

Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Governors held in Room N, Portcullis House on 22 February 2017

Present	Sir Henry Bellingham MP (Chair) Andrew Rosindell MP Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP John Osmond Ken Caldwell Rushanara Ali MP Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh MP Bronwen Manby Simon Walker Anthony Smith (CEO) Paul Naismith (Finance Director)
In attendance	Fulvio Menghini (Head of Communications)

1. Apologies

Dame Margaret Hodge MP

2. Conflicts of interest

None.

3. Matters arising

The Chair noted that this would be the final Board meeting for both Bronwen Manby and Ken Caldwell. On behalf of the entire Board, he thanked them both for their outstanding contributions to WFD's work, including the significant amount of time that they had each devoted to the Board and its sub-Committees over many years. They would be missed.

Minutes of Board Meeting held on 23 November 2016: the Board noted that all previous actions had been taken, and approved the minutes.

Update items

4. CEO's report

The Board noted the points raised in the CEO's report which all related to issues to be covered in other agenda items.

5. Quarterly Progress Report

The Finance Director noted that revenue was on track to reach £10.7 million by the end of financial year 2016-17, with strong prospects for further growth in 2017-18. Compared to financial year 2015-2016, expenditure levels have adhered to forecasts more closely and were spread more evenly. Overheads would be just under 10% of total revenue.

Programmes were performing relatively well, and the tendency was for performance to improve as they matured.

Governors asked for some adjustment to the templates used for both financial and programme performance.

6. Programmes

The CEO invited Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP and Rushanara Ali MP to report on their recent visits to Colombia and Burma-Myanmar respectively.

Sir Jeffrey said that a group from a combination of Northern Irish political parties and civil society had held a series of meetings with the Congress of Colombia. The aim was to support the peace process with the FARC and other groups in Colombia by sharing the experience of Northern Ireland. The meetings had been well attended and highly appreciated by Colombian stakeholders. There had been requests for follow up engagement which the group will consider along with the British Embassy in Bogota.

Rushanara reported on the visit that she had made to Burma-Myanmar with an official from the secretariat of the Burma APPG. Rushanara began by noting the very good work of the WFD team in Naypyidaw and the very good WFD programme there, including the secondments of Commons Clerks and the English language courses - MPs who can read English texts gain access to a wealth of data and information which they can use to improve their legislative oversight. She noted the strong support for the UK programmes from the State Counsellor.

Rushanara said that her meetings in Naypyidaw, Yangon and in Rakhine State illustrated the depth of the governance challenges that the country faces, including conflicts in a number of regions. The scale and complexity of the challenges were severely testing the capacity of the government to deliver change, and further progress was not guaranteed, especially given the entrenched position of the military.

Governors welcomed Rushanara's visit and her report. They agreed that WFD's programme was providing important help to build capacity in the parliament. Progress would be slow and WFD would need to remain aware of the internal conflicts in the country and avoid being drawn into them.

The CEO gave an update on other opportunities for future programmes, including in Armenia, Georgia, Ghana, Turkey (working with the Turkey APPG) and Lebanon. He would report back to the Board on these, especially where there were political sensitivities.

7. Report on Programme Quality Committee

Ken Caldwell reported on discussion at the Programme Quality Committee (PQC) – because the meeting had been held the previous day there was no written report available.

Ken said that the Committee had welcomed the establishment of WFD's three-person Technical Advisory Unit with Parliamentary, Governance and Gender advisers. The Committee had also welcomed progress made on implementation of programmes. Ken said that the Committee had noted that WFD would be the subject of three significant reviews in the space of six months: two DFID assessments and the FCO's Triennial Review. This would require good coordination and a significant amount of staff time.

Finally, Ken reported that the Committee had reflected on its own procedures and effectiveness and noted that they had asked the CEO and Director of Programmes to provide some options to the Board to strengthen its work, building on helpful proposals that had been made during their discussion. These could be discussed with the Board, including the new members when they are appointed.

Action point 1 – CEO to provide recommendations on the functioning of the PQC in advance of the next Board meeting.

8. Report of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

John Osmond reported back to the Board on the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARC) on 26 January. John said that the discussion covered three main areas.

First, the National Audit Office had noted the pace of growth in WFD and, reflected that WFD's control environment might be challenged to keep pace. Second, the ARC had reviewed four internal audit reports on (i) tenders, where systems for tracking bids were not fully in place, (ii) programme monitoring and evaluation, where new systems were being implemented but were stretched, (iii) Kenya office, where the inability to register the office had required adaptations within normal procedures, and (iv) the Serbia office, where strong controls were in place and no mitigation is necessary. In all cases where mitigations were now in place their progress will be checked early in the new financial year.

The third area was financial performance, where the ARC agreed that the significant growth in WFD revenues meant that the ARC would like in future to receive reports that track impact on cash flow and the balance sheet.

Finally, John noted that the ARC had undertaken a self-assessment which concluded that there needed to be greater clarity on the remit of the committee, including its relationship with the Programme Quality Committee and the Board.

In the discussion, the CEO noted the action that was being taken on WFD systems, with an Action Plan that was already tackling most of the issues raised by the internal audit reports. The Finance Director also noted the specific characteristics of WFD funding, with the vast majority of programmes being funded by grants that provided reliably timed funding from HMG sources. That meant that management of cash flow was less problematic than for many other organisations. On the issue of the financial qualifications of Board members, the CEO noted that while there were usually at least three qualified accountants attending the ARC, none represented the Board. One option to address this would be to recruit a financially qualified member of the ARC that would represent the Board.

9. Risk Management

Governors noted the updated corporate risk management framework.

10. 2017/2018 Budget

The Finance Director noted that, while the levels of the FCO Grant-in-Aid and the DFID Accountable Grant were known, a decision had not yet been taken by FCO on an additional £1m grant. The draft budget therefore reflected both options. The CEO proposed that, given the lack of time for a full discussion, the Board should approve it by e-mail.

Action point 2 – Budget to be circulated to Governors following the meeting for approval. Note – this was done and the budget was approved.

11. Annual Plans

The CEO noted the process for adoption of Annual Plans. Since these would be within the existing strategic framework and operational in nature, his intention was to approve these without clearance from the Board. He noted the very good collective discussion earlier in the month to start the planning process. This took forward the request from the Board to track countries where there were active WFD programmes, whether parliamentary or political party and resulted in a shared table with programme information and the identification of a number of countries where we would explore joint work. Governors warmly welcomed this progress.

12. Update of WFD strategy

The CEO updated on the process to refresh the WFD strategy. A draft has now been shared with HMG partners and political party offices and feedback is being considered. In the context of the 25th anniversary year from the foundation of WFD, the CEO also updated the Board on plans to launch the revised strategy as part of a conference which will also serve to highlight progress made by WFD programmes including research. The conference could include moments to celebrate WFD's achievements which could be presented by former WFD Governors and partners.

Lastly, the CEO consulted the Board on the opportunity to organise an away-day. This would be useful to discuss WFD's strategic direction and to integrate two new

Governors into the works of the Foundation. Governors agreed they would be in favour of organising one before the summer recess.

Action point 3 – CEO to circulate potential dates for an away day.

Next meeting – 7 June 2017

WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY BOARD MEETING, 12 OCTOBER 2017

MYANMAR

Present:

Sir Henry Bellingham MP (Chair)
Dame Margaret Hodge MP
Patrick Grady MP
Sue English
Simon Walker
Anthony Smith (CEO)

Apologies:

Rushanara Ali MP
Andrew Rosindell MP
Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP
Thomas Hughes

1. The Board met to discuss the implications for WFD programmes of the actions taken against the Rohingya population in Rakhine State since the terrorist attacks by the ARSA on 25 August. Some of the Governors that were unable to attend the meeting had participated in a briefing call with the British Embassy in Myanmar earlier on 12 October and communicated their views about the events in Rakhine and the implications for the WFD programmes¹; and two Governors had sent in comments by e-mail.
2. All Governors had followed with great concern the reports of the suffering caused by the military actions that had led to at least 500,000 Rohingya fleeing Rakhine and the destruction of hundreds of Rohingya villages, which they condemned. They recognised that Myanmar was at the beginning of a long transition to a fully democratic society and that WFD's engagement would need to be long-term in order to help contribute to the strengthening of Myanmar's democratic institutions. The events in Rakhine had not changed that but they had illustrated how difficult the transition was, especially while the constitutional and executive role of the military remained so strong. In those circumstances, WFD could not ignore those events but instead had the responsibility to respond to them.
3. The Board noted that the DFID-funded WFD programme provided a range of support to the parliament in Naypyitaw. None of this had any direct involvement

¹ Rushanara Ali in particular said that the slight optimism that she had felt when she visited Myanmar in February had been shattered by the actions taken by the military. It would be morally indefensible for WFD to carry on with business as usual in these circumstances. We needed to reflect and review our programme or else we would be complicit with the ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya.

with Rakhine State or with the military authorities. The Board agreed that the programme team should urgently consider ways in which the programme with the parliament might be adjusted in order to support the parliament in addressing more directly some of the issues arising from the events in Rakhine, for example related to Women and Children's Rights, or the issues of diversity and tolerance that the State Counsellor had been addressing, or the issues arising from the report of the Rakhine Commission (the Government had committed to implement the recommendations). Addressing these issues would fit with the overall aim of the work with the parliament which is aiming to enable the parliament to be as effective as possible in its functions of representing all the people of Myanmar, conducting high quality policy work and holding the government to account.

4. In addition, the Board asked the programme team to consider additional activities, eg working with civil society, that the WFD programme might be able to include that would support tolerance and diversity in Myanmar. Such activities would be able to respond to the State Counsellor's call for support for implementation of the recommendations of the Rakhine Commission.
5. While understanding the importance of ensuring that WFD had clear understanding of the developments in Myanmar and a clear position on the rationale for its programmes, the strong view in the meeting was that WFD should not make a statement.
6. The Board confirmed that the team should consult closely with all other stakeholders and asked Anthony to report to the next meeting on progress.
7. The main conclusions of the meeting were:
 - We should review the DFID-funded programme with the parliament in order to see how it could be adjusted in order to address more directly some of the issues that have been raised by the military actions taken against the Rohingya. The proposals from the review should be ready for the next Board meeting on 29 November and the presentation to the parliament of the 2018 work plan in January.
 - We should also develop proposals to add to the programme, eg by supporting one or more civil society organisations that were addressing issues related to the treatment of the Rohingya.
 - Anthony should report back to the Board on the practicality of delaying any elements of the programme that could have a damaging impact on the work.

Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Company number: 2693163

Minutes of Meeting of Board of Governors of Westminster Foundation for Democracy in Room T, Portcullis House on 29 November 2017

Present: Sir Henry Bellingham MP (Chair)
Rushanara Ali MP (Vice Chair)
Andrew Rosindell MP
Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP
Dame Margaret Hodge MP
Patrick Grady MP
Simon Walker
Thomas Hughes
Sue English
Anthony Smith (CEO)
Paul Naismith (Finance Director)

In attendance: Kerrie Doogan-Turner (Board Secretary)
Andrew Patrick (UK Ambassador to Burma) (via telephone for Agenda item 5)
Clare Vallings (Senior Governance Adviser, DFID Burma) and Joe Rolling (Head of DFID Liaison Office, Burma) (via telephone for Agenda item 5)

1. Apologies

No apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of interest

No new interests to declare.

3. Matters arising

Minutes of meetings held 13 September and 12 October 2017

In a review of the action points from the two previous meetings, the Board confirmed an exit meeting took place with former Board member John Osmond. The emphasis placed on Board oversight of WFD's financial management in this meeting was noted.

Regarding the proposed visit to Bahrain, it was agreed that Dame Margaret Hodge MP would accompany Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP in place of Rushanara Ali MP.

The Board approved the minutes.

Update items

4. CEO's report

Funding opportunities

An overview of upcoming funding opportunities was presented to the Board, including opportunities surrounding the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Work is underway for a proposal that covers parliamentary standards and women's empowerment in partnership with Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat (CPA-HQ) and UK branch (CPA-UK).

Media handling

Following some media attention around the Conservative Party conference observation programme, the Board discussed policy options for co-sponsorship and other funding principles. The Board also asked for further work on the following areas:

- Evaluations had confirmed the value of UK party conferences to WFD's international work given the interactions with party members and departmental officials. However, inclusion of Political Party conference fees in WFD projects needed to be justified as genuine costs rather than a subsidy to the party.
- VFM for consultancy was essential and WFD should consider a standard rate, or clear guidance on when higher rates might be justified.
- There were a range of different provisions for travel policy across government and in other similar organisations like CPA-UK. It would be helpful to review the appropriate policy for WFD, including the possibility of specific provisions for those carrying out work for WFD on a *pro bono* basis.

Action point 1 – Review travel policy and branding guidelines. Develop policy on standard rates for consultancies.

5. Myanmar

The Board asked the Ambassador to provide an update. The main points were:

- The position had worsened since the Board's last discussion in October. Although the violence inside Rakhine had largely stopped, intimidation continued and another 150,000 Rohingya had left the country for camps in Bangladesh, bringing the total to about 650,000.
- The civilian authorities had begun to assert themselves more, including by signing a returns agreement with Bangladesh and taking some steps to prepare for returns. Inter-faith meetings were also taking place. However, it was still uncertain whether the military would allow returns to happen, and in any case

the conditions would be worse than before. Attempts to secure accountability for their actions was clearly a red line for the military. A UN Human Rights Council report was due in March 2018.

- The military's popularity had increased as a result of the actions in Rakhine and they were exploiting this to strengthen their political position. One likely objective was to win the next elections. This was not out of the question since the constitution gives them 25% of the seats anyway. They would only need 32% of the vote to secure a majority in parliament.
- British Ministers were reshaping the UK's engagement to put Rakhine at the centre of its work. Their short-term objective was to provide humanitarian support and to support safe returns of Rohingya to Rakhine. UN involvement would be needed for this. The longer-term objective was to address the racist environment in Myanmar that led to this treatment of the Rohingya.
- The British government saw WFD's engagement with the parliament as part of the longer-term objective. For all its weaknesses and faults, parliament contained the best collection of future leaders that Myanmar had, including moderates that disagreed with the actions against the Rohingya. We needed to strengthen them and broaden thinking in parliament. Parliament could also have an important role in supporting the government's implementation of the Rakhine Commission recommendations.
- The idea of working with civil society in conjunction with parliament was good and would fill a gap in local engagement with civil society. But some more work was needed to identify the right organisations.
- A pause in WFD's operations would very probably be interpreted as a withdrawal.
- Both HMG and the international community more generally had so far concluded that they should reconfigure their engagement rather than withdraw. The shared assessment was that withdrawal would fatally wound ASSK, who remained the best hope for changing the behaviour towards the Rohingya.

After the Embassy left the meeting the Board discussed options. All Board members considered the actions against the Rohingya to be abhorrent and that criminal proceedings should be pursued against those responsible. As agreed in October, business as usual was not an option. Rushanara and Margaret said that they thought that WFD should temporarily suspend WFD activities in Myanmar. Although things might change in the future, eg when the UN HRC report was released, WFD should remain engaged.

As far as the options in the paper were concerned, there was recognition that some of it was a continuation of previous work, since there was a need to secure acceptance of the overall programme by the parliament. As far as the new elements were concerned, it would be important to think creatively to identify additional elements, including ways of influencing ASSK directly. One option would be to use some high-profile UK political figures with experience of conflict in other countries to speak directly to her (the Board should also discuss this with Speaker Bercow). Another would be to get some experts in conflict resolution involved who could apply the techniques that had been used successfully in other countries, or even in other parts of Myanmar, to the Rohingya. WFD should be clear what it thinks about the treatment of the Rohingya.

The Board decided that the WFD team should keep working on the options in time for the meeting with the Joint Coordination Committee of the parliament in January to present the 2018 work plan.

6. Funding options for political party offices

Options to amend political party funding in the next grant cycle were presented to the Board. A key objective was to ensure the effective management of WFD programmes by all of the party offices, including those with more restricted levels of resources.

The Board agreed that WFD should take forward the ideas in the paper in preparing the draft budget for 2018-19. However, it would be essential to take into account the impact they might have on the work of the two larger offices.

Action Point 2: The draft Budget should include narrative covering the handling of political party funding.

7. Audit and Risk

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARC) met on 13 November 2017. Chair of the ARC, Thomas Hughes, outlined the main points from the meeting:

- Moore-Stephens' interim audit in January will cover all issues from the National Audit Office's 2017 Annual Audit.
- The planning for the 2017-18 annual audit has been revised to ensure its timely completion.
- The ARC reviewed the internal audit of local security plans and agreed that progress had been made but implementation of the plans needs to accelerate.
- The internal audit contract will be tendered at start of 2018.
- Management accounts forecast a deficit of £89,000. Action will need to be taken to ensure WFD breaks even. The deficit was the result of lower third-party funding than originally anticipated.

8. Strategy implementation

The WFD conference in September 2017 launched the new strategic framework. Increased work on elections and with civil society organisations will complement existing core areas of political parties and parliaments, though this change will be introduced gradually in the next financing period, partly depending on available funding. Discussions were under way with the FCO and DFID regarding the level of WFD funding in the next grant cycle.

9. Programme Quality Committee

The Programme Quality Committee (PQC) met on 21 November 2017. Chair of the PQC, Sue Inghish outlined the main points from the meeting:

- Concerns raised about the delays in finalising the next core grant and the impact this will have on staff contracts and overall impact of programmes.
- Visa issues for inward visits are having an impact on programme travel costs. It would be valuable if WFD could raise this issue with the Government.

Action point 3: WFD Board to consider writing to the Home Office about this issue.

10. Quarterly Progress Report

Paul Naismith presented the latest Quarterly Progress Report:

- Core revenue for 2017/18 is slightly higher than forecast due to benefit of some underspend from the previous year being carried forward. This means that if 2018/19 funding remains the same, then year on year comparable revenue from core grant will be down.
- Forecast revenue from third party sources stands at approximately £4.3 million but is dependent on work being fulfilled. The success rate of our bidding was lower than we had expected.
- There was additional investment in central costs, principally in the finance capacity, which, combined with the reduction in third party spend, meant there was a slight increase in the share of total revenues taken by WFD administration.

On programme performance, Anthony Smith said that the level of programme performance was satisfactory with a very small number of red-rated programmes.

11. Any other business

- The sexual harassment scandal revealed in the UK Parliament was flagged. The Board welcomed a review of WFD guidelines in this area to ensure a robust response in dealing with any inappropriate instances, especially regarding overseas visits.
- Rushanara Ali MP praised WFD parliamentary and political party work in Jordan following a recent visit with the Labour Party funded programme to meet civil

society leaders in the region. Inspiring success stories, especially around WFD's work with women, should be used to promote WFD much more.

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