Japan CSO Network on IMF & World Bank Annual Meetings

Activity Report

December 2012
Summary of Activities

1. Objectives:
1. Collection and dissemination of information on domestic/overseas initiatives regarding the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings.
2. Sharing of information and exchange of views regarding the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings among Japanese CSOs and with overseas CSOs, the World Bank, the IMF, the Japanese government and other sectors.
3. Promotion of CSO advocacy and awareness-raising activities regarding the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings and involvement in the CSO Policy Forum.
4. Support to organizations conducting activities regarding the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings.
5. Other activities that contribute to the above.

(Excerpt from “Constitution of the Japan CSO Network on IMF & World Bank Annual Meetings”)

2. Terms:
First Term: 7 October 2011 - 31 March 2012
Second Term: 1 April 2012 - 31 December 2012

3. Activities:
1. Collection and dissemination of information on domestic/overseas initiatives regarding the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings

- The website of the Japan CSO Network on IMF & World Bank Annual Meetings was launched in December 2011 to provide information and solicit memberships. The number of members was 16 organizations in the first term and 27 organizations in the second term.

  ■ URL: http://www.janic.org/activ/activsuggestion/imfworldbank/index.php

- A list of seminars organized by member organizations and information on related events was posted when concrete information on the Civil Society Policy Forum became available.

- A three-part serial seminar was planned to collect and disseminate information. The second and third sessions were broadcast to members in real time as well as from an archive over the internet using Ustream. There have been a total of 93
views as of December 2012.

- Second Seminar URL  http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/24351390
- Third Seminar URL  http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/25719233

2. Sharing of information and exchange of views regarding the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings among Japanese CSOs and with overseas CSOs, the World Bank, the IMF, the Japanese government and other sectors

- A listserv for member organizations was set up to share news about the IMF and World Bank as well as information about the Ministry of Finance-NGO Regular Dialogue, registration for the Annual Meetings, etc. There have been a total of 300 messages posted as of December 2012.
- The steering committee listserv was used to share information and exchange views about plans for seminars, negotiations with the IMF and World Bank, etc. There have been a total of 226 messages posted as of December 2012.
- A serial seminar with a total of three sessions was organized between 29 May and 26 September 2012. (For details, please refer to the appended Annex I). The Director of the IMF Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the World Bank's Special Representative to Japan and the Director-General of the International Bureau of the Ministry of Finance were invited to the third session of the serial seminar for an exchange of views. They were called upon to hold regular dialogues with NGOs.
- Overseas CSOs were provided a referral service for accommodations and information on seminars of the Civil Society Policy Forum, etc. The English language website of the Japan CSO Network was launched in July 2012 to disseminate information.

3. Promotion of CSO advocacy and awareness-raising activities regarding the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings, and involvement in the CSO Policy Forum

- Active advocacy and awareness-raising activities were promoted by cross-posting communications from IMF and World Bank officials regarding registration with the Civil Society Policy Forum, proposals to organize seminars, etc., to the members' listserv as needed.
- When the CSO liaison officers of the IMF and World Bank visited Japan in
February 2012, the steering committee members and others met with them and proposed that interpreting services be provided at the Annual Meetings. When they came to Japan again in September, they again met them to make this proposal; ultimately, simultaneous interpretation was provided for two thirds of the seminars of the Civil Society Policy Forum.
- Two representatives of organizations in the steering committee of the Japan CSO Network and one representative of the member organizations participated in the CSO Planning Group, and in conference calls held in July and September. They spoke from a CSO perspective on organizing a town hall meeting and a roundtable.

4. Support to organizations conducting activities regarding the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings.

- When registration for participation started in July 2012, member organizations were notified and encouraged to sign up early. Since information was received that Japanese CSOs would be exceptionally allowed to register after the 24 September deadline, member organizations were informed of this and several participants registered after the deadline.
- A proposal for hosting of a seminar by the Takagi Fund for Citizen Science, a member organization of the Japan CSO Network, as part of the Civil Society Policy Forum was rejected on the grounds that "nuclear power generation is outside the purview of the World Bank." Accordingly, the Japan CSO Network held an emergency steering committee meeting, and the Takagi Fund for Citizen Science and the Japan CSO Network engaged in negotiations with the World Bank side. Consequently, the Takagi Fund for Citizen Science and the World Bank reached mutual agreement to hold a seminar with a revised theme.

4. Summary:
[Regarding the Annual Meetings]

- It was very meaningful for Japanese CSOs to gain the opportunity to participate in cutting-edge policy debate regarding health policy, safeguard policies and other issues.

[Regarding the Civil Society Policy Forum and dialogue with CSOs]
• There was no transparent process for selection of civil society speakers at the town hall meeting and the roundtable, which were fora for dialogue between civil society and executive directors of the IMF and World Bank. There was no defined process on how questions would be summarized and raised by delegates during the town hall meeting. Under the present method of proceedings, it would be more meaningful to have discussion with the floor from the beginning, rather than determining the civil society speakers beforehand. It was also unfortunate that no executive director of the IMF attended the roundtable.

• On a number of occasions, sudden communications were received from the World Bank regarding separate meetings with IMF and World Bank executive directors, with the request for an immediate answer. If dialogue with civil society is considered important, the IMF and World Bank should allow adequate time for consultation among member organizations of the CSO Network.

• Exchanges between the CSOs that organized seminars of the Civil Society Policy Forum and the sponsored CSOs were inadequate. Furthermore, exchanges between the CSOs participating in the Civil Society Policy Forum and officials of the IMF, the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance, etc., could not be said to have been sufficient. There is room for reconsideration of the scheme to facilitate participation and mutual exchange.

• Care should be taken to incorporate CSO perspectives in operations, for instance, by holding seminars on similar themes in venues near to each other.

• The World Bank refused to hold a session on nuclear power as proposed by CSOs on the grounds that "nuclear power generation is outside the purview of the World Bank." During the planning and implementation of the Civil Society Policy Forum, the role of CSOs was unclear, particularly in terms of decision-making. The seminar could ultimately be held with a revised theme, but the occurrence of such a situation was most unfortunate considering that the Civil Society Policy Forum aims to promote dialogue between the IMF and World Bank and the civil sector. It is thought that the Civil Society Policy Forum could be operated smoothly if it is co-sponsored by the IMF and World Bank and the CSOs of the host country. The civil society should have a certain level of autonomy in planning its contents.
【Regarding Sponsored CSOs】

・The criteria for selection of sponsored CSOs were not apparent. It seemed questionable whether many of the participants were actually engaged in advocacy work regarding the IMF and World Bank.

・A number of meetings were held with top officials of the IMF and World Bank, but the CSOs at large were not informed in advance and participation of sponsored CSOs was prioritized. Meetings should not be set up in such a manner as to exclude CSOs at large.

【Regarding the CSO Planning Group】

・Though the CSO Planning Group was significant to some extent in facilitating participation of CSOs, its role was unclear.

【Regarding Publicity】

・The Ministry of Finance's website set up especially for the Annual Meetings made no reference whatsoever to civil society. Websites giving information on the Annual Meetings varied according to the organization, so it was difficult to know which one to refer to. The websites set up especially for the Annual Meetings on the websites of the IMF, the Ministry of Finance, etc., did not have any hyperlinks to information regarding the Civil Society Policy Forum, leaving something to be desired in terms of information sharing and ease of use. A proposal to address this issue was raised to the Ministry of Finance after the formation of the Japan CSO Network, but it was not acted upon.

【Regarding the Activities of the Japan CSO Network】

・One of the important roles of the Japan CSO Network was to support the implementation of CSO programs. It was significant that it could take a strongly supportive stance at the steering committee meetings and in individual face-to-face meetings.

・The IMF took the position of proposing to Japan that it promote deregulation,
increase the consumption tax and join the TPP. The Japan CSO Network was unable to respond effectively to this. There was a lack of coordination with movements in Japan.

- It would have been better to support activities such as thinking about development issues from a domestic perspective.

**Recommendations**

- There should be a transparent process for selection of civil society speakers at the town hall meeting and the roundtable, which are fora for dialogue between civil society and the IMF and World Bank executive directors.
- If dialogue with civil society is considered important, the IMF and World Bank should allow adequate time for consultation among member organizations of the CSO Network.
- The scheme to facilitate mutual exchange between the CSOs participating in the Civil Society Policy Forum and officials of the IMF, the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance, etc., should be reconsidered.
- Care should be taken to incorporate CSO perspectives in operations of the Civil Society Policy Forum, for instance, by holding seminars on similar themes in venues near to each other.
- The Civil Society Policy Forum could be operated smoothly if it is co-sponsored by the IMF and World Bank and the CSOs of the host country. The civil society should have a certain level of autonomy in planning its contents.
- Meetings with top officials of the IMF and World Bank should not be set up in such a manner as to exclude CSOs at large.
- The role of the CSO Planning Group should be made clear.
- Publicity should be strengthened, for instance, by advertising about the Civil Society Policy Forum on the websites of the IMF and World Bank and the government ministries of the host country.
### Annex I: Chronological Table of Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 October 2011</td>
<td>Kick-off Meeting of the Japan CSO Network on IMF &amp; World Bank Annual Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 October</td>
<td>First meeting of the steering committee (first term) is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 December</td>
<td>Second meeting of the steering committee (first term) is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 February 2012</td>
<td>Third meeting of the steering committee (first term) is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 February</td>
<td>First plenary meeting is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 22 April</td>
<td>Japan CSO Network members participate in the IMF &amp; World Bank Spring Annual Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 May</td>
<td>First meeting of the steering committee (second term) is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 May</td>
<td>Second plenary meeting is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Serial Seminar &quot;Latest info on IMF &amp; World Bank and CSO's activities&quot; 1. Briefing session on IMF &amp; World Bank 2012 Spring Annual Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 July</td>
<td>Second meeting of the steering committee (second term) is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 July</td>
<td>Third plenary meeting is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Serial Seminar &quot;Latest info on IMF &amp; World Bank and CSO's activities&quot; 2. Citizens' point of view on IMF &amp; World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 September</td>
<td>Third meeting of the steering committee (second term) is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 September</td>
<td>Fourth plenary meeting is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – 13 October</td>
<td>Members of the Japan CSO Network hold seminars, etc., as part of the Civil Society Policy Forum of the IMF &amp; World Bank Annual Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 October</td>
<td>Members of the Japan CSO Network participate in a roundtable with IMF &amp; World Bank executive directors at the IMF &amp; World Bank Annual Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 October</td>
<td>Members of the Japan CSO Network participate in a town hall meeting with the Managing Director of the IMF and the President of the World Bank at the IMF &amp; World Bank Annual Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 October</td>
<td>Fourth meeting of the steering committee (second term) is held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 December</td>
<td>Fifth plenary meeting is held</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>