

An Open Letter to Lenita Toivakka, Minister for Trade and Development of Finland:

As a global civil society platform that unites CSOs from around the world on the issue of development effectiveness, we are writing to express our concern over news that Finland has decided to cut 43% of its development aid and another 300 million EUR cut foreseen in 2016. According to our colleagues in Finland, this sudden change in aid programming can be understood as a bid to restore economic growth in the country, but it consequentially entails slashing 30-40% of funding to the Finnish NGO sector.

Finland, like most Nordic countries, has been a reliable and a generous partner when it comes to development aid and assistance to developing countries. Through the years we have come to believe that Finland is supportive of nurturing the diversity of CSOs and in promoting inclusion in all levels of work.

This unprecedented move is a worrying signal that could deliver a *coup de grâce* to the Finnish NGO sector and may result in dire consequences to the global CSO community and the broader constituencies we represent at the country-level.

CSOs play a critical role in society—from country-level service delivery to influencing global development policy and practice. The cornerstone of our work as independent development actors relies on the commitment of governments to strengthen the enabling environment for civil society. But as this very environment increasingly closes for CSOs in many parts of the world, we express solidarity to our Finnish NGO partners whose work in promoting human rights and sustainable development continues to be a valuable asset to the entire platform and to the citizens they serve.

As the Third Financing for Development Conference and the Post-2015 Intergovernmental Negotiations come to a close, we call on the Finnish government to review its decision and join other development actors in committing to a better world for all.

CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness