

CSO Statement | November 29, 2016 | Nairobi, Kenya

We, civil society organisations (CSOs) from around the world, have gathered in Nairobi on the occasion of the Nairobi Civil Society Forum and the Second High-Level Meeting (HLM2) of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC).

Speaking many languages but with one voice, we call for universal effective development co-operation that is accountable to people and to all partners in development.

In line with this vision, we strongly uphold the value of the GPEDC as a unique multi-stakeholder platform for mutual accountability in development co-operation. We assert that the starting points of the HLM2 should be the four development effectiveness principles (democratic ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and accountability); the aid and development effectiveness commitments made in Rome, Paris, Accra, Busan, and Mexico; and the documented progress to date of all actors in implementing these principles and commitments.

We emphasise that CSOs are key partners in inclusive and effective development co-operation. We further underline that free and guaranteed civic space at all levels, consistent with agreed international rights, is essential for CSOs to contribute to development, globally and locally, and join as equal partners in helping people realise their rights.

We acknowledge the critical role of the development effectiveness principles, effective development co-operation and multi-stakeholder partnerships in the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. Effective development co-operation is an essential and stand-alone complement to the Sustainable Development Goals.

We believe that effective development co-operation must be applied universally.



This means:

- addressing poverty and inequality, which are faced especially by the most vulnerable and those whose rights are least upheld, through a whole-of-systems approach and inclusive partnerships that ensure the delivery of meaningful results to people;
- ensuring self-determination and decolonisation linked to the continued displacement of indigenous peoples as a result of militarisation and trade agreements for development; natural resource exploitation; climate change; lifestyle diseases; and conflict;
- upholding participatory methods; mutual accountability; feminist, gender, intergenerational and human rights-based approaches; and democratic ownership, using a variety of development co-operation policies and tools, including the establishment of two inclusive multi-stakeholder taskforces to address commitments for effective development co-operation to (a) gender equality and women's rights, and (b) the rights of children and youth, in partnership with feminist and women's rights advocates and the youth sector from civil society respectively; and
- governance and accountability mechanisms that meaningfully include and engage different stakeholders, and strengthen the capacities of all actors to participate on an equal footing.

We recognise the work that still needs to be done. We commit to continuously work on our own effectiveness and accountability as independent development actors, to better enable people to claim their rights. We remind all development actors of their shared commitment in implementing effective development co-operation. All actors must translate effective development co-operation commitments into action at the level of countries and local communities, which are most affected by challenges to sustainable development, and to direct development co-operation where it is most needed, including contexts of human insecurity, conflict and



fragility, noting that these situations particularly affect women and girls as well as children and youth. It is vital that the HLM2 set a path for progress.

Specifically, we call for the parties to the HLM2 to take the following steps to further their commitment, action, and progress towards effective development co-operation:

Effective Development Co-operation and Accountability in the 2030 Agenda

We welcome progress towards some key principles of effectiveness like greater transparency of aid. However, this is insufficient to compensate for the trend towards increased (negative) conditionality, a focus on donors' own national interests at the expense of effective development co-operation, and the undermining of democratic ownership.

We call on all parties to the HLM2 to advance the implementation of an effective development co-operation framework, particularly in relation to the implementation of Agenda 2030, recognising that growth is not the same as development and the existing model of development must be reviewed. We recognise that the GPEDC cannot address all aspects of Agenda 2030, and should focus on ways that effective development co-operation can support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Specifically, we call for:

- The universal application of a framework of effective development co-operation, subject to regular assessments through an inclusive monitoring framework with clear indicators that recognise the multidimensionality of development, that will hold stakeholders accountable for commitments they have made, including through agreements in Rome, Paris, Accra, Busan, Mexico, and Nairobi.
 - The comprehensive implementation of human rights-based approaches at all levels of development and development co-operation, including through compliance with international legal commitments such as those concerning anti-human trafficking efforts and the promotion and protection of decent work and social dialogue.
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- The use of evidence-based decision-making, including through the use of disaggregated data and gender- and age-responsive tracking, to identify the most vulnerable people – including refugees, migrants, and indigenous peoples – and to leave no one behind.
- The use of country systems, recognition of national realities, and respecting national realities and priorities as underscored by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.
- Reasserting the notion of countries' responsibility for and ownership of their development, and the acknowledgement and protection of their policy space by the international community.
- The integration of effective development co-operation principles in the planning, monitoring, evaluation, and implementation framework of Agenda 2030 at the country level.
- A continued focus of Official Development Assistance on poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Accountability and the Private Sector

We urge all stakeholders to ensure business and corporate accountability and transparency in the context of development co-operation programmes, to better achieve effective, positive and significant development outcomes. Recognising that an increasing role for the private sector in development presents inherent risk, and must therefore be combined with appropriate engagement criteria, the role of the private sector in development co-operation should be consistent and accountable with the Busan principles and labour, environmental and other human rights.

Specifically, we call for:

- The elaboration of criteria to assess and regulate private-sector interventions in development co-operation at the country level, in order to evaluate their compliance with international human rights, the UN Guidelines on Business and

Human Rights, the OECD Guiding Principles for Multinational Enterprises, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure, and development effectiveness principles. These criteria must be based on a framework that clearly addresses the following areas:

- illicit financial outflows;
 - tax justice, anti-tax evasion policies, and domestic capacity-building for revenue collection bodies, and domestic resource mobilisation;
 - land grabs, whereby the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalised groups in rural and urban areas, particularly those without formally recognised land rights, lose their customary and legitimate rights to land and thereby their livelihoods, without alternative economic opportunities or adequate compensation;
 - peace- and state-building and the prevention of violence;
 - accountability of Development Finance Institutions; and
 - respect for social, labour, and environmental rights, including social dialogue to ensure inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability.
- Support from provider and partner countries for the establishment of a United Nations Treaty for Transnational Corporations and Human Rights.

South-South Co-operation

We recognise that development will only be achieved through solidarity across peoples and sectors. We call for the development of a global accountability framework for South-South cooperation that is multidirectional, transparent and consistent with the principles of horizontal development co-operation, i.e. solidarity, mutuality, equality, respect for sovereignty, inclusion, human rights, non-interference, and non-conditionality.

Specifically, we call for:

- The development of a framework for horizontal development co-operation that can be used by civil society and non-traditional Southern partners, including

diverse constituencies such as diaspora communities, in assessing the quality and impact of South-South co-operation, and to strengthen regional integration.

- The adoption of rights-based approaches and principles for effective development co-operation in global accountability frameworks for South-South co-operation.

Countries/Regions in Situations of Conflict and Fragility

We urge effective development co-operation approaches that deliver peace and security for people in situations of conflict and fragility, including situations with climate-induced vulnerability.

Specifically, we call for:

- A commitment to inclusive, accountable partnerships using human rights-based approaches to development in all activities in situations of conflict, including resource-based conflicts, and in states in post-conflict and fragile situations.
 - Full alignment of foreign and security policies to principles and commitments to human rights and development co-operation, including through support for inclusive governance and peacebuilding, demilitarisation, comprehensive psycho-socio and social protection, and innovative and inclusive alternatives for youth.
 - The full application of development effectiveness principles in fragile and conflict affected states, as well as in situations where people are marginalised.
 - Support from provider countries for inclusive governance at the country level, with an empowered civil society at the core, as an essential means to address the root causes and drivers of fragility, conflict, and violence in fragile and conflict-affected states.
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Enabling Environment for Civil Society

We note with concern the global closing and shrinking of civil society spaces, and increasingly limited access in many countries to funding for civil society organisations, including feminist and women's rights organisations, children's and youth organisations, and faith-based organisations. Furthermore, human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders and those defending the human rights of rural people, indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups, are under attack and face constant threat of stigmatisation, violence and criminalisation in many parts of the world. A worrying trend further undermining the legitimacy of independent civil society is the increasing number of government-organised non-governmental organisations (GONGOs). These restrictions on CSOs, public participation, and the realisation of human rights diminish the quality and legitimacy of democracy.

We urge the comprehensive alignment of country-level legal and regulatory frameworks with human rights standards, and the facilitation and effective institutionalisation of space for CSOs in development policy dialogue, planning, and monitoring.

Specifically, we call for:

- A shared commitment from CSOs and governments in both provider and partner countries to locally-designed legal and regulatory frameworks, including mechanisms to expand democratic space and ensure freedom of speech and association, as well as free, prior and informed consent for indigenous peoples; institutionalised spaces for policy dialogue and participation; and funding, education, or other support mechanisms that facilitate CSOs' coherence with the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness.
 - The creation of institutionalised partnerships, such as country partnership frameworks, between national governments, local governments, and CSOs, which recognise CSOs as development actors in their own right and equal partners in development co-operation. These partnerships should provide space for accessible and meaningful participation of civil society, with specific attention to including marginalised and vulnerable groups.
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- The creation of a permanent and independent complaint mechanism at the international level, to which civil society organisations can appeal when their country's legal and regulatory framework is not in line with international human rights standards.
- The creation of permanent multi-stakeholder structures at the country level to establish and monitor legal and regulatory reforms based on human rights standards.
- Measures to support the political, economic, and social empowerment of youth as key contributors to effective development, including their inclusion and participation in decision-making processes.

Development Effectiveness of CSOs

CSOs across the globe have committed to improve their own development effectiveness as development actors, in accordance with the eight Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness. Accountability is an essential part of this commitment, and of the broader effectiveness of CSOs as independent development actors.

Specifically, we will:

- Adhere to the Istanbul Principles, which incorporate the Busan Principles, as an expression of mutual accountability with other stakeholders in the GPEDC.
 - Take pro-active actions to improve and be fully accountable for our development practices, including by expanding CSO accountability frameworks and in particular encouraging the development of national and sectoral CSO effectiveness compacts.
 - Continue to engage with the GPEDC monitoring process, and with stakeholders inside and outside of the GPEDC, to evaluate, document and communicate the contributions of CSOs to effective development.
 - Be guided by country-led results frameworks as relevant to our work as independent development partners in our own right.
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CSO Partnership
for Development Effectiveness



Civil society is united in supporting development that is based on human rights and supports the empowerment of people, especially the poor and marginalised and those in situations of vulnerability. We remain committed to engage and contribute meaningfully, at local, national and global levels, to the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and to the core principles of development effectiveness. In doing so, we will continue to assert our rightful space as independent development actors and as core partners in effective development co-operation, and to work in partnership with all stakeholders to advance viable solutions and options for a sustainable world.

