



CIDSE Views on the Paris Declaration and Recommendations for Positive Changes in Accra

CIDSE's broad vision of development, of which effective aid is one part, is based on a strong notion of the common good and on communities as authors of their own development. These values stem from the principles of Catholic Social Teaching: human dignity, subsidiarity, solidarity and a preferential option for the poor. **They underpin our work and inform the basic values of partnership, sustainability and the commitment to address structural injustice.** They also shape our definition of effective aid in development. **CIDSE believes effective aid is aid that promotes human dignity, delivers positive impact, is accountable and promotes learning, focuses on equality and rights and reaches the most marginalised, is empowering and sustainable.** This definition has informed our advocacy for increased official resources for development (0.7%) and quality of aid in recent years.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS & SOUTHERN GOVERNMENTS FOR THE ACCRA PROCESS

CIDSE welcomes efforts to define a common official agenda to increase aid effectiveness, finally embodied in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness agreed by donors in 2005. Many donors and partner governments have made a real commitment to improve how the aid system is implemented. We agree with the underlying principles of the Declaration, namely harmonisation, alignment, ownership, managing for results and mutual accountability for increasing the efficiency of aid. However, we have some concerns with both the scope and direction this agenda is taking and believe the aims of the Declaration do not go far enough to guarantee impacts on sustainable poverty reduction. **CIDSE considers the Paris Declaration to be a technical instrument, using technical indicators and benchmarks for increasing the efficiency of the delivery of aid, which, if successful, cannot automatically be assumed to have achieved effective development.**

- ***Aid Effectiveness vs. Development Effectiveness; A Bigger Debate***

In CIDSE's view aid cannot be disassociated from the broader development process, i.e. the issue is aid for development effectiveness and not aid effectiveness for its own sake.¹ Other indicators of development effectiveness, such as poverty reduction, the realisation of human rights, environmental sustainability and gender equality, which are 'the fundamental cornerstones for achieving good development results', are not addressed as the desired end results of effective aid from government to government.² **By not locating aid effectiveness within the broader ambition of development effectiveness, the agenda fails to encapsulate all the elements and actors that contribute to effective development** as well as the obstacles and challenges faced in achieving it.

There is a risk with the Paris Declaration that donors will concentrate on making progress on the technical targets of the Declaration, to the detriment of progress on the real indicators of effective development. We believe that aid can only truly serve development in association with other means of seeking economic and social justice, using a rights based approach, ensuring policy coherence and

¹ Civil Society and the Aid Effectiveness Agenda, Linking the Paris and FfD Processes, UNDP, October 2007

² Main Messages and Summary Record – Workshop on Development Effectiveness in Practice : Applying the Paris Declaration to Advancing Gender Equality, Environmental Sustainability and Human Rights, Dublin 26-27 April 2007

addressing other key issues, some of which are being addressed at the Financing for Development Review Conference in Doha in December this year. Accra is an important step prior to this conference.

- *Civil Society and the Paris Declaration; Recognition of the Role of Civil Society*

The fundamental role and contribution of civil society in the development process at national, regional and global levels is not officially addressed in the Declaration. The legitimacy of CIDSE and other civil society organisations is represented by the solidarity we share with people in the developing world from all groups and faiths, striving to be a driving force for positive change. Civil society, in its broadest definition, have many roles; enabler, mobiliser, service provider, donor, researcher and advocate. **Civil society's critical role includes holding donors and governments to account for their actions and encouraging parliaments and citizens to do so, and is a vital expression of democratic citizenship which cannot be overlooked in the current debate and in the wake of increasing aid flows.**

This critical role should be recognised within the Paris Declaration. However, the work of civil society should not and cannot be evaluated and monitored using principles designed by governments for governments, as this ignores the distinct and independent role played by civil society in the current aid architecture. It is imperative that the space for civil society, both north and south, to monitor the activities of their governments and hold them accountable is maintained and expanded, without which progress on good governance and anti corruption will be limited.

In our view, effective aid is delivered by good coordination among a diverse group of actors. CIDSE as one of these actors considers the role we play in development to be complementary but very distinct. Our members are responsible for ensuring that they work as effective actors for development effectiveness.

- *Ownership and Mutual Accountability are not Meaningfully Addressed*

The current notion of developing country ownership needs to be expanded to respond to a fuller expression of democratic ownership and accountability, which recognises the roles of parliaments, national oversight bodies, women's and other citizen groups. The current understanding of ownership due to the power imbalance between Northern and Southern donors, has led to the direction of the flow of accountability being skewed, with Southern governments' upward accountability to Northern donors being prioritised over their downward accountability to their own citizens. While ownership is defined as government ownership rather than democratic ownership, accountability will continue to flow upwards. Civil Society has a key role to play in facilitating the expansion of democratic ownership to increase accountability.

CIDSE has prioritised the following key technical issues, on which there has been a lack of progress, based on our analysis of the monitoring of the Paris Declaration to date:

- To ensure that aid does not undermine democratic ownership, all aid must be **untied**, the practice of imposing **economic policy conditions** must end and the delivery of **technical assistance** must be reformed so that it responds to pro poor national priorities and truly builds capacity.
- **Predictability and transparency of donors:** There is a lack of transparency and predictability by some donors within the aid process, with distinct differences between what donors say they intend to disburse and what they eventually disburse. With this unpredictability, planning processes are made very difficult for recipients and again ownership is undermined. Also, without access to transparent and timely information from donors, civil society's efforts to monitor aid flows and effectiveness and involve citizens in holding governments to account are made more difficult
- **Insufficient monitoring of donors:** Currently Northern donors monitor themselves against their commitments and Southern governments are monitored by Northern institutions that comply with and use World Bank assessments. This is clearly not adequate while striving for mutual accountability and ownership of Southern governments.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POSITIVE CHANGES BY GOVERNMENTS AT ACCRA

- CIDSE calls for the **link between human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, social inclusion and the Paris Declaration to be addressed systematically in the Accra Agenda for Action**. This would require the development of timetables, specific indicators, and means of assessment. The principles of empowerment, human dignity and positive impact in the lives of the poor, which have been identified by CIDSE as essential for effective aid, should be used to guide this new approach.
- CIDSE calls for the **recognition of civil society's role** by donors and Southern governments as an essential development actor in the Accra Agenda for Action, accepting that diversity and independence is part of civil society's strength.
- CIDSE calls for commitment by donors to a **broader definition of ownership** to one of democratic ownership, which involves all relevant actors in policy dialogue in order to increase accountability.
- CIDSE calls for more ambitious, independently monitored and timetabled targets set by donors for the **ending of tied aid**.
- CIDSE calls for a commitment by donors to end all donor imposed **economic policy conditions**, which have a negative impact on citizens, with timetabled targets set to achieve this.
- CIDSE calls for an increase in the target for **demand driven technical assistance**, allowing partner governments to set their own agenda.
- CIDSE calls for donors to make realistic commitments in the Accra Agenda for Action, to achieve the highest standards of **predictability and transparency** of their aid and agree new targets for multi year, predictable and guaranteed disbursements of this aid.
- CIDSE calls for an **independent institution to monitor** both Northern and Southern government progress against commitments made.

CIDSE – International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity - is a coalition of 16 Catholic Development agencies in Europe and North America which share a common vision on poverty eradication and social justice and a common strategy on development programmes, development education and advocacy. CIDSE's advocacy work covers trade and food security, resources for development, global governance, and EU development policy.

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