

March 9, 2001

To: Members of the Executive Board

From: The Secretary

Subject: **Committee on Agenda and Board Procedures—Summary Record of Meeting 01/2**

Attached for the information of Executive Directors is a summary record of the February 22, 2001 meeting of the Committee on Agenda and Board Procedures.

Att: (4)

Other Distribution:
Department Heads

Summary Record
Committee on Agenda and Board Procedures
Meeting 01/2
February 22, 2001

Members Present: Mr. Mozhin (Chairman), Mr. Bernes, Mr. Collins, Mr. Donecker, Mr. Yakusha, Mr. Anjaria (Secretary).

Also Present: Mr. Alosaimi, Mr. Atoloye, Mr. Beauregard, Ms. Boucher, Mr. Costa, Mr. Daïri, Ms. Farid, Mr. Fidjestøl, Mr. Keshava, Mr. Low, Ms. Lundsager, Mr. Vittas, Mr. Wei, Mr. Yepez, Ms. Zador, Mr. Zurbrugg.

The meeting convened at 12:15 p.m.

1. Calendar Management System (CMS)

The Secretary noted that the CMS continued to be based on the principle of longer-term planning, over about three months; every two weeks the calendar was extended by a further two weeks. Short-run changes were to be kept to a minimum. In the period through the spring IMFC meeting the calendar appeared to be manageable, assuming that at least a few of the key individual policy items could be dealt with in just one Board discussion.

Committee members noted that the format of the calendar was more user friendly. They suggested that changes be introduced on a real-time basis. In addition, if possible, major policy discussions should not be scheduled on two consecutive Board days, and the three-week circulation requirement for major policy items should be observed. Also, changing agreed Board dates for country items for the coming two-week period, especially moving items forward, should be avoided.

The Secretary noted that he would explore introducing more regular updating of the calendar as soon as possible. The possibility of occasionally advancing Article IV items provided some useful flexibility, as otherwise items could only be postponed. A report on the experience with the CMS would be given to the Committee following the spring IMFC meeting.

2. Review of Experience with Experimental Procedures for Article IV Consultations (Models A and B)¹

The Chairman commented that, given the limited time available at the meeting, the discussion of the experimental procedures would have to be preliminary. It would be particularly helpful to know whether Directors felt that the experience thus far with models

¹ The Secretary circulated Issues for Discussion as well as preliminary data (see attached)

A/B was sufficient to warrant a review or whether a further six months of experience would be preferable.

The Secretary reported that the average length of discussions under both models was about equal, and that, on average, the discussions had been somewhat longer than in the period before the models had been introduced. Eighty percent of the consultations had taken place under model A. The Directors for the United States, Japan, Italy, and Norway had opted for model B. When those cases were excluded, the average time spent on model B discussions was somewhat less than the average under model A. Varying views on the purpose and orientation of model B still existed, but in general the notion was that model B would be particularly useful for countries that would otherwise be expected to attract only a few or no speakers. Directors' offices seemed to have felt reluctant to serve as lead contributors under model B, possibly because of the requirement to circulate a comprehensive Gray statement. One of the objectives of the experiment was to produce consistent results in Article IV consultations, and model B had served to make island country consultations more similar to model A country discussions.

The Committee agreed that it was too early to draw final conclusions on the Model A/B approach to Article IV consultations and that more analysis was needed before reviewing the system within six months. The discussion would be continued at the next meeting.

A few Committee members considered that the experiment had failed, but others noted that from a quality perspective, for a number of the small or island countries the discussions had improved. Indeed some members commented that the discussion under model B turned out to be not much different from what it would have been under model A. Some members felt that in general, from an efficiency point of view, self-restraint by speakers was sometimes lacking. Since a number of changes in staffing of Directors' offices had taken place, it would be useful for the Secretary's Department to explain to newcomers, perhaps every six months, the models' guidelines, and how interventions should be brief and focused and self-restraint exercised. Also, staff should be asked to refrain from responding to questions at excessive length.

It was suggested that it would be useful to analyze speaking times and the effectiveness of lead statements in the 12 model B cases.

The Secretary noted that it was difficult to track speakers' times accurately in interactive discussions. He suggested that, for the next discussion, it would be useful to have Directors' views on the basis of their own experience with model A/B. In addition, before the next meeting he would welcome any suggestions they might have on the list of discussion questions that he had circulated. It might be useful to go over the list more systematically at the Committee's next meeting.

In addition, the suggestion was made for Directors to present a list of model B countries to the Board, and for three Directors (on a rotation basis) to either speak or to issue a Gray statement for those items.

3. Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to meet again in about one month. It is expected that there will be some further discussion on the experience with models A/B approach to Article IV consultations, including on the list of questions distributed by the Secretary. Several other issues were suggested for the discussion at the next meeting, such as the issue of access of Directors to verbatim transcripts of Board meetings, the possibility of reviewing the IMFC agenda earlier than was previously the case, and the possibility of distributing written staff statements after country matters sessions involving information on important program negotiations.

The meeting concluded at 1:15 p.m.

Attachments (3)

- 1. Notice of Agenda**
- 2. Table circulated**
- 3. Questions circulated**

March 6, 2001

To: Members of the Agenda and Procedures Committee

From: The Committee Secretary

Subject: **Notice and Agenda of Meeting 01/2**

There will be a meeting of the **Agenda and Procedures Committee** on **Thursday, February 22, 2001** at 11:00 a.m., in the Board Committee Room.

The Committee Chairman, Mr. Mozhin, suggests that Executive Directors consider the following items:

1. The status of the Calendar Management System
2. Experience with stand-alone Article IV consultations under Models A and B
3. Possible other ways of streamlining the Board's work

All Executive Directors are welcome to attend meetings of the Agenda and Procedures Committee.

Other Distribution:
Members of the Executive Board

**Stand-Alone Article IV Consultations—Model A/B Experiment
June 2000 to February 7, 2001**

Type	Number	Total Time	Average Length
Model A	45	74.6 hours	1.7 hours
Model B ¹	12	18.8 hours	1.6 hours

Average Length of Country Items, 1999 and 2000

Type	Average Length (in hours)
Model A/B (from 6/00 to 2/7/01)	1.7
All A4 and UFR Country Items, 2000	1.9
All A4 and UFR Country Items MINUS Model A/B Items, 2000	2.0
All A4 and UFR Countries 1999	1.7
Stand-Alone Article IV Consultations, 1999	1.5

¹ 9.2 hours total and 1.2 hours on average, excluding United States, Japan, Italy, and Norway.

Article IV Consultation Discussions—Models A and B

Issues for Discussion¹

Is there enough experience to review the models now, or should the committee wait another six months?

If a review takes place now, the following are a few of the issues that could usefully be addressed. Are there others?

1. Do Directors find the availability of alternative models useful? Are discussions under Models A and B roughly similar in terms of quality and effectiveness and, if not, how are they different? How should they be made to produce more consistent results?
2. Models A and B rely on self-restraint by speakers under the established guidelines on oral interventions. The guidelines are not compulsory and depend on ownership by the Board to be effective. Do Directors feel that speakers have adhered sufficiently to the guidelines? Are any steps required to ensure better adherence to the guidelines?
3. Under Model A, has it been helpful to interrupt the discussion for staff comments after the first eight interventions?
4. Model B is designed to, inter alia, help focus discussions on issues raised in the comprehensive gray statements of lead contributors. Subsequent speakers are supposed to be brief and/or issue statements in advance. Do Directors feel that this has happened?
5. Do Directors feel they are asked to take on too heavy a load by volunteering one week in advance to serve as lead speakers under Model B, with the undertaking to circulate a gray statement the day before the Board discussion?
6. Do Directors feel that Model B is suitable for all members, or mainly for smaller countries for which there have often been only a few speakers in the past?

¹ For the consideration of the Agenda and Procedures Committee, February 22, 2001.