The Policy and Evaluation Committee met on Friday, 11 December 2009, to consider the “Disclosure of Information Policy (OP-102). Report on implementation and recommendation for policy review” (document GN-1831-19). The Management team made a presentation on the main points of the proposal before the Board, noting that changes in the region and among the international financial institutions regarding access to information and the standards and principles that govern its availability make it necessary to update and review the Bank’s Disclosure of Information Policy, in order to remain on a par with the best legislation and practice of the member countries.

The document identifies a number of types of information or documents that the Office of External Relations (EXR) has disclosed in the past and that Management has decided to disclose on a routine basis consistent with the policy’s presumption in favor of disclosure, even though they are not included on the “positive list” contained in the existing policy. Management also proposes to begin to make available to the public on a routine basis two types of information that have not been disclosed by the Bank in the past: the administrative budget and the salaries of Bank Senior Management.

Management will prepare a profile of a new policy for presentation to the Board, to include a proposal for a public consultation.

The Executive Directors expressed general support for the proposal, but had some concerns about the cost of implementing the revised policy, the risk of it leading to exaggerated demands that could not be met by the institution, and whether the salaries of Bank officials should be published by name. Executive Directors also said there was a need for absolute clarity as to the reason for the changes and their purpose, differentiation between publication/dissemination of information and disclosure by various means, and a mechanism to identify who would have access to the information, such as civil society. Additionally, the Executive Directors said prudence should be exercised with documents having to do with the status of country negotiations in various areas, and all proposed revisions to Bank policies should be subject to the same standards and priorities set by the Bank’s member countries. Lastly, the Executive Directors said the components of the proposal need to be managed effectively, so that it does not remain a mere intention.

The Committee resolved, therefore, to endorse Management’s recommendations that the Board of Executive Directors: (a) take note of Management’s report on implementation of the Disclosure of Information Policy presented in section II of document GN-1831-19, as well as Management’s decision to adopt administrative measures on implementation described in section III; (b) pursuant to sections II and III.E.6 of the policy, subject to the restrictions set forth in section III.D thereof, take note of Management’s decision to make available to the public on a routine basis the documents and information described in
paragraph 4.4, and express its nonobjection to the routine disclosure of the documents contained in paragraph 4.5; and (c) endorse Management’s intention to undertake a broad review of the Bank’s Disclosure of Information Policy, as described in section IV.B and in the action plan appearing in the aforesaid document GN-1831-19.

In terms of process, the Committee asked Management to circulate the revised World Bank policy paper as soon as possible, and that any comments or concerns be sent to the Chairperson of the Policy and Evaluation Committee, so that Management can receive it during preparation of the profile and proposal for a public consultation. Management will submit the profile and proposal for a public consultation to the Board of Executive Directors in February 2010. Once these are approved by the Board, the first 30-day public consultation phase will be held, after which a draft of the document incorporating the outcomes of the consultations and comments from Executive Directors will be submitted to the Committee. The Committee will discuss this draft, and authorize the 90-day final public consultation process, after which the final document will be produced and submitted for formal approval by the Board, which should occur in June or July 2010. The Committee agreed that every effort will be made to have at least the first profile approved before the Bank’s 2010 Annual Meeting in Cancún, and to adjust the consultation periods so as not to unnecessarily delay publication of the revised policy.