

Visit Report

GPSA Global Partners Forum

Washington DC, May 13-16, 2014

George Cheriyan visited Washington DC (USA), for attending the 'GPSA Global Partners Forum' at The World Bank on May 14-15, 2014. Making use of the opportunity, he also met with several staff at the Bank and discussed possible collaboration.

1. GPSA Global Partners Forum

1.1 Background

The Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) hosted the first Global Partners Forum, in Washington, DC, on May 14-15, 2014. GPSA is a programme hosted by the World Bank that supports civil society organisation (CSO)-led Social Accountability initiatives through funding and knowledge products. The Forum is part of the GPSA's Knowledge & Learning Strategy, which puts emphasis on continued dialogue between partners, and on sharing lessons learned that will be disseminated and put into practice.



The Forum was a unique opportunity to bring together more than 165 global partners of the GPSA, which includes diverse array of development agencies, international CSOs, and local organisations and private sector groups from around the globe – alongside government representatives and the World Bank staff. The Forum was an occasion to recognise, connect, and share knowledge with many relevant actors in the field of social accountability. The guiding question of the Forum was '*What works in Social Accountability?*' The GPSA proposes a pragmatic *problem-solving approach* to social accountability interventions, grounded in realistic theories of change and monitoring & evaluation frameworks. (<http://www.worldbank.org/gpsa>)

Other than Cheriyan, representatives from Participatory Research in Asia & Accountability Initiative from India attended the Forum. CUTS', being one of the global partners, its logo also was displayed on the backdrop and kept appearing in rotation on the display board prominently.

1.2 Proceedings

Day - I



The Forum started with opening remarks by Sanjay Pradhan, Vice President, World Bank. He said GPSA can play a key role in bringing a paradigm shift in the governance by making it people-centred and amplifying people's voice. It was followed by a Keynote presentation by Jonathan Fox, Professor, American University, Washington DC. He said that it is time to move beyond the dichotomy of the question "Does Social Accountability Work?", and take a closer look at the environment, political economy, and incentive structures that can lead to the

success or failure of specific tactics or tools and, ultimately, to the potential for replication or scaling of these initiatives. He concluded by saying, '*Voice needs teeth to have a bite, but teeth may not bite without voice*'.

In the breakout session on '*What works in Social Accountability?*', following questions were discussed.

- How do we bolster state-citizen synergy?
- What kinds of transparency lead to accountability?
- How do public oversight strategies take scale into account?

The interesting aspect of the breakout groups were all the three groups discussed, all the three questions, by the facilitators moving from one group to the other. Cheriyan actively participated in the discussion and shared the Indian experience institutionalising the social audit.



In the Panel on Theory to Change, World Bank Lead Specialist Helene Grandvoinet was the moderator. Courtney Tolmie, Senior Programme Director, Results for Development Institute; Lily Tsai, Associate Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Marcio Vasconcelos, Technology for Social Change Manager, Fundación AVINA. Cheriyan raised questions about using Information and Communication Technology for crowdsourcing.

In the breakout session in the afternoon, the following questions were discussed in detail.

- How can collaborative social accountability mechanisms thrive and succeed in adverse environments?

CUTS governance publications were great in demand. Accountability Solutions (CoPSA) web-portal and its alert mechanism was appreciated by many.

- The Forum provided an opportunity to realise how much CUTS, India and the South Asian region has advanced with regard to governance issues.

2. Dinner hosted by Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF)



Richard Stern, PTF President and Daniel Ritchie, PTF Board Member hosted a dinner on May 15, 2014 for PTF managers and visiting partners. Cheriyan was given a prominent position. CoPSA alert mechanism was mentioned and appreciated by Vinay Bhargawa. It was a good opportunity to showcase CUTS' present work on governance and discuss future collaboration with PTF. Bhargawa suggested the possibility of joint proposals on 'Rule of Law'.

3. Meetings with Representatives of Donor Agencies/World Bank staff

Making use of the opportunity Cheriyan met with a number of representatives of donor agencies and senior staff and the Bank and had discussion about possible collaboration. Following are the persons with whom he met:

- Stephanie de Chassy, Head of Gender, Governance and Social Development Team of Oxfam (UK), London
- Loe Schout, Director Expressions & Engagement Programme, Hivos, Hague
- Mariana T Felicio, Social Development Specialist, Middle East & North Africa Region, The World Bank
- Astrid Manroth, Operations Adviser, Openness and Aid Effectiveness, Operations Policy and Country Services, The World Bank, Washington DC
- Parmesh Shah, Lead Rural Development Specialist, Rural Development Department, South Asia Region (SASRD), The World Bank, Washington DC
- Carolina Vaira, Operations Officer, Social Accountability Practice, The World Bank Institute

