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NEWS



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Highlights



On the Accra leg of her Africa visit in December 2018, IMF Managing Director, Mme. **Christine Lagarde** met and interacted with staff from the AFRITAC West 2 (AFW2) and Resident Representative’s offices in Accra.



Mr. Owen, Deputy Director of the IMF Africa Department visited AFW2 headquarters in Accra, during which he held discussions with the team, as well as country authorities at the Ghana Revenue Authority and Bank of Ghana, on capacity development (CD) and strategies moving forward.

Pictured (L to R): **Mr. Oral Williams**, AFW2 Center Director, **Mr. David Owen**, Deputy Director of the IMF Africa Department, **Mr. Henry Yentumi**, Advisor to the Commissioner General, **Mr. Emmanuel Kofi Nti**, Commissioner General of the Ghana Revenue Authority.

Summary of Work Plan Execution and Key Achievements

Tax Administration

In tax administration, capacity development work continued to strengthen member countries' capabilities to manage tax compliance. Audit training missions were conducted to improve officers' capacity to effectively audit medium taxpayer segments in the **Gambia** and **Liberia**. In **the Gambia**, officers were trained to audit the telecom sector, including using computer assisted audit tools. **The Gambia** revenue administration was also assisted to expand their sources of third-party information and signed an MOU with the Gambia telecom regulator. In **Ghana** and **the Gambia**, missions also sought to build capacity in data matching, a key skill set required for auditing and ensuring compliance. AFW2 assisted **Sierra Leone** to expand its tax base by improving the country's capacity to administer domestic excise duties. In addition, AFW2 conducted missions to take stock of progress and refocus modernization and reform efforts in **Liberia** and **Sierra Leone**.

Customs

Activities continued to support customs administrations of AFW2 member countries in the development of structures, skill-sets and strategy for ensuring border compliance. Improving risk management remained a focus of CD during the period, as countries were supported in the design and implementation of Risk Management Strategies and equipping relevant Risk Management Units to implement them in **Nigeria** and **Sierra Leone**. In **Cabo Verde** and **Ghana**, efforts to build capacity in risk management included further mentoring support in intelligence and investigation. In **Gambia**, **Liberia** and **Nigeria**, significant work went into improving the accuracy of audits and declarations through post-clearance audit support, review of exemption procedures and coordinated border management. CD resulted in significant progress in the development of an RM strategy in **Cabo Verde**, the establishment of a Risk Management Unit and an action plan for PCA best practices in Nigeria, as well updating **Sierra Leone's** existing RM strategy to include Automated Systems for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) and standard operating procedures for risk profiling. In **Liberia**, a National Integrated Border Management (NIBM) strategy has been successfully developed, for implementation and preparations made to train representatives involved in its implementation. In **the Gambia** we provided CD to enhance the GRA's ability to monitor and manage customs exemptions.

Public Financial Management (PFM)

Interventions sought to improve budget planning and execution in AFW2 member countries. They focused on the areas for evaluating Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects, as well as building capacity in the preparation of financial statements in line with International Public-Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the Government Finance Statistics (GFS). Reports were published by **The Gambia** and **Sierra Leone**. In the Gambia s AFW2 PFM experts helped to populate the State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) database for the five largest SOEs. They also collaborated with IMF headquarters to support the EU on a PFM and revenue administration installation mission and the implementation of a Medium Term Fiscal Framework (MTFF) and advice on cash management.



Training on Private Partnerships Fiscal Risk Assessment Model (PFRAM), Oct. 29

In **Ghana**, over 20 Ministry of Finance staff received training on evaluating the Public-Private Partnerships Fiscal Risk Assessment Model (PFRAM), project finance, and evaluation and financial modeling. The Boankra Inland Port was analyzed as a case study during the practical training. In **Sierra Leone** and **The Gambia**, the missions assisted in the revision of the Chart of Accounts, to facilitate program-based budgeting and the preparation of GFS reports in the future.

Monetary Operations (MONOPS)

TA delivered in MONOPS involved continued support in improving monetary policy analysis (**Nigeria** and **Sierra Leone**), payment system oversight (**The Gambia** and **Liberia**), monetary operations (**Liberia**) and FX operations (**The Gambia**). Additionally, missions were conducted to support countries to improve compliance with CPSS-IOSCO Principals, especially in the risk assessment of real-time gross settlement systems (**Bank of Ghana**).¹ A joint regional effort between AFW2 and AFE, also provided training in a regional workshop on current payment system oversight issues in October.



Central Bank of Nigeria officials during a hands-on training on monetary policy analysis, Dec. 3

¹ CPSS-IOSCO denotes the Committee on Payment and Settlement Systems of the Bank for International Settlements and the Technical Committee of the International Organization of Securities Commissions.

In **Nigeria**, the training on monetary policy analysis, strengthened analytical skills by introducing methods of computing and assessing real sector indicators and using the analysis for economic story-telling, through a hands-on workshop. The missions in **Sierra Leone** resulted in the Research Department in the central bank (Bank of Sierra Leone) preparing the assessment of economic conditions in Quarter 3, 2018 and a one-year outlook for inflation. Another key achievement in **Sierra Leone** was the first successful automated foreign exchange auction, conducted by the Bank of Sierra Leone in October 2018, following a series of regional and country-level missions on foreign exchange and money market instruments. Another milestone was reached when the Central Bank of **The Gambia** resumed the issuance of central bank bills for the more efficient sterilization of excess liquidity in the banking system.

Financial Sector Regulation & Supervision

In the Financial Sector Regulation and Supervision, CD was provided to the supervision divisions of the regional central banks to continue to build capacity in IT Supervision, preventing IT Fraud and Enhancing Credit Analysis (**Liberia** and **Sierra Leone**). AFW2 also supported the improvement of supervision and reporting structures to comply with Basel II/II and IFRS 9 Standards (**Gambia** and **Ghana**). A regional workshop focused on stress testing, as a means of facilitating regional peer-to-peer learning.



Participants in the Regional Workshop on Stress Testing, Cabo Verde, December 4, 2018

Statistics

Statistical bureaus of AFW2 member countries continued to compile data and compute relevant macroeconomic indicators, with guidance from statistics experts. Missions supported the countries to improve computing methods and generate national accounts data (**all AFW2 member countries**) and consumer price indices (**Ghana**). Experts made significant progress toward (i) backcasting, (ii) improved methodology of Quarterly and Annual GDP compilation, (iii) determination of SUT dimensions, and (iv) update of CPI, including the completed collection and review of data points. Also, a lot of training was delivered to the member countries during the missions, especially on System of national accounts framework (SNA 2008), Supply and Use Tables, Classifications, Informal economy and financial sector.

Regional Workshops & Professional Attachments

Regional collaboration and peer-to-peer learning was further encouraged with three regional workshops/courses and two professional attachments were organized.

For MONOPs, AFW2 and AFRITAC East jointly held a week-long regional workshop on the **Principles for Financial Market Infrastructures (PFMI) in Accra, from October 29 – November 2, 2018**. It was attended by 25 officials from 11 central banks and the West African Monetary Institute (WAMI). The workshop aimed to enhance the level of proficiency in the new international standards and to support efforts towards compliance and discuss current development in the FMI landscape.



Participants at the CPSS-IOSCO PFMI Regional Workshop in Accra, Ghana

A regional workshop on **Stress Testing** was led by the Banking supervision LTX in **Cabo Verde, December 3 – 14, 2018**. This two-week workshop was organized to train experienced supervisors from member Central Banks to conduct regular stress tests of the banking system.

Professional attachments involved staff of the Central Bank of Liberia visiting the Central Bank of Nigeria to observe and learn from monetary policy committee (MPC) functions at the CBN. Staff of the central bank of Sierra Leone were also posted to Bank of Ghana to learn from their financial market operations.



In Accra, AFW2 conducted a regional workshop on the **Economic Issues of Regional Integration, January 28 - February 1**, in collaboration with the IMF's Institute of Capacity Development (ICD). A combination of lectures, which introduced the group to analytical tools, and case studies and breakout sessions encouraged conversation around regional integration in West Africa. (Pictured: participants at the workshop)

Centre Outreach



AFW2 Center Director engaged in several outreach activities over the course of the period, to engage with country authorities in Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. This was a key activity, as AFW2 prepares to begin a new phase, establish stronger channels between the RTAC and countries to determine CD needs and improve delivery going forward. (Pictured: Mr. Oral H. Williams with the Liberia Central Bank Deputy Governor and Director of Research and the IMF Resident Representative).

Upcoming Activities

TAX	
<p>Cabo Verde AFW2 will provide audit training in two missions scheduled for February and April.</p> <p>The Gambia In March, the Gambian Revenue Authority will receive support to develop a Compliance Management Framework.</p> <p>Ghana A mission on VAT compliance and data matching will be conducted in March, as a follow-up to a previous mission held in October 2018.</p>	<p>Liberia TA will be delivered in February and April to build capacity in arrears management and excise duties management, respectively.</p> <p>Nigeria A follow-up mission in data matching will be conducted in April</p> <p>Sierra Leone A mission on VAT compliance and data matching will be conducted in Feb, also as a follow-up to a previous mission held in 2018.</p>
CUSTOMS	
<p>Cabo Verde A mission will assist with completion of business process mapping and development of customs standard operating procedures in March.</p> <p>The Gambia A customs induction training module will be delivered in April.</p> <p>Ghana AFW2 will deliver mentoring support and training on Intelligence and Investigation in February and post clearance audit in April. A mission will also be conducted in April to assist with the development of an integrity strategy and action plan.</p> <p>Liberia Training will be provided on valuation and classification in February.</p>	<p>Nigeria Two missions will support Nigerian customs officials in post clearance audit and the development of an integrity strategy and action plan in April.</p> <p>Sierra Leone In April, a mission to Sierra Leone will conduct a valuation and classification training needs analysis and preparation of training module for further capacity building.</p> <p>Regional Workshop A regional workshop on customs integrity and the development of an ECOWAS Customs Integrity Framework will be held in Accra in March.</p>
PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	
<p>Ghana AFW2 will provide support to the MOFEA in preparing, appraising and prioritizing capital projects during a mission in February.</p>	<p>Liberia In February, a mission will support the Ministry of Finance to develop/review its SOE Fiscal Risk Strategy.</p>
MONOPS	
<p>Liberia A mission will provide training on monetary policy analysis and foreign exchange operations in February.</p>	<p>Nigeria Central bank officials will also receive training on monetary policy analysis.</p>

REAL SECTOR STATISTICS

Liberia

TA mission is planned in March, to review the data of National Accounts Annual Survey and other administrative sources for the rebasing of the national accounts estimates.

Cabo Verde

In February, a TA mission will be conducted to support the rebased CPI compilation, and another one is expected in March on national accounts rebasing.

The Gambia

A national accounts mission will provide TA on developing the workplan for the next rebase and follow up the industry coding in The Gambia.

Nigeria

TA will be provided to review the progress on the SUT development, continue the work on the rebasing planning process and review progress on quarterly GDP estimates in March.

AFW2 Says Goodbye to Cheryl Bruce, Banking Supervision Regional Advisor and Founder of ELPA

AFW2 bid farewell to Cheryl Bruce, Regional Advisor for Financial Sector Supervision, in January 2019, after 4 years of being at the Centre. During her time at AFW2 she found a home in Ghana and left a lasting mark in the lives of many through her TA efforts and outreach. Cheryl shared her experiences and memories below:



Cheryl Bruce with children from the ELPA program.

How would you describe your time at AFRITAC West 2?

In three simple words: Fulfilling, Inspiring, and Spiritually-uplifting. I thoroughly enjoyed working with the various countries and helping to guide compliance. I came to appreciate the differences in cultures and tribes; and the strength and innovation of people in finding a means to survive. Finally, nothing can compare with the experience of returning to and learning more about my roots!

What are some of the lessons learned while working with different countries in the field of banking supervision?

I gained a deeper insight into the challenges faced by low income countries in the conduct and oversight of banking; and more fully appreciated the need for proportionality in the application of international standards. For example, we often speak of banking as aiding maturity transformation, and matching borrowers to lenders. However, in West Africa there are banks where lending constitutes a minute portion of their business operations, many loans are short to medium term, and there is no desire to lend to individuals; albeit sometimes for logical reasons such as lack of loan addresses and proper IDs.

What part of the Ghanaian experience did you most enjoy/will you miss the most?

The people. The warmth, smiles, welcoming attitude and polite mannerisms.

You founded a wonderful initiative Enhanced Learning and Play in Africa (ELPA) during your stay. What is one of your favorite memories from working with ELPA and the children you helped?

Permit me two. The first is the look of wonder on the faces of adults and children when we opened the ELPA Learning room. Eyes and mouths rounded at the colorful room with a range of books, play items and learning resources. It was a joy to think of the strong collaboration from both HQ and AFW2 in making this dream a reality. I also recall the intense squeals of joy and excitement when I taught phonics using a ‘wheel of fortune.’ That day epitomized my vision of promoting learning through fun and play.

What is the future of ELPA and in what ways can interested parties help sustain it?

I see ELPA as having a strong future, given the local and international partnerships, and the fact that so many people have bought into the vision. We also have a trained pool of local staff, who do an excellent job in carrying forward the work. For sustainability - donations, donations, donations please! We are also looking to widen our pool of volunteers, and hope that people can commit to supporting at least one day a month; and/or to providing programs in the creative arts, sports and IT among other things.

AFW2 and World Bank Group Support ELPA with Charity Dinner



AFW2 and the World Bank Group hosted a charity dinner, themed “Taste of the Caribbean”, to raise funds for the IMF/WBG supported initiative, Enhanced Learning and Play in Africa -November 2018.

(Pictured: Jude, one of the children engaged by ELPA, speaking about his experience with ELPA and its impact, Founder Cheryl Bruce delivering a welcome speech and some of the children in ELPA entertaining guests with a dance performance.)

Staff Changes



AFW2 bid farewell to **Philip Wood**, Regional Advisor for Customs Revenue Administration in November 2018. Philip served for nearly two years at the Center, before taking up a new role in IMF AFRITAC South, headquartered in Mauritius.



Elirjeta Pepaj took on the role of Regional Advisor for Real Sector Statistics, succeeding Donna Grcman in October 2018. Mrs. Pepaj originates from Albania and has more than fourteen years of experience working on production of national accounts, prices and business statistics.



Elorm Darkey recently joined the AFRITAC WEST 2 Team as a Results-Based Management (RBM) Project Officer. He has collaborated with teams across boundaries in various economic projects where he provided program management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and co-ordination.

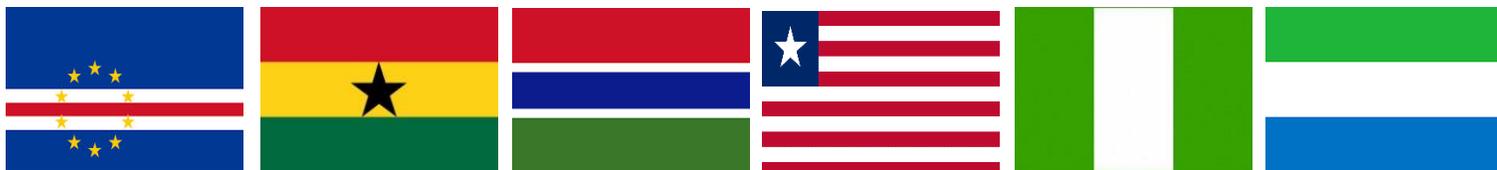


David Smith joined AFW2 as the Regional Advisor for Customs Revenue Administration in November 2018, succeeding Philip Smith. David Smith is a very experienced, former UK Customs Officer who then worked for Crown Agents for almost twenty years in the design and delivery of customs technical assistance, reform and modernization projects and programs throughout the world.

AFRITAC WEST 2 STAFF

Center Director	Oral H. Williams
Resident Advisors	
Revenue Administration	
Tax	Henry Gaperi
Customs	David Smith
Public Financial Management	John Grinyer Naresh Jha
Monetary Operations and Payment Systems	Zsolt Érsek
Financial Supervision and Regulation	Cheryl Bruce
Real Sector Statistics	Elirjeta Pepaj
Results-Based Management Officer	Elorm Darkey
Economist	Pokuaa Adu
Office Manager	Janice Norman
Administrative Support	
Admin/IT Officer	Selase Kofi Dusi
Administrative Assistant	Maria Adam
Staff Assistant	Deborah Morrison
Driver	Peter Nii Laryea

AFW2 Member Countries



AFW2 Development Partners



Completed Technical Assistance Reports² in FY 2019

Title of Report	Country	Date Sent to Authorities
REVENUE ADMINISTRATION (CUSTOMS)		
Development and Implementation of DNRE Integrity Strategy	Cabo Verde	7/18/2018
Implementation of Risk Management Strategy	Liberia	6/28/2018
Post Clearance Audit Training and Mentoring Support (Phase 2)	Liberia	7/26/2018
Development and Implementation of Standard Operating Procedures for Control of Exemptions and Waivers from Customs Duties and Taxes	Liberia	8/31/2018
Valuation and Classification Training and Mentoring Support (Phase 1)	Liberia	9/17/2018
Implementation of Nigeria Customs Service Strategic Plan and Key Performance Indicators	Nigeria	8/29/2018
Delivery of Project Management and Leadership, and Management Training	Nigeria	5/5/2018
Review of Post Clearance Audit and Training in Container Inspection and Cargo Examination Procedures	Sierra Leone	7/18/2018
Review of Transit Procedures and Training in Cargo Inspection Procedures	Gambia, The	6/28/2018
Delivery of Customs Induction Training Module (Phase 3)	Gambia, The	10/3/2018
Coordinated Border Management Program (Phase 1)	Liberia	10/29/2018
Development and Implementation of Operational Unit Plans and Supporting Key Performance Indicators	Sierra Leone	10/3/2018
Provision of Mentoring Support to Intelligence and Investigation Units (Phase 1),	Ghana	11/30/2018
Implementation of Nigeria Customs Service Strategic Plan and Development of Key Performance Indicators	Nigeria	1/9/2019
Implementation of Risk Management Strategy and Support to the Risk Management Unit	Sierra Leone	1/9/2019
Coordinated Border Management Program (Phase 2)	Liberia	1/16/2019
Implementation of Post Audit Clearance Procedures (Phase 2)	Nigeria	1/21/2019
PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT		
The State-Owned Enterprise Sector in the Gambia Financial Reporting Gap Analysis and Development of the State-Owned Enterprise Reporting Database	Gambia, The	6/21/2018

² Includes Technical Memos/Reports and Aide Memoires

Strengthening the Framework and Implementation of the TSA Action Plan	Gambia, The	10/23/2018
Continuing Treasury Single Account and Cash Management Reforms	Gambia, The	10/26/2018
Fiscal Data Integrity and Fiscal Reporting	Liberia	6/28/2018
Continuing Treasury Single Account and Cash Management Reforms	Liberia	10/26/2018
Continue Momentum on Restructuring the Ministry of Finance (Budget Division)	Ghana	11/6/2018
Operationalizing the Medium Term Macro-Fiscal Framework and Linking to the Budget	Gambia	11/2/2018
Strengthening the Framework and Implementation of the TSA Action Plan	Gambia	10/23/2018
Strengthening Capacity in the Financial Reporting of State-Owned Enterprises	Liberia	11/28/2018
Improved Forecasting of Macroeconomic Variables	Sierra Leone	12/12/2018
MONETARY POLICY AND PAYMENT SYSTEMS		
Improving Monetary Policy Analysis	Liberia	9/20/2018
Improving Foreign Exchange Operations and Liquidity Forecasting	Ghana	6/21/2018
Improving Monetary Policy Analysis and Foreign Exchange Operations	Sierra Leone	11/1/2018
Strengthening Monetary Policy Analysis	Gambia	11/28/2018
FINANCIAL SUPERVISION		
Enhancing Risk-Based Supervision	Gambia	7/6/2018
IFRS 9 Implementation	Nigeria	7/30/2018
Enhancing the Implementation of Basel II	Nigeria	7/23/2018
Enhancing Credit Risk Analysis	Nigeria	10/23/2018
Credit Risk	Sierra Leone	10/12/2018
Credit Risk	Sierra Leone	7/16/2018
REAL SECTOR STATISTICS		
Consumer Price Index	Cabo Verde	9/7/2018
National Accounts	Gambia, The	8/13/2018
National Accounts	Ghana	7/19/2018
National Accounts	Liberia	8/2/2018
Consumer Price Index	Nigeria	7/4/2018
Consumer Price Index	Ghana	1/9/2019
National Accounts	Liberia	1/9/2019
National Accounts mission	Ghana	1/17/2019