

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

The IMF's Communication Strategy

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in Consultation with Other Departments

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May 29, 2007

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFR	African Department
ECB	European Central Bank
EUR	European Department
EUO	IMF Offices in Europe
EXR	External Relations Department
FAD	Fiscal Affairs Department
FIN	Finance Department
GFSR	<i>Global Financial Stability Report</i>
HRD	Human Resources Department
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KOA	Key output areas
LIC	Low-income country
LOE	Languages Other than English
MCM	Monetary and Capital Markets Department
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OTM	Office of Technical Assistance Management
PDR	Policy Development and Review Department
PNoWB	Parliamentary Network of the World Bank
PIN	Public Information Notice
REO	<i>Regional Economic Outlook</i>
RES	Research Department
STA	Statistics Department
TA	Technical Assistance
TGS	Technology and General Services Department
WEO	<i>World Economic Outlook</i>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review of the IMF’s communication strategy comes at an important time. The institution is carrying out comprehensive reforms to strengthen its effectiveness in helping its 185 members meet the challenges of globalization. The reforms also aim to position the Fund as an institution which, while fulfilling its role as a trusted advisor to its diverse membership, plays an integral role in public debates on global and national issues within its mandate.

Communication is central to the functioning of modern organizations. Organizations use communication increasingly as a policy tool rather than simply as a means of conveying information. Moreover, rapid changes in technology offer new, cheaper, and more effective ways to communicate and with more people.

The current communication strategy took shape in the mid-1990s. In the face of sometimes intense public scrutiny, the Fund increased its transparency and publication of information, most notably on the external website; established more systematic contacts with the media; and extended outreach to a wider array of non-media audiences—including civil society—both to better explain IMF policies and to seek feedback to improve them.

At the time of the last review of the communication strategy in 2005, Executive Directors noted that it was “reasonably balanced.” They also endorsed the objective of “better coordination and integration of communication activities with IMF operations, both in country work and in broader policy design and implementation”—recognizing that communication is not an add-on, but rather plays an essential role in supporting the IMF’s mission and work. The Board noted that, for the future, the communication strategy would need to take into account the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), which was being developed at the time.

Since then, the MTS has been endorsed by the membership and is now being implemented. The MTS recognizes the changing global context in which the Fund operates and provides the overall agenda with which the Fund’s communication activities must be aligned. While communication related to the Fund’s research and policy advice—both globally and in individual countries—must be maintained and enhanced, a priority is to support delivery of the MTS, conveying the message of an institution responding effectively to global change. The MTS itself recognizes the importance of strengthened outreach and communication as a means of enhancing the Fund’s effectiveness.

The strategy proposed in this paper seeks to build understanding and support for the IMF’s reform agenda as outlined in the MTS, further integrate communications with operations, raise the impact of communication tools, and rebalance outreach efforts (Box 1). Implementation of the strategy will entail: use of communication increasingly as a tool to make operations more effective; coordinated outreach efforts across the institution; more effective and strategic use of products in languages other than English; and further modernization of the Fund’s communication instruments. It will also require a more strategic approach to outreach tailored to the various target audiences—government officials and legislators, markets and the private sector, the media and non-governmental organizations—that can shape policies as well as perceptions of the Fund.

All parts of the Fund—the Board, management and staff—undertake communication and outreach in support of the institution. The External Relations Department (EXR) has a key role in supporting these efforts and is directly responsible for a range of communication activities and products. The proposed strategy involves some reprioritization of EXR’s activities, including redirecting dollar savings achieved from a more cost-effective publications program. No increase in EXR’s existing resource allocation is proposed. Like all other Fund departments, EXR is already working in a tightly constrained budget environment and, in that context, delivering the proposed strategy will be challenging.

Box 1. The IMF’s Communication Strategy

Goals of the communication strategy: Strengthen the Fund’s effectiveness by (i) raising understanding and support among key constituencies of the Fund’s mission and reform agenda; and (ii) using communication as a tool in the delivery of the Fund’s operational activities.

Main elements of the communication strategy proposed in this paper are

- **Building understanding and support for the IMF’s reform agenda.** Progress in the implementation of the MTS will be highlighted, including the work to strengthen multilateral and bilateral surveillance, reform the system of quotas and voice, design a sustainable income model for the Fund, and refocusing communication efforts about the Fund’s role in low-income countries.
- **Integration of communications and Fund operations.** Further coordination of efforts across the institution is envisaged, including on efforts to disseminate global and regional surveillance products. While taking into account the role of the Fund as a trusted advisor to country authorities, there is substantial room to expand on country-level outreach. EXR is stepping up its efforts to assist Fund departments in the design of appropriate communication strategies.
- **Increased impact of communication tools.** This will be achieved by placing increased emphasis on web-based technologies; aligning publications with institutional and departmental priorities; better marketing of Fund publications; and more effective and strategic use of products in languages other than English.
- **Rebalancing outreach efforts.** Recent efforts to follow a strategic approach to outreach through focused interactions with legislators, civil society, and the academic and think tank community will continue, and further efforts will be devoted to interactions with the private sector and financial markets.

Judging success: Successful implementation of the strategy would validate perceptions of the IMF as

- playing a key role and providing a public good in helping to maintain the stability of the international monetary and financial system;
- a unique multilateral forum for the discussion of global economic issues and a source of new and important ideas on these issues;
- a full partner in international efforts to help low-income countries attain development goals;
- a source of high-quality policy advice, technical expertise, and statistical information;
- a learning institution that values two-way communication; and
- objective, transparent, and representative of its membership.

The paper is structured as follows:

- Section I assesses the evolution of the current strategy and the progress made to date.
- Section II analyzes changes in the Fund's operating environment, including evolving perceptions of the Fund and trends in communication practices and technology.
- Section III discusses the Fund's response to these changes in terms of the communication strategy going forward, including supporting the MTS and its main elements, the use of communication as a policy tool to make operations more effective, and the roles and responsibilities of different players across the Fund.
- Section IV addresses strategic shifts being undertaken by EXR to change the balance and mix of communication products, particularly via the web and publications, the use of products in languages other than English, and strengthening of internal communication.
- Section V addresses implementation, cost-effectiveness, and measurement issues.
- Section VI suggests some issues for discussion by Executive Directors.

I. EVOLUTION OF THE IMF'S COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

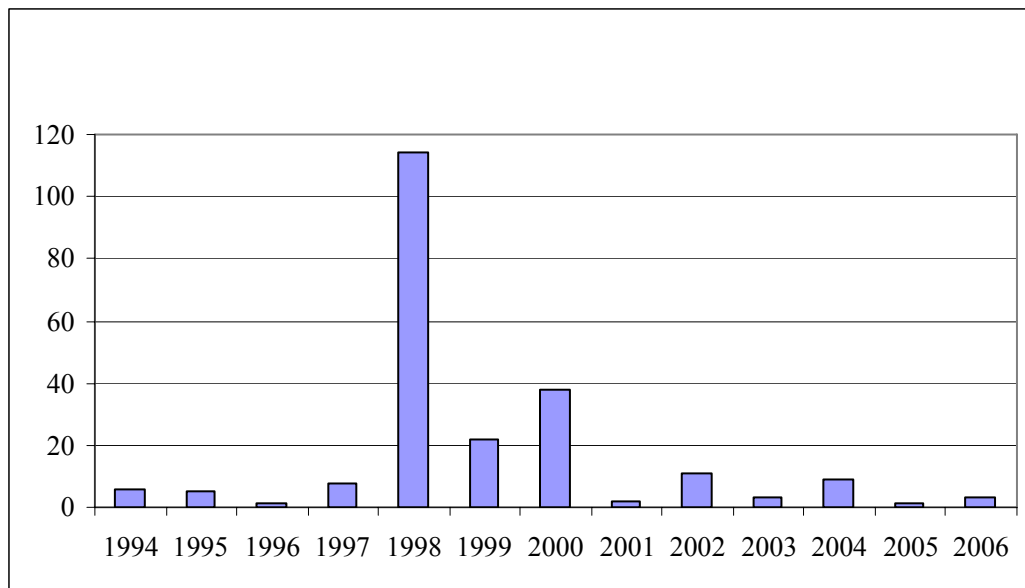
1. **The IMF's communication strategy has evolved significantly since the mid-1990s.** The international financial crises of 1994–98, in particular, led to vocal criticism of IMF-supported programs, which were amplified by advocates for debt relief in low-income countries. This prompted a significant increase in the IMF's communication effort, with a focus on three key elements: transparency, engagement with the media, and outreach to a broad group of stakeholders.
2. **Over time, this strategy has yielded a number of results:**
 - **Transparency:** The latest report on implementation of the IMF's transparency policy shows that 142 out of 185 countries published all of their Article IV Consultation and Use of Fund Resources reports in 2006.¹ This increased transparency is now widely recognized. In its *2006 Global Accountability Report*, One World Trust ranked the IMF third out of 10 among inter-governmental organizations in terms of transparency, and fourth out of 30 among inter-governmental and private transnational companies.²
 - **Engagement with the media:** A biweekly press briefing by EXR, instituted in late 1999 and initially intended for Washington, D.C.-based press, has now developed into a webcast for journalists all over the world. The online Media Briefing Center, a password-protected multimedia site set up in FY2004, also allows journalists to access documents under embargo, participate in press briefings, and receive responses to information and data tailored to their needs. Operational staff, particularly senior managers, mission chiefs, and resident representatives, have increased their contacts with the press. Media references to the IMF using negative descriptors such as “secretive”—a frequent descriptor in 1998–2000 and an indicator reported in previous Board papers on the communication strategy—have remained low (Figure 1).
 - **Outreach to a broader group of stakeholders:** Reaching out to non-official constituencies such as civil society and the private sector has proven useful to the Fund not only in terms of explaining its positions but also in listening and using feedback from external sources to improve operations. Examples where such feedback has been useful include the streamlining of conditionality, the IMF's early support for the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, and participation in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

¹ See “Key Trends in the Implementation of the Transparency Policy,” January 30, 2007; available at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2007/pr0721.htm>. The report features data on documents considered by the Board between November 1, 2005, and October 31, 2006, and published by December 31, 2006.

² The report, available at http://www.oneworldtrust.org/?display=index_2006, assesses the 30 organizations on four dimensions of accountability—transparency, participation, evaluation, and complaint and response. This is the first time that the Fund has participated in this assessment. One World Trust plans to study the same 30 organizations again in 2008.

3. **In its 2005 review, the Board noted progress in the communication strategy, but saw the need to continue adapting it to a changing global context.** Directors indicated that the strategy had served the aims of strengthening the constituency for sound policies and enhancing the effectiveness of IMF policy advice.³ At the same time, the Board took note of the “ongoing development” of the MTS and endorsed the proposal for stronger integration of operations and communication activities to enhance the Fund’s effectiveness in a changing environment. The following section examines some of these changes and points to some shortcomings and challenges in terms of perceptions of the Fund—emerging since the 2005 review.

Figure 1. Reference to IMF and “Secretive” in the Media



Source: Factiva. Number of stories in individual years, in English-language publications.

II. A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

A. Changing Global Context and Perceptions of the IMF

4. **Changing economic and financial conditions carry significant implications for the IMF.** The MTS notes that “twenty-first century globalization—with overwhelming movements in capital and abrupt shifts in comparative advantage—has altered the context of the Fund’s mission.” Indeed, the MTS views the evolving process of globalization as the main challenge facing the Fund and its membership.⁴

³ See “Integrating IMF Communications and Operations,” February 10, 2005; and “Responsibilities of the External Relations Department,” Supplement 1, February 10, 2005. The papers are available at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pn/2005/pn0534.htm>.

⁴ See “The Managing Director’s Report on the IMF’s Medium-Term Strategy,” Rev. 1, September 15, 2005; also available at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/omd/2005/eng/091505.pdf>.

5. **In recent years, a majority of the IMF’s membership has experienced an improvement in macroeconomic conditions and, in the absence of crises, the need for IMF financing has diminished.** While this decline may be cyclical, it means that, at least in the near term, the Fund’s role needs to be less focused on lending and crisis management and more focused on providing top-quality advice on economic policies and on identifying risks—most notably through surveillance.

6. **Public discussion has also reflected this changing emphasis in the Fund’s role.** For example, while policymakers and many in the academic and think tank community recognize the importance of surveillance, others are skeptical about its leverage outside a lending program setting and in a world where high-quality analysis is available from many quarters. Increasingly, this has led to questions about the role of the Fund.⁵

7. **Recent qualitative research conducted among opinion makers on perceptions of the Fund underscores an increasing emphasis on the IMF’s shift to a non-lending role.**⁶ This research notes that various factors such as global economic stability and increased private investment in developing countries have diminished the IMF’s importance as a lending institution. At the same time, opinion-makers indicate that the importance of the Fund’s technical expertise and policy advice has increased amidst ongoing globalization.

8. **This opinion research further indicates that the quality, objectivity, and reliability of the Fund’s expertise and advice are perceived by most stakeholders as indispensable and unique.** In this respect, the IMF is well positioned to leverage its knowledge, technical excellence, and global experience to enhance its role as the leading voice on issues and trends related to the global economy.

9. **At the same time, a number of factors are identified as limiting the receptivity and impact of IMF advice and influence.** These include the following:

- Negative associations with past loan conditionality (particularly in respect of some emerging market countries and, more generally, in low-income countries, especially in Africa); and
- Perceived lack of even-handedness in the Fund’s treatment of advanced economies versus other economies.

⁵ See, for example, Adam Lerrick, “What’s Left for the IMF?” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 13, 2007; Johannes Linn and Colin Bradford, “The Next Phase of IMF Reform,” *washingtonpost.com*, September 27, 2006; and Ted Truman, “Diminishing Prospects for IMF Reform?” *Handelsblatt*, March 27, 2007.

⁶ In 2006, an independent research consultant with a team of professional interviewers conducted confidential interviews with opinion leaders from around the world on their perceptions of the Fund and the effectiveness of its outreach. About 75 respondents were chosen randomly from a global database—with balanced representation of stakeholder groups, geographic regions, and country categories.

Moreover, the *2006 Global Accountability Report* mentioned earlier noted that while the Fund did reasonably well on transparency, there were shortcomings in other areas, such as an uneven distribution of voice and control.⁷

10. **Stakeholders view enhanced engagement as key to strengthening the Fund’s relevance and effectiveness.** Without greater understanding, it will be more difficult for the Fund to develop the broader support it needs to make its policy advice effective. As the MTS states, there is a “need for the Fund to help convince broader public opinion, which—more so in an age of global communication—shapes the decisions of governments.”⁸

B. Changing Communication Technologies and Practice

11. **Rapid changes in technology as well as in the way people receive information also have implications for communication.** Newspaper readership has been rapidly declining in many countries, while for increasingly large numbers of people in most parts of the world the internet is becoming a prime source of news.⁹

12. **Everyday use of the web as a primary communication tool has accelerated dramatically the news cycle and exponentially expanded people’s access to information.** This means that the “response time” to deliver a message or to react to criticism is greatly reduced. Yesterday’s “rapid response” may be well behind today’s news curve. It also means that a news story can very quickly “go global.” Any organization that focuses only on the international media can find itself surprised by a news story originating locally. Use of the web is also changing people’s preferences for receiving information—with a general trend towards online rather than print.

13. **Another major development is the rapidly increasing variety of new products—blogs, wikis, podcasts, and web videos.** This heralds the rise of citizens not only as consumers, but also as producers of communication and news (Box 2). Every day, between 100 and 200 blogs refer to the Fund. A search of “IMF” on YouTube yields over 200 hits.¹⁰

14. **The IMF’s communication strategy must pay attention to the “new media”—especially the web.** At the same time, the Fund must continue to take full account of the traditional specialized journalists and opinion makers who cover global economic issues and

⁷ The Report also criticized the lack of a formal mechanism for external stakeholders to file complaints about Fund policies.

⁸ See bullet 4, page 6 of the MTS report, referenced in footnote 4.

⁹ “Pew Internet and American Life Project,” March 2006 report on *Online News*, see www.pewinternet.org.

¹⁰ The material on YouTube ranges from a documentary on the activities of protesters at the 2000 Annual Meetings in Prague to audio files of crank calls to EXR. In addition, for many, their view of the IMF is formed by films such as *Bamako* and *Life and Debt*.

the Fund's role. Some international organizations, for example, have already started using blogs to interact with external audiences, as well as more traditional tools such as letters to the editor and opinion editorials.¹¹

Box 2. Blogs, Wikis, and the New Media Landscape

The emergence of new media on the web, such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other digital media, is altering communications by blurring the line between producers and consumers of information. These easy-to-use tools are ushering in a new era, dubbed “Web 2.0” or the “Read/Write Web,” in which anyone with internet access can edit web pages, contribute to debates, and make his or her voice known.

Blogs, or web logs, have turned the internet into a powerful mass publishing engine that enables individuals to easily share views, receive comments, and reference related websites. A blog often resembles a personal journal, and its simplicity and ease of use allows users to publish quickly and to comment on events in real time.

A **wiki** is a web page that anyone can edit. The best-known example is Wikipedia, a vast online encyclopedia maintained by its users. They facilitate collaboration and web-based information sharing, and they make updating and revising content easy.

Podcasts are audio recordings delivered via the web. Before podcasts, individuals had few, if any, outlets for “broadcasting,” unless they worked for a major media outlet. With the advent of podcasting, individuals have relatively cheap and easy access to a tool for broadcasting on a broad range of subjects.

Web video has experienced rapid growth in the past few years, with YouTube and other video-sharing sites (websites that encourage users to post their own videos) leading the way. The small, clip-based format has proven compelling, both among web users and the mainstream media.

15. **In addition to responding to changes in technology, many organizations—public and private—now use communication in a different way.** As well as conveying information, communication is increasingly being used—and viewed—as an instrument of policy and an integral part of the business. Many central banks, for instance, now use communication strategically to send signals to markets and to the public about policy intentions.

16. **The MTS recognizes this shift towards communication as a policy tool.** It notes the challenge facing the Fund: “Fund transparency and outreach must go beyond mere publication of reports to becoming an integral part of the public debate on reforms, bringing to bear the power of ideas and cross-country experience.”¹²

¹¹ The WTO uses an “online chat” in which the Director General takes questions online and responds to them during a set period of time. The World Bank’s Private Sector Development (PSD) Blog, available at <http://psdblog.worldbank.org/>, hosts discussions on the role of private enterprise in fighting poverty. Though the hosts are Bank staff, a disclaimer notes that the blog is “informal and represents the quirks and opinions of the bloggers, not the World Bank Group.”

¹² See bullet 4, page 6 of the MTS report, already referenced in footnote 4.

III. RESPONDING TO CHANGE: SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MTS

17. **In the near term, a key goal of the communication strategy is to build support for the Fund's reform agenda.** It is important to communicate that the institution is modernizing its key functions to better respond to a changing global landscape and the evolving needs of its membership. Building support among key constituencies for the institution's mission and reforms raises the overall effectiveness of the institution. This is discussed in Section A.

18. **The second, equally important goal, is to use communication to make the Fund's ongoing operational work more effective.** How communication can be used in this manner is discussed in Section B, using the core area of surveillance as a major illustration. Achieving this goal requires contributions from all parts of the Fund, as discussed in Section C.

A. Building Understanding and Support for the IMF's Reform Agenda

19. **To help build support for the reforms outlined in the MTS, the communication strategy needs to encompass each of its main elements:** (i) new directions in surveillance, including Multilateral Consultations; (ii) the changing role of the Fund in emerging market countries; (iii) more effective engagement in low-income countries; (iv) building institutions and capacity; (v) reforming quotas and voice; and (vi) developing a new income model for the Fund. Underpinning all these activities are the stream of ideas produced by the Fund's research, data-gathering and policy analysis that can be used by policymakers, markets and academics alike.

20. **The focus of communications at each point in time needs to reflect the state of progress in the agenda.** At the 2006 Annual Meetings, for example, the emphasis was on reform of quotas and voice and the vote to increase the shares of a number of countries. At the Spring Meetings in 2007, the emphasis was on surveillance and, in particular, the Multilateral Consultation on global imbalances.¹³

21. **The Board's semi-annual discussion of the Work Program helps to determine communication priorities related to the various elements of the MTS.** Each element requires a customized approach:

- ***On surveillance:*** The challenge is to communicate how this core activity contributes to economic and financial stability for individual member countries and for the international economy, and how the Fund is responding to the evolution of the global economic system by updating its toolkit. This includes the review of the 1977 Decision on Surveillance over Exchange Rate Policies,

¹³ For the press release on Quotas and Related Governance Reforms at the 2006 Annual Meetings in Singapore, see <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2006/pr06205.htm>; and for the press release on Multilateral Consultations at the 2007 Spring Meetings, see <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2007/pr0772.htm>.

a sharpening of exchange rate analysis, the strengthening of financial sector surveillance, and the introduction of a new surveillance tool in the form of Multilateral Consultations.¹⁴ This work provides an opportunity to communicate that, by its responsiveness to the needs of its membership in this core area of responsibility, the Fund remains as relevant as ever.

- ***On emerging market economies:*** Perceptions persist in some quarters that the Fund has not moved far and fast enough to meet the needs of this segment of its membership. Changing these perceptions includes efforts to demonstrate that financial and capital market issues are well integrated into the Fund’s surveillance and that its crisis prevention capacity is attuned to countries’ needs. The ongoing consultations with emerging market members—especially on a possible new financing instrument—are key to success in this area.
- ***On building institutions and capacity:*** Despite accounting for about 25 percent of the Fund’s outputs, the scope and value of this activity is not always well understood by stakeholders. A strengthened communication effort needs to convey that the Fund’s technical assistance and training plays a critical role in strengthening policy-making capacity in a few well-targeted areas—especially in low- and lower-middle-income countries where 90 percent of this activity is allocated. The benefits to the global community (as well as to individual countries) should also be emphasized.
- ***On quotas and voice:*** Governance reform is directly related to perceptions of the Fund’s relevance and legitimacy. An effective communication strategy is essential to explain the importance of quota reform, to manage expectations, and to promote consensus on the complex issues involved. Outreach needs to focus not only on official sector audiences, but also on other influential parties including parliamentarians, the academic and think tank community, and civil society.
- ***On a new income model:*** The case for a new and sustainable income model came through strongly in the final report of the Committee of Eminent Persons to Study the Sustainable Long-Term Financing of the IMF.¹⁵ While building a consensus among members on a new income model, it must be clearly communicated that the Fund is committed to cost-effectiveness and is taking steps to ensure that its medium-term budget and expenditures are prudently managed.

¹⁴ *Surveillance over Exchange Rate Policies*, Decision No. 5392-(77/63), 4/29/1977; available at www.imf.org.

¹⁵ The “Crockett Report” (named after its Chairman, Andrew Crockett) can be found at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/oth/2007/013107.pdf>.

22. **On another important element of the MTS—the Fund’s role in low-income countries—a concerted effort is underway to improve both the operational work and how it is communicated.** An analysis of news content indicates that media coverage of the Fund is currently driven disproportionately by critical stories on its work in LICs. In addition, parliamentarians, academics, and civil society organizations often see the IMF’s effectiveness through the lens of its work in these countries. The Independent Evaluation Office’s (IEO) recent report on the IMF’s role in sub-Saharan Africa found that there had been “miscommunication” about the Fund’s work—resulting in a “disconnect in external perceptions between the Fund’s rhetoric and its actual work at the country level.”¹⁶ Against this background, a priority in the period ahead is to define the Fund’s policies in LICs more clearly and ensure that communication efforts are closely aligned with those policies, including addressing issues raised by the IEO report. This involves both clearer guidance on various policy issues and how they should be communicated (for example, wage bill ceilings) and better communication of key messages on the Fund’s role in LICs. EXR is working closely with departments—AFR, PDR, and FAD in particular—on both these fronts (Box 3).

Box 3. Improving Communication on the IMF’s Work in Low-Income Countries

Specific steps underway to improve communication on the Fund’s low-income country work include

- *Greater clarity in policies.* The Board discussions of upcoming papers on LIC issues will provide important opportunities to clarify Fund advice, especially regarding appropriate macroeconomic policies in an environment of scaled-up aid to help countries meet the MDGs. Following these discussions, EXR will step up communication efforts to effectively transmit externally messages consistent with these policies. This will also include identifying opportunities for management and senior staff to signal the Fund’s commitment to LICs as spelled out in the MTS.
- *Aligning internal communications with institutional priorities and policies.* Internal communications tools from the intranet to seminars and briefings will be deployed intensively to ensure that (i) staff is aware of the broad institutional messages so that communication does not run ahead of delivery; and (ii) mission teams in particular fully understand, and are therefore able to apply consistently, specific policies.
- *Supporting departments in developing external communications strategies and generalizing best practices in outreach.* AFR, for instance, has developed in collaboration with EXR an overall communication strategy for its mission chiefs and resident representatives. EXR is working closely with departments to get the messages of the Fund’s work in LICs out more effectively—notably, the contribution to poverty reduction the Fund makes through promoting macroeconomic stability and growth and the changes in approach that the Fund has been implementing, for example, in supporting additional debt relief.
- *Leveraging the web and other communication instruments.* The redesigned website includes a clear, reader-friendly portal on the external website devoted to the Fund’s work on LICs. Op-eds, by management, senior staff, and resident representatives, as well as IMF publications such as the *IMF Survey*, will be used to distribute messages. Greater use of products in local languages will also aid communication efforts in LICs.

¹⁶ See the IEO’s report “The IMF and Aid to sub-Saharan Africa,” released March 12, 2007, available at <http://www.imf.org/External/NP/ieo/2007/pr/eng/pr0701.htm>.

23. **Effective delivery of these messages requires enhanced coherence and coordination across the Fund.** In this regard, an inter-departmental communication group—headed by the First Deputy Managing Director—has begun meeting regularly to identify priorities. The group reviews implementation issues and ensures that staff receives the communication support they need to engage effectively with external groups.¹⁷

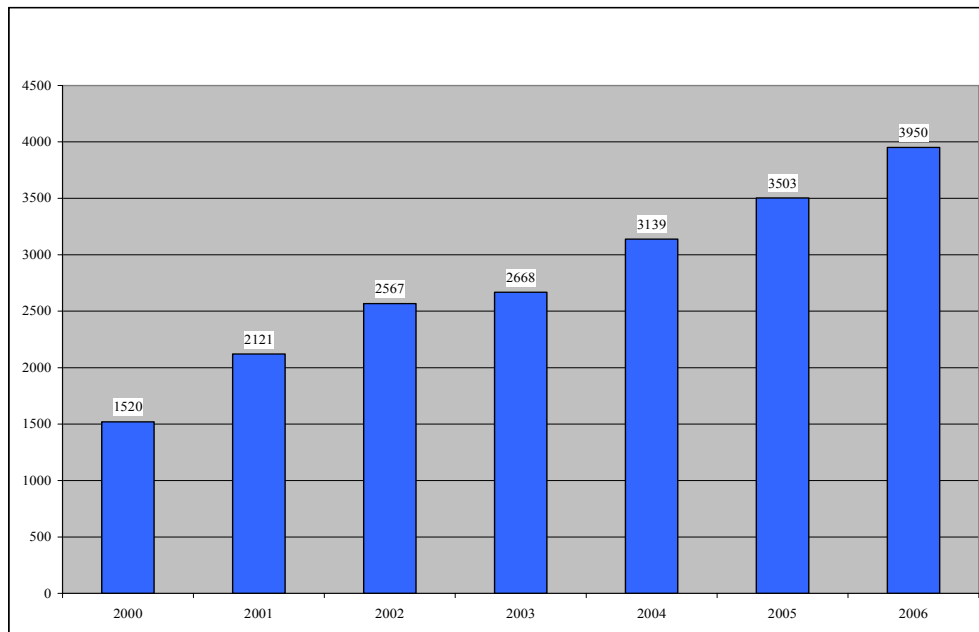
B. Using Communication to Make Operations More Effective

24. **Communication is an important tool for making the delivery of the Fund’s operational work more effective.** While this is true for all of the Fund’s operations, it is particularly so for surveillance, a core responsibility of the Fund. The challenge for the Fund is to balance its role as a trusted advisor to its members with its role as a public institution. The latter role includes informing markets of the results of Fund surveillance and shaping public debates on global and national issues within the Fund’s mandate, including as a source of new ideas.

25. **At the multilateral level, a significant outreach effort has been made to enhance the effectiveness of the *World Economic Outlook* (WEO).** The WEO has a long track record of providing high-quality forecasts and analysis of the global outlook. In addition, through an increased emphasis on the so-called “analytic chapters,” the IMF provides more than a conjunctural viewpoint—examples include well-received work on building institutions to raise growth and the planned work on the macroeconomic aspects of climate change. Since 2005, WEO outreach has been stepped-up through the publication of an Executive Summary, the preparation of focused press bullets and video clips for each chapter, and changes in the format of the press conference for the analytic chapters from phone to live/video, which has greatly increased the number of journalists who participate. In addition, release of the analytic chapters separately from “forecast chapters” has significantly increased their impact. RES also has launched a WEO e-Newsletter and is conducting more outreach events on the WEO. Overall, WEO media coverage doubled between 2000 and 2005 (Figure 2).¹⁸

¹⁷ The group also takes into account the need to be prepared for financial crises. The importance of communication during a crisis cannot be overstated. The opinion survey referred to earlier noted that the IMF’s reputation is still colored by perceptions of its handling of past crises. This highlights the importance of refining further a crisis communication strategy as part of the IMF’s overall preparedness to respond to a crisis in which the authorities seek the institution’s help.

¹⁸ Media references to WEO tend to be much greater than to other reports covering some of the same territory; for instance in 2005 coverage of the WEO was about three times larger than coverage of the *OECD Economic Outlook*.

Figure 2. WEO Media Coverage 2000–06

Source: Factiva database

26. **Regional surveillance products are achieving greater impact through stronger communication efforts.** Outreach events associated with the *Regional Economic Outlook* (REO) reports have proven to be highly effective, including in accessing the non-English media in various regions. EXR works closely with area departments in the outreach related to this high-impact product (Box 4). Area departments have also been making greater use of seminars and conferences that bring together officials and other stakeholders from countries within a region to discuss key policy issues.¹⁹ Participation by management and Executive Directors at these events helps signal the value the Fund attaches to regional surveillance.

27. **Country surveillance is also benefiting from improved communication.** During 2006, for example, post-mission press conferences were held in 54 cases. Experience suggests that these events, arranged in consultation with the authorities, are effective in informing broader audiences about concluding statements and the Fund’s surveillance work. Mission chiefs should note the preliminary nature of any policy recommendations discussed at these press conferences. Conference calls at the conclusion of Board meetings would be an important additional way of highlighting the unique value of Fund surveillance, namely, the discussion of a country’s policies by the international community represented by the Board—and EXR would be willing to provide support to such conference calls.

¹⁹ Recent examples include a December 2006 seminar organized by the IMF and the Arab Monetary Fund on “Institutions and Economic Growth in the Arab Countries” and a June 2006 seminar for policymakers from Central America, Panama, and the Dominican Republic.

28. **Effective communication requires an approach tailored to the specific product and circumstance.** The Fund’s work on addressing global imbalances offers an illustration of this point. The WEO, as one of the Fund’s main products for furthering discourse on global macroeconomic issues of the day, has long been vocal in highlighting the risks from these imbalances. However, when the first Multilateral Consultation was launched, it was judged that its success would require that communication take a low profile until the results of the consultation were announced at the Spring 2007 meetings. Similarly, in some circumstances, acting as a confidential advisor to a country’s authorities may be the most useful role the Fund can play—discretion may be the better part of communication. By contrast, in other circumstances, the Fund’s effectiveness may rest on being an important part of the public dialogue on country issues. Here again, trade-offs need to be considered in deciding on the appropriate channels of communication. For instance, if the Fund’s country and policy documents are likely to be used as part of the public discourse, they should be written with that end-use and with those audiences in mind. The extent to which to communicate through written documents versus other forms of communication (such as seminars and press conferences) also varies by country and issue.

Box 4. Increasing Communication Impact of REO Reports

Regional Economic Outlook (REO) reports have made a strong communication impact. Press briefings during the 2007 Spring Meetings generated hundreds of stories by news agencies and major newspapers. Coverage was facilitated by making available webcasts and video news clips, as well as press releases in multiple languages. REO outreach continues through follow-up seminars and outreach with the participation of resident representatives and senior staff at seminars and conferences. With EUR slated to publish its first REO in the fall of 2007, all five area departments will now publish a REO.

C. Communication Roles and Responsibilities Across the Fund

29. **Delivering more effective operations by using communication requires contributions from all parts of the Fund.** Communication is a shared responsibility, with management, the Board, and departments—mission chiefs and resident representatives in particular—all having important roles to play.

30. **Fund management and Executive Directors play a key role in the Fund’s communication.** Beyond providing guidance to staff on communication priorities, management is the most visible face of the Fund to external observers. Management’s participation in outreach events continues at a high level; an innovation over the last year has been the use of “curtain raiser” speeches ahead of the Spring and Annual Meetings to clearly lay out the agenda for the Meetings and to set expectations. The Board also provides strategic oversight of the Fund’s communication strategy through regular reviews (the 2007 review is the fifth in nine years), and Executive Directors interaction with external audiences—including their own constituencies—through speeches, participation in conferences, and

writings. The group travel of the Executive Directors also has a significant communications impact.

31. Departments are using communication increasingly as an integral part of their operational work. There is considerable diversity across departments in communication activities, but also a common—and growing—recognition that communication is a business need—not an add-on—essential to the effectiveness of operations. With EXR support, many departments are developing and implementing communication strategies to enhance the effectiveness of their operational work. For example:

- Area departments have developed outreach strategies for their respective regions as well as some country-level strategies. As noted in paragraphs 26–27, outreach events linked to the REO, regional seminars, and press conferences are an important component of these strategies.
- To increase understanding of the Fund’s technical assistance and training, EXR is working with the Office of Technical Assistance Management and functional and area departments. The communication effort includes compiling country examples where technical assistance has made an impact; high-profile press interviews and speeches by senior managers; and a new issues brief and pamphlet for distribution in several languages.
- The Fund’s statistical data is one of its most highly-valued products—acknowledged by external audiences to be objective, reliable, and comprehensive. EXR has been working closely with the Research Department (RES) and the Statistics Department (STA) to make this data accessible to a global audience, via publications and the web.²⁰ STA and EXR are now collaborating on a number of projects that will make the Fund’s data even more accessible by harnessing state-of-the-art technologies for dissemination and visualization of data.
- Outreach efforts are also underway to enhance public sector governance. For example, EXR is assisting with outreach to publicize FAD’s revised *Fiscal Transparency Manual*. In addition, in cooperation with FAD and area departments, EXR is developing an outreach program aimed at strengthening the role of parliaments, particularly in low-income countries, in the oversight of public financial management.
- The Finance Department (FIN) and EXR are also collaborating on a number of areas. For example, a joint web page on quota and voice reform has been recently

²⁰ The WEO database is now easily accessible through the web.

created on the external website.²¹ Among other resources, it provides researchers access to data needed to work on quota formulas, as well as links to, and summaries, of external work on this reform.

- The Fund’s offices in Europe (EUO), in collaboration with EXR, have been intensifying their outreach in Europe. Activities involve regular press briefings; contacts with think tanks, academics, and NGOs; participation in seminars; and presentations on issues relating to Fund activities.²²

32. **Mission chiefs and resident representatives are on the front lines of the Fund’s communication efforts.** Particularly in the work on low-income countries, they are expected to maintain open lines of communication not just with the authorities but also with other multilateral organizations, donor agencies, legislators, media, civil society, private sector, and other stakeholders. Through effective communication, they can promote two-way communication between the Fund and member countries and assist the authorities in explaining and promoting economic policy reform. As noted earlier (paragraph 28), there can be circumstances under which mission chiefs and resident representatives may be more effective in the role of a confidential advisor to country authorities. Resource constraints also impose trade-offs. The Fund has far fewer people in the field than other international organizations. Resident representatives therefore have a multiplicity of functions to perform—of which outreach is one. These constraints need to be recognized and trade-offs made in work programs and planning.

33. **As departments gain experience in outreach, EXR is adapting its support to provide greater value-added.** Over the past year, EXR senior managers have met with counterparts in most other Fund departments to discuss their communication priorities and plan how EXR can best support departments in achieving them. EXR “point persons” for each department monitor the delivery of this plan and also serve as a “one-stop shop” to advise on and handle communication issues. An example of this collaboration is given in Box 5. A start has also been made in terms of specific training courses for outreach and EXR participation in departmental and resident representative retreats where communication issues are explicitly addressed. In addition, EXR has put together guides to help staff interact with particular groups such as civil society organizations and legislators, and a

²¹ See <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/key/quotav.htm>.

²² EUO has recently organized policy seminars in Paris on topics such as central bank governance (with MCM), empirical exchange rate models (with RES), and the Fund’s Role in Aid Flows to Africa (with AFR, EXR, IEO, and PDR).

communication “toolkit” for resident representatives and mission chiefs is under preparation.²³

Box 5. Supporting the European Department’s Outreach Strategy

The strategy aims to enhance effectiveness of the department’s surveillance and program work and make its operational and analytical work more relevant to external audiences and influencers of public debate. To this end, an EUR/EXR outreach team has been established to help strengthen the department’s outreach on a continuing basis.

- **The EUR outreach plan lays out activities and communication priorities for a one-year period**, identifying some key milestones for department-wide outreach at the regional and the bilateral level. In turn, country teams develop country-specific outreach strategies identifying key messages and tailoring outreach events.
- **Core messages are identified for the region as a whole and for sub-regions and countries.** For example, one core message is that financial integration and capital market development should be pursued vigorously to maximize growth potential and welfare.
- **Early milestones include** a joint IMF-Bruegel Conference on financial integration; an op-ed by the Managing Director on the 50th Anniversary of the European Union; and the department director’s press conference on the outlook for EUR countries during the 2007 Spring Meetings.

IV. RESPONDING TO CHANGE: REFOCUSING EXR’S APPROACH

34. **EXR is refocusing its priorities to meet the challenge of strengthening its support for the Fund’s core operational efforts as well as for delivering on the MTS.** Major areas of reprioritization include raising the communication impact of tools and products, in large part by harnessing the power of web-based technologies (parts A–C in this section); rebalancing outreach across constituencies (part D); and strengthening internal communication (part E). The resources to support these new priorities will come from dollar savings from a more cost-effective publications program as well as from efficiency gains and cutbacks in lower priority activities (Section V).

A. Placing Increased Emphasis on the Web

35. **There is considerable scope to increase the impact of the IMF’s communication strategy by making more effective use of web-based technologies.** Outreach via the internet can be a highly cost-effective and high-impact way of reaching a large number of external constituencies—including the media, the private sector, civil society, and the academic and think tank community.

²³ See the “Guide for Staff Relations with Civil Society Organizations,” available at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/cso/eng/2003/101003.htm>, and the “Guide for IMF Staff Outreach to Legislators,” available at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/leg/eng/guide.htm>.

36. **The Fund's principal vehicle in this regard is its external website** (www.imf.org). The IMF's website is already the primary source for information about the Fund for the public (Figure 3). The website is being further strengthened to make it even more accessible to broader audiences, offer a more modern look and feel, and provide a better platform for strategic communication—while retaining its already strong information provision and transparency role (Box 6).

Box 6. The IMF's External Website

The web is at the center of the Fund's communications activities. The external website—www.imf.org—established in 1996, is now the primary source for information about the Fund for the public. Almost 5,000 items are posted on the website each year and usage has been rising rapidly—reaching more than 60 million page views in 2006.

In response to user requests for more material in plain English, the homepage of the external site has been redesigned to increase the visibility of strategic messages and offer greater insight into the Fund's priorities. The new design will improve accessibility—including in languages other than English—while retaining www.imf.org's traditional strengths in terms of credibility, accuracy, and timeliness. Going forward, EXR and TGS are also examining new ways of helping users find material on the website more easily, including reconsidering some of the technology used on the site such as the search engine.

37. **To leverage the impact of the web, EXR has already established the following:**

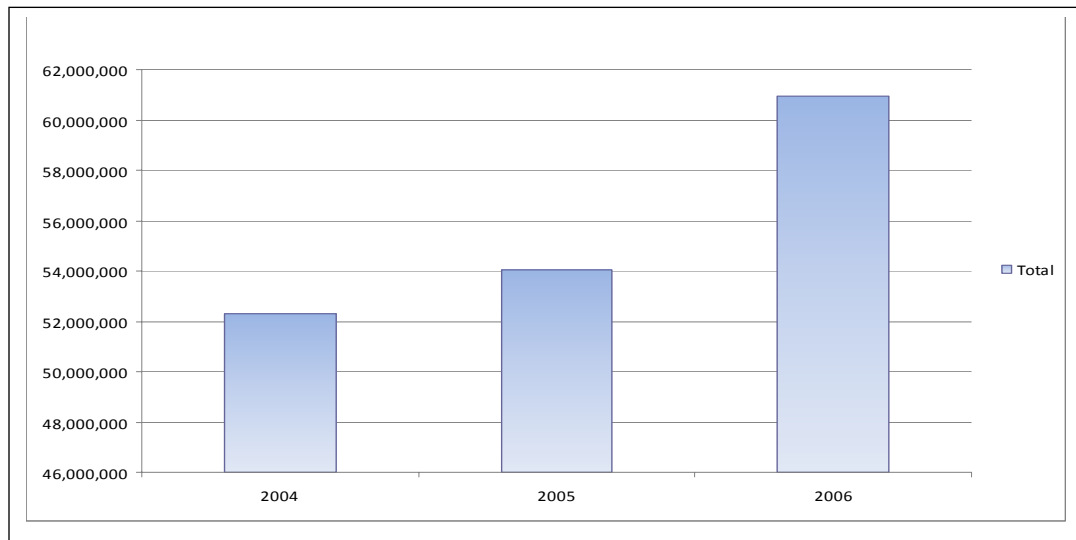
- an online page for legislators, which brings relevant Fund products to their attention and enables a two-way dialogue on Fund advice and policies;
- an online Media Briefing Center with about 2,600 journalists registered on it;
- web-based newsletters for reaching civil society groups and the academic and think tank community; and
- provision of support for a RES initiative involving a direct e-mail distribution to over 130,000 people all over the world that promotes the WEO and other intellectual products directly to interested parties.

In addition, since many commentators now use the internet to make their views known—via websites or blogs—the Fund has begun engaging with them through that medium. Given the sheer number of blogs, this engagement has to be selective and focus on cases where there is both a strong need to react and a strong likelihood of making a significant communication impact.²⁴

²⁴ For example, the Fund responded to a blog to address allegations that donors were concerned that the IMF was imposing caps on aid to Mozambique (www.open.ac.uk/technology/mozambique).

38. **There is also a gradual shift underway from traditional print to web-based products and digital publications.** This shift has a number of advantages: it enables the Fund to be more agile and quicker in disseminating information and messages; it better matches the preferences of users; and it generates savings—some of which can be redeployed to maintain print access for those parts of the world that do not have reliable web-access (most notably in sub-Saharan Africa).

Figure 3. Total Number of Page Views of www.imf.org



Sources: EXR and TGS.

B. Revamping Publications

39. **Over the past year, the effectiveness of the Fund’s publications program has been reviewed by an interdepartmental working group.** (Box 7 provides information on the scale of the program.) The review found that the fundamental goals of the program remain valid, with its focus on sharing IMF research and knowledge in a cost-effective manner. The IMF “brand”—the institution’s intellectual product—remains highly respected and is perceived to be of great value to external audiences.

40. **The review also found significant opportunities to scale up the communication impact of the publications program, while capturing potential efficiency gains.** These include:

- ***a more strategic approach to publications***—moving away from what has been essentially a supply-driven model (in terms of what gets published), to greater emphasis on ensuring the impact of what is published, alignment with institutional and departmental priorities, and demonstrated external demand;

- **enhanced marketing and support so that the materials selected for publication have more impact**—this includes making greater use of the web and new technologies, as well as partnerships with commercial publishers where appropriate; and
- **greater cost-effectiveness**—ensuring that Fund resources in this area are used to maximum effect, including by taking advantage of technological improvements in the publishing and printing business.

Box 7. Scale and Scope of the Fund’s Publications Program

The scale and scope of the Fund’s publications program is significant.

- Over 1,000 titles were published in FY2007, including
 - 807 official reports, Working Papers, and Country Reports.
 - 175 issues of periodicals, of which 63 were statistical titles.
 - 33 World Economic Financial Surveys, including WEO, GFSR, and REO products.
 - 23 Occasional Papers, monographs, books, and seminar volumes.
- Over a million print copies are distributed worldwide each year.

41. **Specific changes underway in the publications area include the following:**

- providing greater support to area departments in increasing the communications impact of the REO;
- enhancing the online visibility of the Fund’s research publications (through a partnership with Google);
- establishing an e-commerce/shopping cart website to facilitate sale of publications through the web;
- a new partnership with Palgrave MacMillan, an academic publisher, on *IMF Staff Papers*—which is projected to double readership while achieving cost savings;
- greater use of print-on-demand technology—making it easier to tailor print runs to actual demand—thus leading to substantial savings in printing and inventory carrying costs; and
- introducing a differential pricing policy for publications, with discounts for readers in low-income countries.

42. **The Annual Report also is being streamlined.** Guided by the Executive Board’s Committee on the Annual Report, the objective is to enhance the report’s communications impact, while preserving its integrity as a comprehensive document of record (Box 8).

Box 8. Strengthening the Annual Report

On the recommendation of the Committee on the Annual Report, a significant reform of the report aimed at enhancing its communications impact and cost effectiveness is underway. This will result in a print version of the report much shorter than in the past. However, the report will remain a comprehensive document of record because much of the material previously included in the traditional print version will be transferred to a CD-ROM, to be included in the new and shorter report.

It is expected that the streamlined report will make it much more accessible to a broader audience. It will also result in significant cost savings. These savings will be used, in turn, to increase the number of languages in which the report is produced, thereby further broadening its reach. Thus, the changes will preserve the integrity of the Annual Report while enhancing its communications impact for the Board and the Fund. The changes will be reflected in the 2007 Annual Report.

43. **Making greater use of the web across the range of the Fund’s publications products—for example, through the introduction of an e-version of *IMF Survey*—will achieve substantial savings.** Reducing printing and distribution costs, including the currently very large internal distribution of publications, are important components of the savings.

C. Making More Effective Use of Languages Other than English

44. **Building on the work of the 2006 Task Force on Publication of Fund Documents and Information in Languages Other than English, an inter-departmental staff working group has made recommendations aimed at significantly increasing the effectiveness of the Fund’s use of languages other than English (LOE) for communication purposes, while containing costs.** This will involve increasing awareness within the Fund of the importance of LOE and the need to integrate LOE translation and publication decisions into broader communications and outreach strategies. The objectives are to help improve the timeliness, efficiency, and effectiveness of LOE material, and enhance both broad corporate outreach strategies as well as operational communications with the authorities and the dissemination of Fund policy messages to other layers of government and civil society. The recommended actions include the following:

- ***Strengthening web access to LOE materials***, by (i) posting on the web country-specific and Fund-wide documents in LOE when translations are available and the documents are already published in English, and (ii) improving the visibility and searchability of this material on the web. Through these changes, the large volume of material already translated in the Fund can be made much more accessible to external audiences. In addition, in the context of the revamp of www.imf.org, home pages for the more heavily-used languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, Spanish, and Russian) will be introduced in the near future. Looking further ahead, links to resident representative websites will be improved, boosting access to LOE material on these sites.

- ***Producing shorter, more timely materials in LOE*** (for example, major press releases, factsheets, WEO summaries), which can have a substantial communications impact, with only a small additional word count (to be offset by streamlining other documents). The Executive Summary of the April 2007 WEO was translated into Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, and Russian, and posted on the web simultaneously with the English version.
- ***Improving business practices and developing a clearer budget framework to raise efficiency and produce translations quickly where this has the highest impact.*** Recommended measures include: better projections of translation demands; immediate web-posting of translated materials; use of cost-effective new technologies (such as print-on-demand); and an improved budgeting framework for translation.
- ***Improved monitoring of demand, costs, and implementation of LOE Working Group recommendations.*** EXR will provide staff support for a standing inter-departmental committee to monitor implementation of the recommendations, support steps towards an improved budgeting process that will help to prioritize demand, and search for ways to share translation costs—including through copublishing arrangements and donor/user support. Improved web access will also support better monitoring of demand for LOE publications, guiding future policy.

45. **The envisaged improvements to LOE web access are being absorbed within the current EXR and TGS budgets, in the context of the ongoing revamp of *imf.org*.** Thus, the impact of the Fund’s products in LOE can be significantly raised within a budget-neutral framework, in the first place by making sure that material that is already available in LOE is published. As other departments’ awareness of the importance of LOE for communication is raised, it will be important that the budgeting framework be developed to maximize the impact of the spending on translation.

D. Rebalancing Outreach Across Key Constituencies

46. **Over the years, the Fund has expanded its outreach to many audiences including the general public, students, legislators, the academic and think tank community, and civil society organizations.** In the context of a tight resource envelope and in order to deliver on the MTS, there is a need to rebalance the emphasis accorded to some constituencies. To that end, EXR has moved away from an ad hoc, demand-driven approach to a more targeted approach. For example, briefings that were given on demand to groups have been replaced by a fixed schedule of briefings. EXR is also devoting relatively fewer resources to outreach to the “general public” in order to free up resources to engage strategically with those who have an important role in implementing policies (e.g., parliamentarians) and who shape public

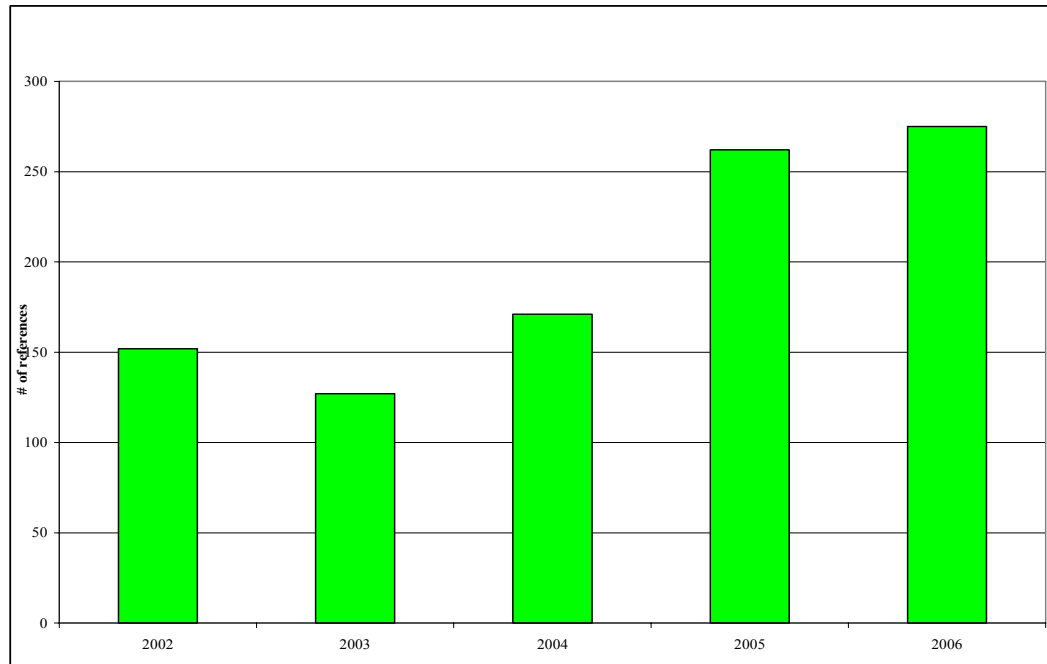
opinion and debate (e.g., the academic and think tank community, civil society). In particular:

- ***The academic and think tank community:*** These organizations make an increasingly significant contribution to shaping public debate on economic issues and frequently voice their views through the media—thus influencing the decisions of policymakers. In addition, in a globalized world where discussion of topical international economic issues—for example, global imbalances, reform of international institutions—takes place in many different forums, it is important for the Fund to engage with opinion makers and to contribute to public discussion of these issues. EXR is listening more to the views of leading think tanks around the world through a newly introduced *Think Tank Monitor*, and organizing joint meetings and discussion forums with Fund staff at think tank events—for example, recent discussions with think tanks in Washington, Brussels, and New Delhi—on the Spring 2007 WEO.
- ***Legislators:*** National parliaments enact legislation on economic issues, play a role in the budget process, influence public debate, and more generally exercise oversight of the government, including its relations with international institutions. Experience suggests that the success of economic policies depends significantly on support in the legislature and the broader public. Responding to suggestions from authorities for strengthened engagement with this constituency, EXR is placing increased emphasis on engagement with legislators within the context of country operational work and on the broader MTS reform agenda.²⁵
- ***The private sector and financial markets:*** The Fund is placing increased emphasis on financial and capital market issues in the context of its macroeconomic analysis, especially in emerging markets. To do this effectively, it will be critical to deepen outreach to financial markets as well as the private sector. The Monetary and Capital Markets Department (MCM) and EXR are developing a strategy that includes: broadening the reach and impact of the *Global Financial Stability Report* (GFSR) (Figure 4); raising the profile of other research and analysis, such as the Financial Market Updates or FSAPs; making greater use of management and senior staff in outreach to the private sector; organizing outreach events that allow for dialogue on topical issues, such as hedge funds; and making the most of the Capital Markets Consultative Group

²⁵ Fund staff's interactions with staff of the European Parliament helped shape its resolution on IMF reform in 2006 and the constructive report by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2005). Legislators also have welcomed the Managing Director's participation in the annual conference of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank (PNoWB).

structure. This effort would complement the intensive use that market participants already make of the Fund’s surveillance products as well as its data.

Figure 4. GFSR Media Coverage 2002–06



Source: Factiva database. Figures are for English media references only.

- Civil society organizations (CSOs)**—including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions, and faith-based groups—remain a priority constituency for the IMF’s outreach efforts. Areas of common interest include fiscal transparency—and the Fund has had a constructive relationship with a number of CSOs working on extractive industries transparency. Going forward, outreach to established civil society organizations in industrial countries needs to be better balanced with outreach to civil society groups in low-income countries to ensure that they have a greater voice in overall IMF-CSO relations.

E. Strengthening Internal Communication

47. **To be fully effective, staff needs to have a clear and shared understanding of the overall direction in which the Fund is heading.** In the 2005 review, the Board recognized that “effective internal communication in the IMF is a prerequisite for effective external communication.” Over the past year, EXR—in close collaboration with HRD and TGS—has made a significant effort to strengthen internal communication. Initiatives include the following:

- A revamp of the intranet homepage to help staff stay informed on the Fund’s strategic priorities, and to provide space for knowledge-sharing on ongoing work. This has included the introduction of podcasts and video interviews to supplement written stories about staff and the Fund.
- The introduction of a fortnightly email news bulletin—the *IMF Digest*—that brings major issues, publications, and events to the attention of staff.
- Seminars for staff on the WEO, GFSR, REO, and other special issues.
- The establishment of a scaled-up program of contacts between management and staff—to facilitate two-way feedback and greater understanding of institutional issues.
- An internal communication survey, conducted in 2006 (Box 9).

Box 9. 2006 Internal Communication Survey

The Fund’s first survey of internal communication focused on the internal communication climate. The survey, which was conducted by an independent firm, found that

- Two-thirds of staff state satisfaction with the process of communication at the Fund.
- There is a strong shift away from staff wanting information to be “pushed” to them through e-mail and newsletters, and toward having it available on the Intranet.
- Staff expressed strong interest in institution-wide issues and many indicated feeling “insufficiently informed” on some of these issues.

V. IMPLEMENTATION, COSTS, AND MONITORING

48. **The communication strategy described in this paper is a Fund-wide effort that will be achieved by making strategic shifts and reprioritizing within the current resource envelope.** As noted in the FY2008–FY2010 budget paper, much of the Fund’s communication output is captured as “general outreach” in the key output area (KOA) covered by global monitoring.²⁶ This encompasses a diverse and broad range of activities, carried out by nearly all Fund departments, including seminars, workshops, and conferences, as well as media activities and a number of the Fund’s flagship publications.

49. **Like other departments, EXR faces a constrained budget environment over the FY2008–FY2010 period.** The tight budget scenario calls for some difficult trade-offs and delivering the communications strategy outlined in this paper will be a considerable

²⁶ See *The FY 2008–FY 2010 Medium-Term Administrative and Capital Budgets*, pp. 20–22 (forthcoming).

challenge. EXR aims to achieve its objectives by reallocating resources from low-priority activities toward key output areas that support the delivery of the MTS, and through cost savings. As noted, EXR plans to increase the share of its budget devoted to outreach to think tanks, parliamentarians, and the private sector. Resources will also be redeployed to support more extensive use of web-based communication; support for regional surveillance activities, including for the REO; and communication in languages other than English, including the development of new language sites on the Fund's external website. This redeployment of resources will be made possible by the measures to strengthen the cost-effectiveness of the publications program where significant savings are anticipated over the medium term (as noted in paragraphs 40–41). In addition, resources will be redeployed from activities related to outreach to the general public, as well as from certain support activities—for example, by streamlining editing and clearance procedures for external presentations and working papers.

50. **Monitoring inputs and outcomes will be key to gauging the performance of the communication strategy and its value-added for the Fund.** EXR will achieve this through performance indicators agreed with the Office of Budget and Planning. These indicators, a number of which EXR has already begun to track, result from the recommendations of the Second Task Force on Performance Indicators. In addition, EXR is closely tracking progress in achieving cost-effectiveness through its business plan, which covers its programs and activities, and through a monthly monitoring matrix for the publications program that tracks cost and revenue developments.

51. **Communication is a notably complex area in which to measure implementation and “success,” but EXR has begun introducing several instruments that can help achieve this objective.** These include public opinion research; surveys of external demand for Fund publications and EXR information products; user surveys of the external website; media analysis through a Factiva database; and an internal communications survey for staff. These tools, referred to previously in this paper, will enable EXR and the Fund to better measure the impact of its communication efforts—and improve them in the future.

52. **The ultimate test of the communication strategy will be strengthened impact of the Fund's work and increased support for its mission.** This will include MTS delivery and a strengthened public perception of the IMF as a modern, open, institution that provides valued services to its members and to the global community.

VI. ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

- *Do Executive Directors endorse the overall direction of the IMF's communication strategy as described in this paper?*
- *Do Executive Directors see the proposed communication strategy as an appropriate response to the changing global context facing the Fund, and perceptions of the Fund? This response includes: (A) emphasis on building support for the Fund's reform agenda; (B) use of communication as a tool to make operations more effective—both in the core area of surveillance and in other operations; and (C) greater recognition of the shared responsibility for communication across all parts of the Fund.*
- *Do Executive Directors agree with the refocusing and reprioritization being undertaken by EXR to support the effectiveness of the Fund's communication strategy? The shifts include: (A) placing increased emphasis on the web and greater use of technological innovations; (B) revamping the publications program to increase its communication impact and realize efficiency gains; (C) making more strategic use of languages other than English; (D) rebalancing outreach across key constituencies; and (E) strengthening of internal communication.*

APPENDIX: EXR AT A GLANCE

Core Functions and Products

Current Publications: Drafting and editing of *IMF Survey*, and *Finance & Development*; news space on external website.

- Close to 100 titles published per year.

Editorial and Publication Services: Editing of the Annual Report, WEO, GFSR, Occasional Papers, *IMF Staff Papers*, and other publications; distribution, pricing, sale, and promotion, including through the e-commerce site, newsletters, and the IMF digital library.

- About 1,000 titles published each year.
- Over a million print copies distributed worldwide.

External Website: Develops and manages www.imf.org.

- Close to 5,000 items posted each year.
- 60 million page views in 2006.

Internal Communications: Management of Intranet News space; OMD website; EXR website; *IMF Digest*; *Staff News*.

- 220 Intranet stories projected for FY2007.

Media Relations: Relations with print, broadcast, and internet media at IMF Headquarters and in the field; biweekly press briefings; Morning Press; videos and media training.

- Nearly 400 press releases/PINs, 330 briefings at HQ and 75 in the field, and close to 2000 Morning Press and News packets per year.

Policy Communication: Development of policy communication strategy; drafting of speeches and articles for management; “rapid response” to criticism; Issues Briefs and Factsheets; engagement with private sector; policy seminars.

- About 80 published letters, Op-eds, and articles (not including syndication) per year.
- Approximately 50 Issues Briefs and Factsheets drafted and/or updated per year.

Public Affairs: Outreach to legislators, think tanks, civil society (including NGOs, labor, and faith-based organizations), and general public; Book and Economic Forums; IMF Center; Civic and Community Program.

- Briefings/meetings for general public, legislators, think tanks, CSOs.
- 7,200 responses to public queries (e-mails, letters and telephone calls).