |

¹This table summarizes the IEO assessment of the extent to which different types of participation were implemented in each of the case studies. It draws upon the detailed discussion of the participatory process described in the individual country reports, but uses the categories of possible intensities of participation discussed in McGee and Norton (2000). In each case, the assessment is of the extent of participation in macroeconomic and related areas (including the composition of budgetary expenditures). Assessments of the intensity of participation would probably be higher in some social sector policy areas (e.g., health and education).

²McGee and Norton (2000) propose a more detailed disaggregation of the stages of the “design” cycle into “Diagnosis,” “Formulation,” and “Approval.” However, the intensity of the participatory process does not seem to have varied widely between such potential subcategories, so we have used a simpler classification.

³Includes monitoring and evaluation.

⁴In the case of Mozambique and Nicaragua, information about the fiscal consequences of banking crises—which had important implications for macroeconomic policy design and key trade-offs—were not shared with a broader group of stakeholders.

⁵Consultation on fiscal/monetary policy was limited in Vietnam, but this seems to have partly reflected a mutual agreement that the more pressing issues were elsewhere. Debate on key issues such as pace of state enterprise reform was significant, but took place within the traditional framework of the party.

⁶We have drawn upon the descriptions in the four country case studies undertaken by the OED alone to make an assessment of the degree of participation in the macroeconomic policy area. However, the summary judgments provided here are the responsibility of the IEO alone. In some instances, there is not enough information in the case study to make such a judgment and these have been indicated as “n.a.”

⁷In Ethiopia, the private sector influenced PRSP implementation via business organizations but there was no institutionalized dialogue mechanism for civil society.

format was large attendance workshops and conferences held at the national and, in most cases, also at the regional level, with large variations in stakeholder coverage and number of workshops organized. In several countries, a lot of background work for the PRSP—and some of the material subject to broader consultation—was prepared in working groups involving at least two of the three main stakeholder groups (i.e., government, civil society, and donors). While in Guinea and Mauritania these groups were ad hoc and ceased to meet after the formulation of the PRSP, a permanent structure has been put in place in Tanzania, building on the preexisting PER working groups. In Nicaragua, such a group was recently constituted on an ad hoc basis, to explore tax reform issues.

Several countries made attempts to hold direct consultations with NGOs and grassroots organizations, but these efforts were often impaired by the lack of organization of the sector. However, where

civil society already had a form of institutional representation (e.g., miscellaneous government sponsored NGO umbrella groups in Guinea, CONPES in Nicaragua, and mass organizations in Vietnam) consultation of these institutions formed a core part of the participatory process. In others, such CSO umbrella organizations were established for the occasion of the PRSP, either by the government (e.g., in Albania) or independently of it, with donor support (e.g., in Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Tajikistan). In many of these cases, these (or other) civil society groups managed to prepare substantive inputs into the PRSP. Such inputs, while rarely called for, were welcomed in most cases (though not always taken into consideration). However, in Nicaragua, it was dissatisfaction with the official participatory process that led certain groups (in particular an NGO umbrella group and a group of municipalities) to develop their own alternative version of the PRSP.