

## 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CPRSOUTH

04 SEPTEMBER 2018

POLANA SERENA HOTEL, MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE

### MEETING MINUTES

#### Summary of decisions made and follow-up actions required

Agenda item	Board paper	Decisions and actions
1.0 Recording of excuses and welcome of observers		Excuses recorded and observers welcomed
2.0 Confirmation of election	BP 2018.1	Confirmed
3.0 Tabling of decisions taken by circulation	BP 2018.2	Board TOR approved by circulation amended.
4.0 Minutes of 2017 Board Meeting		Confirmed
5.0 Matters arising from the Minutes		None
6.0 Report on 2018 young scholar program and conference	BP 2018.3	Decided to continue with current format; Chair to circulate list of revised topics for 2019
7.0 Pilot project on continued policy engagement between conferences	BP 2018.4	Approved
8.0 Next conference	BP 2018.5	Bangkok approved subject to funding and satisfactory terms
9.0 Approval of audited Accounts	BP 2018.6	Approved; each participant to be informed of what was spent on each
10.0 Any other business: Election of Chair and Alternate Chair		Samarajiva elected for 2 years; Ramasoota for one year
11.0 Change is best policy brief selection		Only first-time presenters eligible; popularity based method to be devised for 2019

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## **PRESENT**

Alison Gillwald, Erwin Alampay, Helani Galpaya, Lishan Adam, Payal Malik, Pirongrong Ramasoota, Rohan Samarajiva, Supriya Singh, Tracey Cohen, Wallace Chigona.

## **REGRETS**

Jae Jong Rho, Kameshnee Naidoo. Ashok Jhunjunwala, Krishna Oolun, Monica Keretts Makau, Nirmita Narasimhan, Olivier Nana Nzepa, Zhong Liu, Tim Waema

## **OBSERVERS**

Rasheda Sultana, Americo Muchanga (Board members from 2019), Phet Sayo (IDRC); Fola Odufuwa, Aileen Aguero (DIRSI); Siope Vakataki 'Ofa (UN ESCAP) Prashanthi Weragoda, Sujata Gamage, Ashwini Natesan, Samali Perera (LIRNEasia).

The Chair, Rohan Samarajiva [**“Chair”**] welcomed the Board members [**“Board”**] of CPRsouth and observers to the 13<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

### **Recording of excuses and welcome of observers**

Apologies were made on behalf of the Board members who were unable to be present and observers were introduced. It was observed since funding was provided to one half of the Board, those present last year were for the most part absent at the present meeting.

New Board Members in attendance who would begin their terms in 2019, Rasheda Sultana and Americo Muchanga were welcomed. It was mentioned by the Chair, with regret, that Siope 'Ofa of ESCAP though elected would not be in a position to join the Board as he was unable to get clearance from his organisation.

Status: information only

### **Confirmation of election BP 2018.1**

New board members were welcomed and their nominations were confirmed. It was observed the Chair that with the appointment of new members the male / female ratio had not changed. The representation of Africa in the board was at 33 percent, South and South East Asia 44 percent and East Asia & Oceania 22 percent. Further, it was discussed whether to increase African representation in the Board by 2 members because the total number was down to 18. Alison Gillwald commented that there were enough members and that the African representation was sufficient.

Status: confirmed

### **Tabling of decisions taken by circulation BP 2018.2**

The Board resolution BP 2018.2 was tabled. Helani Galpaya suggested an amendment (1.3 In the event CPRsouth chooses to conduct a curated conference, board members should actively participate when they are called upon to perform curation and moderation duties) which was accepted.

Status: approved

### **Minutes of 2017 Board Meeting**

The previously circulated and published board minutes were confirmed.

Status: confirmed

### **Matters arising from the minutes**

The new method of selecting and curating papers was to be taken up as a separate agenda item

Status: No actions required.

### **Report on 2018 Young Scholar Program and Conference BP 2018.3**

A presentation was made in relation to the 2018 Young Scholar Program and Conference. *Inter alia* the presentation included the following:

- Amongst the applications received there were 28 and 33 female applicants from Africa and Asia; 46 and 40 male applicants from Asia and Africa respectively.
- It was explained by the Chair that Facebook posts helped gain wider reach. Payal Malik added that there were 19 applicants from India alone.
- Further the Chair observed that 42% of all applicants were women and 52% men of which nearly half 47% applicants were African.

#### Acceptance of applications for Young Scholars:

It was stated by the Chair that 48% of the accepted candidates were women. On a question as to whether there was a specific quota for women, the Chair responded that gender balance had been a factor for consideration, however, it was not on the basis of a fixed quota system.

Fola Odufuwa (observer) raised a question whether the women who were selected as young scholars were deserving. The Chair affirmed that although gender balance was taken into

consideration only deserving women with merit were selected.

The Chair added that 48% of the selected candidates were from Africa, although there were two last-minute drop outs from Zimbabwe and Morocco. A total of 6 spots were allocated for the host country, Mozambique, of which only two were taken up.

#### Acceptance of policy briefs:

The Chair stated that that about 78 policy papers were received. In terms of representation, 44% of received proposals and about 46% of accepted proposals were African. The preference given to past young scholars as paper presenters was also highlighted by the Chair wherein about 25 % of the accepted papers were from young scholars from the previous editions of CPRsouth. The Chair gave examples of paper presenters Donald Malanga, Nimish Joseph and Rasheda Sultana who were past young scholars of CPRsouth. On question as to preference for past young scholars, the Chair affirmed that papers of young scholars were given preference over others, as discussed in Yangon.

#### Focus areas for the next conference:

The focus areas of CPRsouth 2018 were displayed the Board was asked to deliberate on what other interest areas may be added to (and removed from) the existing list. Payal Malik added that response from researchers is an indicator to gauge interest in specific areas. The Chair submitted that there may be certain interesting areas which however would not have good research ready for presentation. Alison Gillwald pointed out that “gender” should not be taken as a separate topic, but rather as an underlying theme for all the focus areas. This was readily agreed by the other Board members.

Payal Malik submitted that problems and solutions in relation to Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain and other cutting edge technology issues should be included as a possible field for the next conference.

Supriya Singh stressed that the impact of cryptocurrency as remittance to small businesses was another critical issue. Fola Odufuwa also mentioned cryptocurrency’s impact on elections and identity. The Chair agreed that these issues needed focus, however good research in the said areas were rather sparse. Helani Galpaya echoed the sentiments of the other Board members and suggested addition of another area “Unanswered questions on blockchain.” Payal Malik suggested “Initial changes, theoretical questions, downside / drawbacks of blockchain and other related areas of research.”

Phet Sayo commented that the scope of CPRsouth needed to be clearly delineated.

Alison Gillwald added that it was IDRC's policy to focus on cyber security, human rights links to AI etc. and for this it may be important to for senior scholars to co-author with young scholars.

Phet Sayo added that IDRC's focus areas were gender, AI and disinformation.

The Chair added that CPRsouth has always emphasized on users and the demand side, starting from Manila. This time too the focus was on the demand side but now looking at the entire ecosystem.

Americo Muchanga, highlighted the following:

- a) Network ability and affordability
- b) Cyber security and privacy
- c) Data protection
- d) Balancing of security vs. access / Use of service
- e) Blockchain and digital currency

The other Board members chipped in with the following suggestions:

- f) AI and ethical issues
- g) Autonomous vehicles, especially the possible legal and security issues

The Board also agreed that facets of social networks and use, data security / cyber security were also relevant. Helani Galpaya added that hate speech/harassment were still salient issues along with legal/ethical issues surrounding blockchain, balancing data protection with access and availability. She further added that a point was made by Aileen Aguero that gender should not be considered as a separate subject but rather as an underlying theme.

Erwin Alampay emphasized that e-government issues also raised significant interest among the presenters and there were several applicants. Fola Odufuwa also echoed that policy mechanisms in relation to e-commerce / e-government were important discussion areas. On the basis of the various suggestions of the Board it was suggested by the Chair that a generic field would be included to encompass "all frontier issues in technology."

The Board further discussed about the quality of papers and whether the focus should be on more experienced researchers. Alison Gillwald highlighted that the object of CPRsouth was to provide a platform for young policy makers to engage with the seniors. This point was readily agreed by Phet Sayo. Fola Odufuwa stressed that some experienced researchers with expertise in the relevant field would be useful. Payal Malik said that the present focus although has shortcomings in terms of inconsistency in the quality of papers, this conference presented an opportunity for young researchers to excel and kindle their interest in policy making. Lishan Adam concurred that the present model worked well. Tracey Cohen recommended that the current selection process should continue while the focus can move towards networking and influencing to bring about change.

The Chair agreed and informed that young scholars was central to the conference where the thrust was on “how to intervene in the policy process.”

The focus then shifted to “curators and moderators” / format for choosing papers and the Chair asked the Board about the mechanism of decentralizing the decisions on the basis of subject (as was followed in the present conference). Since this mechanism had only been adopted the previous year, it was agreed by the Board that it would continue for the next conference. In this regard the Chair highlighted that due to paucity of time and lack of inputs certain sessions had to be taken over by others. Further the possibility of a more active involvement by the curators was discussed. It was pointed out that there were some errors (typographical and other minor ones) in the policy briefs, the Chair apologized on behalf of the organizers for this oversight.

Pirongrong Ramasoota stated that the current format (of decentralized reviewing) was indeed better than the previous model. Lishan Adam, added that additional reading was required in the group he had worked with. Fola Adufuwa suggested a possible partnership with regulators for a wider reach out. The Chair responded by stating that although regulators have been invited in the past they had not participated.

Status: Decided to continue with current format; Chair to circulate list of revised topics for 2019

#### **Pilot project on continued policy engagement between conferences 2018.4**

To enable continued participation of the young scholars between conferences, the Chair suggested a project. The universal service fund disbursements in various jurisdictions being of great significance and this information be easily accessed (in several jurisdictions), this could be a starting point for engagement. The Chair had co-authored “Metrics to improve universal- service fund disbursements” which would soon be published.

Young Scholars, who were already given access to this paper, could examine the universal access fund disbursements in their countries and report back. Essentially they would have to report in relation to collection, disbursements and balance in the last 10 years. Alison Gillwald added that this was already happening and this study was undertaken by certain organizations region- wise.

This move was welcomed by all the Board members

Status: Pilot project approved

#### **Location of CPRsouth 2019**

The Chair whilst opening the discussion for the venue of the next conference stated that it has never been held in the same city twice. However, through Siopa Vakataki ‘Ofa’s organization, UNESCAP (ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division) they do have the invitation to hold the next CPRsouth in the UN Convention Centre, Bangkok, Thailand. Pirongrong Ramasoota cautioned that there could be certain inconveniences and tight security screenings, particularly participants may not be able to leave in between. The Chair and Helani Galpaya added that this would not pose a

huge obstacle and in fact encourage better participation. Phet Sayo agreed and added that it would add to the “awe” factor and be an experience for the young scholars. The Board members agreed to the proposal of holding CPRsouth 2019 in Bangkok subject to funding and satisfactory terms being agreed upon. Discussions to be also held with Chulalongkorn University.

Alison Gillwald suggested that Addis Ababa the seat of UN ECA may be considered for CPRsouth 2020.

Status: approved

### **Approval of audited accounts**

The audited accounts for CPRsouth 2017 were circulated and approved.

It was proposed by Alison Gillwald that expenses incurred for each young scholar be given out to highlight the high costs, and this affirmed by the other members of the Board.

Status: approved; all participants to be informed of what was spent on each, with immediate effect

### **Any other business**

#### Appointment of Chair and Alternative Chair

Rohan Samarajiva was nominated by Supriya Singh for re-appointment as Chair and seconded by Payal Malik

Pirongrong Ramasoota was proposed by Alison Gilwald for appointment as Alternative Chair and seconded by Helani Galpaya.

Pirongrong Ramasoota agreed to be the Alternative Chair for one year.

At this stage the expenses incurred for the Board (for travel) was circulated. Pirongrong Ramasoota informed the Board that she would be refunding USD 872, being the additional costs incurred for business class travel. She explained that business class travel was necessitated by health concerns.

#### Criteria for evaluation of best policy briefs

There was a discussion on evaluation of papers presented. Alison Gillwald mentioned that a democratic process based on votes be followed for determining the best papers. It was decided by the Board for CPRsouth 2018 and 2019, awards for best policy briefs would be only amongst first time presenters. It was suggested by Helani Galpaya, that for CPRsouth 2019, the evaluation for best papers can be on the basis of popular votes. Helani Galpaya added that this can be done easily through an app (by clicking on various emoticons) and she could help co-ordinate this.



The closing remarks were for retiring member Alison Gillwald. Rohan Samarajiva remarked about her active involvement in all the conferences and how without her contribution the conferences could not have taken place in various parts of Africa. Supriya Singh added that CPRsouth combined Asia and Africa, bringing in the best personal and intellectual synergy. Helani Galpaya mentioned how the quality of the papers had greatly improved since 2009 and credited the role played by Alison Gillwald. Alison Gillwald thanked all the Board members and assured that RIA would continue its involvement. The Chair also made special mention of the exceptional contributions made by Lishan Adam.

Status: New criteria for best policy brief selection adopted with immediate effect

There being no other business, the meeting was concluded.