

Dear Colleagues --

Most of you will have heard by now that I am stepping down as co-chair of the Effective Institutions Platform to assume a different role within USAID. As I sit down to “pen” a farewell message to you, I find myself overwhelmed by several competing emotions and thoughts: sadness, joy, pride, regret, nostalgia, satisfaction (and some I don’t even recognize) are all vying for attention.

In any event, the occasion is ripe for reminiscing! So, with your indulgence, I would like to share a few observations and thoughts with you, my friends and co-conspirators in this new learning alliance seeking a better way to bring about change. I’ve learned so much during these past three years and, in no particular order, here are a few things I think I now know:

- **The EIP is becoming an effective and inclusive partnership:** In the true spirit of Busan, I’ve been privileged to witness what was once essentially a technical working group for donor and partner country representatives interested in PFM and procurement evolve into a bona fide multi-stakeholder partnership. Current membership includes representatives from nearly all stakeholder groups in the development community.
- **Multi-stakeholder platforms are important:** Co-operation among diverse stakeholders is not only possible, but necessary. It can lead to breakthroughs and innovations. We see this through inclusion in the EIP governance model, but also in the projects the EIP supports such as Supreme Audit Institutions and Citizen’s Engagement.
- **Even in this age of scepticism, there are new models of development co-operation worth the effort and the risk:** Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Learning Alliances and reveal the true potential of collaborative learning among peers to influence and support Public Sector reforms. The current work on the Toolkit on Peer Learning will be used by EIP members and is already creating demand beyond our membership.
- **The EIP is relevant to the post-2015 dialogue:** The Platform has made contributions to the development and future implementation of the SDGs related to governance, but it is also very relevant to the implementation of core aid effectiveness principles and the work of the Global Partnership as in the case of use of country systems, for example.
- **More countries are getting involved in the work of the EIP:** Policy makers and practitioners representing countries from every region of the world are engaged in the work of the platform, making our country-based efforts truly global.
- **The EIP has changed significantly since we collectively endorsed the New Consensus on Effective Institutions:** Some of the more recent advancements include:
 - A strengthened EIP Governance Structure now supported by a dedicated Advisory Group as well as a talented and ambitious Joint EIP Secretariat.
 - We are now guided by a clear strategy having approved the Strategic Framework (2015-2020) and Programme of Work (2015-2016).
 - Our annual meetings in Johannesburg and Paris, along with the Champions meeting in Seoul.
 - Through the efforts of our brilliant Secretariat and the support of generous donors, the EIP has entered the information age in a big way. Our communication tools include a website, regular newsletters and videos to share cutting edge information on public sector reform, and a soon-to-be-launched state-of-the-art resource library expected to improve the way we source tools for learning.

And while we may have come far together, in many ways we are only at the beginning of our collective journey with a long way yet to travel. I'll close this message with my aspirations for where I see the EIP arriving in five short years.

"Vision 2020"

- 1) The EIP is acknowledged as an effective **incubator** for game-changing initiatives (both global and local) helping stakeholders achieve the EIP's vision of accountable, responsive and transparent public sector institutions.
- 2) The EIP is home to **safe spaces** for EIP members from across the development community to vigorously debate and openly experiment in implementing those initiatives, particularly through the EIP's Learning Alliances.
- 3) The EIP is widely recognized as the **"hub"** or **"one-stop-shop"** for the exchange of knowledge and experience amongst countries, civil society, academia and all other relevant organisations on ways to strengthen public sector institutions.
- 4) The **PDIA approach** will be common practice and **champion reformers** around the world will use the EIP as a forum for comparing methods, strategies and tactics.

I believe that, at our core, what unites us is our commitment to development, a willingness to face the tough problems, and the belief that strengthening public sector institutions will help bring about more sustainable results, and I believe that these core values will still be there in five years.

The list of people I should thank for their support these past three years would be longer than this message, but I do need to single out a few...I want to especially thank my co-chair, Neil Cole, whose professional acumen and priceless sense of humor made working together productive and fun; the members of the EIP Advisory Group for their wisdom and willingness to serve; Sara and Jennifer of the Secretariat for simply being two of the most talented, hardworking people I know (and for laughing whenever the situation actually called for tears); USAID for allowing me to take time from my "day job" to participate in the EIP; and to all of you, the members of the EIP, for your generous contributions to this work!

Finally, just a word about my successor as co-chair of the EIP. The Advisory Group has agreed that the U.S. should retain the co-chair for the remainder of the term (provided a suitable replacement could be found). So we looked long and hard to find a match for Neil Cole, and we found him in the person of another "Neil". Allow me to introduce Neil Levine, currently the Director of USAID's *Center of Excellence for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance*, who will assume the role of co-chair effective immediately. Some of you may know Neil from his service as USAID's representative to INCAF and/or his prior work with GOVNET. He has a passion for this work and a willing team of professionals to support him. I'm excited see where the team of "Neil and Neil" (Neil²?) will take us and I will be cheering from sidelines!

Please stay in touch.

Gratefully yours,

Steve