Major Discussions and Recommendations of Working Group B on National Governance

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The Working Group B discussed, and accordingly presented recommendation on ways and means to increase governance at national level. Three major topics were chosen for the group's discussion in terms of increasing governance. They are: a) how to strengthen public administration, b) how to strengthen sustainable participation and c) how to combat corruption.

At the outset, the group identified the definition and implication of some key words such as "governance" and "democratization"

Definition of "governance" in its abstract and static terms is achievement of effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness through transparency, accountability and democratic control in the process of implementing a policy, plan or project. In its more concrete and dynamic terms, "governance" implies "rule of law", "decentralization", "civilian control", "improvement of administrative capability" and "corruption-free government", etc.

By referring to six clusters of indices of governance developed by D. Kaufman and others of the World Bank Institute, the Group took into account the need for voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption.

The Group identified three schools of thought about democratization, with the first advocated by such scholars as Lipset, Huntington, and Diamond which emphasises economic development as basic condition conducive to democratization. This process will accompany increases in per capita income, growth of middle class, and diversification of social values. The second school, as eschewed by D. Rustow, focuses its attention on rational choice of the democratic course by ruling elite and supported by the masses. And the third school advanced by Barlington Moor pays more attention on structural socio-economic

changes which constitute the very basis for irreversible democratization. While accepting the third school of interpretation, the Group felt some integration needed between these three schools of thought to enrich the implication of the concept and process of democratization.

Having reviewed the concept and implication of the key words, the Group discussed the three major questions in their order: how to strengthen public administration through organization, personnel, budget and rapport with clients, how to strengthen sustainable participation and how to combat corruption.

1. Publication administration

As regards organizational issues, the Group called for the adequacy of inter and intra organizational authority distribution and communication system including decentralization of authority. Standardization of procedures for planning, budgetary formulation, implementation, and evaluation will definitely increase efficiency, effectiveness, fairness, transparency and accountability.

As for personnel issues, the Group considered among other things recruitment, training, distribution and treatment including pay-scale rise, and bridging the gap between highest paid and the lowest paid. A successful case of training program to bring about civil servants attitudinal change was referred to. Participatory decision-making mechanism for each unit, and senior official's capability to control and coordinate the decision made by lower units were exemplified by Japanese successful case of RINGI-SEI.

Regarding budget issues, the Group emphasized the need for stable procurement of financial and other resources, budgetary distribution according to the activity planning and budgetary enforcement without delay. It was stressed by the Group in discussing rapport with clients that patiently explaining objectives and process of implementing a project to the stakeholders concerned is essential to secure their support and cooperation. While this depends much on government official's attitude, the case of Narita Air Port construction was referred to as a salient care of failure.

2. Sustainable participation

In discussing the question of sustainable participation, the Group took up both political and economic participation. Three types of participation were pointed out as relevant to this question: a) forced participation, b) participation with incentives, and c) spontaneous and sustainable participation. The major concern was c) spontaneous and sustainable par-

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ticipation. Political participation in general elections both at national and local levels appears to be comparatively high in some Asian countries, e.g., the Philippines. Voters tend to be attracted by popular actors as presidential candidates rather than their rational socio-economic policies.

Despite high literacy rate, free press, and well spread communication media, Japan's voting rates at elections are not so high as expected. This is partly because people have lost interest in, or don't expect much from existing political parties which tend to be engaged in inter- and intra-party politics rather than mobilising public support to their policies.

The Group identified that for sustainable participation in socio-economic activities, it seems three factors are crucial such as: a) organization, b) managerial norms, and c) resources. It was felt strongly that the organization should be a place where people would gather, exchange views, and learn from each other and accumulate experiences of successes and failures for future actions, resulting in more smooth communication, conflict prevention and developing next generation leaders. As regards managerial norms, the Group agreed that a decision of the community be taken by all the participating members, that the members be treated as equally as possible, and that mutual assistance among the members in social and daily life link itself well with cooperation in socio-economic arena. As for resources, it was endorsed by all that the organization should never totally depend on external help alone, with a built-in mechanism to expand its own resources. Illustrating this was a landless women's association in Bangladesh producing and marketing some handcrafts with original micro-finance extended by Grameen bank, depositing some portion of their profits into their common funds and utilizing the fund for the purchase of a sewing machine for common use, etc. Through these self-improvement activities Bangladesh women could recover confidence and human dignity in themselves.

3. Combatting corruption

While corruption is meant by definition to be the abuse of public power or influence attached to a public trust to induce private interest, and while corruption-free society is one of the most important elements of the concept of good governance, most Asian countries have unfortunately been no exception to failures in successfully implementing anti-corruption measures and eliminating corruption. While observing that there are three dimensions to analyze corruption: causes, effects, and remedies, the Group discussed mostly remedies. The Group also identified four areas for remedies: a) administrative, b) legal, c) judicial, and d) social movement measures.

Included among administrative measures are lesser regulations and control, decrease in discretionary power, substantive disclosure of administrative information. Legal measures include enactment of Anti-Corruption law, independent Ombudsman institutions, decrease in official secret, whistle-blower protection act, revision evidence act. Judicial measures imply stricter application of punishment to corrupter without suspension. Increase in the number of judges and clerical staff specializing in corruption cases was also considered as critical to minimizing corruption.. Social movement against corruption was also given priority, with global and local involvement of civil society (specially citizens ombudsman, and mass media), business enterprises, and government. Global cooperation against corruption such as activities of Transparency International was thought most promising.

The Group expected further collaboration among its members in order to strengthen good governance at national level.

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