

CSO Partnership 
for Development Effectiveness

eBULLETIN

The CSO Partnership is an open platform that unites CSO voices from around the world on the issue of development effectiveness.

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Past Forward

Seoul, South Korea Members of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) actively participated in the 3rd Global Partnership Forum held on 6-7 October 2016.

The Korean government began this annual forum in 2014 to support the implementation of the Busan commitments at the country level and to sustain the ambitions of Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). This year being the first year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and one of the last gatherings before the GPEDC 2nd High Level Meeting, this Forum was especially important.

The first day was a review of the progress since Mexico, where CPDE Co-Chair Tetet Lauron noted that CSO participation in GPEDC shows CSOs as independent development actors in their own right who bring added value to processes that have historically been government to government processes. The capacity-building work of CPDE was highlighted, showing that CSOs are more than watchdogs. CSOs increase democratisation and ownership of the development process. Tetet laid out **ABC for EDC**: that to fully achieve effective development cooperation, (1) we must exercise accountability to people and to each other, (2) we must build on political will and equal partnerships, and (3) we must commit to people and planet over profit, to results, to a better world, to the 2030 Agenda.

Vitalice Meja, Executive Director of Reality of Aid - Africa, spoke on development effectiveness commitments. He highlighted areas where much work is still needed, noting that the obstacles are more of political will than technical at this point. He also stressed the importance of mutual accountability, urging everyone to push forward towards fulfilling the commitments made in the past.





CPDE also led a breakout session to present results of the assessment done by CPDE members for the 2nd Monitoring Round on Indicator 2 (Enabling Environment for Civil Society). CPDE members who helped gather information for the study discussed the situation on the ground in their regions pertaining to space for stakeholder dialogue, official development cooperation with CSOs, legal and regulatory environment, and CSO development effectiveness. After these presentations, Florence Nazare (New Partnership for Africa's Development) responded from her perspective as a stakeholder from government, noting that CSOs and government should work together to find synergy in their work together.

On the second day, focusing on the GPEDC 2nd Monitoring Round towards HLM2 in November this year, GPEDC's Monitoring and Advising Group Chair Brian Tomlinson discussed strengthening the monitoring framework. He highlighted the need for GPEDC's monitoring framework to position GPEDC to respond quickly and effectively to HLM2 outcomes. He also highlighted advice and recommendations from [MAG's most recent report](#).

Among CPDE members present in the Forum were: Addys Then Marte (Alianza ONG), MacDonald Munyoro (National Association of Youth Organizations), Nurgul Djnaeva (Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan), Don Marut (Indonesian Society for Social Transformation), Alanieta Vakatale (Pacific Islands Association of NGOs), Jeroen Kwakkenbos (Eurodad), Paola Simonetti, Matt Simonds, and Julius Cainglet (International Trade Union Confederation).



2 Special Series:

CPDE Member Countries on the GPEDC Second Monitoring Round

Central African Republic

Capacity Development: Key to CSO Development Effectiveness

In March 2016, Collectif Inter ONG Centrafricaine (CIONGCA), the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) focal point in Central African Republic (CAR), held a technical workshop on the GPEDC Second Monitoring Round on Busan Commitments to highlight their main issues in the national context. Faced with a three-year economic crisis, CSOs united that the resolutions brought up by the monitoring exercise should help in developing long-term programs for each CSO.

CSO Contribution in Policy Development

The CAR Government sought the participation of CSOs in formulating development policies such as the public participation clause in the Strategic Document for Poverty Reduction. There are also frameworks for dialogue between the government and CSOs in environmental, forestry, and mining sectors such as the Sustainable Management of Environmental Natural Resources. In these areas, NGOs lack effort in monitoring these initiatives.

CSOs have the right to access government information and sharing mechanisms are in place at the sectoral level (e.g. Food Security and National Cluster). However, some government agencies lack mechanisms in disseminating the information. Sometimes, the bureaucratic processes hinder efficient access of some documents that CSOs think contain vital information.

Limited financial resources limit the means to address capacity building of stakeholders to engage in dialogues with the government. However, through Technical and Financial Partners (TFP), some CSOs are able to support capacity building in their respective areas.

Accountability and Transparency in CSO Operations

CSOs in CAR submit their activity reports to their partners and the Ministry of Planning. All CSOs are required to file financial reports to justify the use of funds given to them.

Umbrella organisations are formed in different political arenas. CSOs are active in all major debates related to the country's development. Although structured mechanisms are not in place, CSO representatives often meet to coordinate their activities.

CSOs held initiatives to uphold the Istanbul Principles. Among these initiatives is the passing of the Bangayassi Act that tackles gender equality and gender balance in CSO offices. Women projects for development are prioritised in the New Deal country team. GERDDES and CIONGCA CSOs interact with all grassroots communities without religious, ethnic, or gender discrimination.

Current legislation requires CSOs to inform the government of their activities regularly. Hence, NGOs submit their reports to the Ministry of Planning and inform the partners that support them.

Challenges in CSO-Provider Co-operation

Neither the providers nor the government prioritise or promote an enabling environment for CSOs in the country. Their consultations with CSOs are minimal and limited to discussing some specific issues in their program or projects.

Although CSO freedom is recognised and respected in the Constitution, as stipulated in the 1961 Law on the Establishment of Associations and NGOs in CAR, CSOs launch specific actions to uphold human rights and press freedom. CAR government still lacks communication and dissemination of public information needed by CSOs. On the other hand, the government does not discriminate marginalised groups and takes into account their participation in all national activities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of CIONGCA workshop groups, they recommended the following recommendations for future cooperation of CSOs with government and providers:

- Providers and government should contribute to CSO capacity development for development policies monitoring and evaluation.
- The government must integrate the CSO support in its budget and expand this support.
- Providers and government should support CSOs to establish a coordination mechanism between the platforms.
- Providers should advocate with the government to promote a CSO enabling environment.



Kosovo

Upholding Civil Society Participation

Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) facilitated CSO participation in the Second Monitoring Round on Busan Commitments by the GPEDC. The original report is comprehensive, focusing on Enabling Environment for Civil Society and covering all four (4) modules. The following text is a preview of the original report.

CSO participation in policy making

In Kosovo, CSOs are consulted to some extent by certain institutions in the drafting phase of policy-making. However, their involvement in monitoring and implementation is limited. Involvement in these policy-making development processes are mostly self-initiated by CSOs through activities funded by donors.

There are legal provisions in place for each public institution and level of governance for consultations. The Rules of Procedures of the Government requires public consultations for all draft policies and laws. This regulation provides venue to invite CSOs and organise public hearings. While these consultations are obligatory and should be reported in Government meetings, their proper implementation still lags behind.

Consultation of civil society from the Assembly of Kosovo is non-obligatory. In 2014, the Assembly Partnership Declaration with Civil Society was adopted. The Assembly's engagement improved in terms of inclusiveness and accessibility, but consultations at the local level remain limited in their scope and quality. Politicisation and mutual lack of trust in municipality institutions pose additional barriers to consultations at this level.

Feedback mechanisms on consultation processes are inadequate and none of the public institutions have specific units or officers to coordinate and report on them.

KSCF's data analysis made in 2015 stipulates the following:

- 23% of CSOs were regularly invited to public consultations in their fields of interest
- 61% of these were consulted in the initial stage of the drafting process
- 49% of these were provided with sufficient time to review the documents
- 17% of CSOs whose comments were not accepted received feedback on incorporation of their inputs

A Regulation on Minimum Standards for Public Consultations, proposed by civil society, has been adopted by the Government in May 2016 and enters into force on 1st of January 2017. It provides a systematic basis for public consultations from experts' involvement, and details the specific requirements for each step. Also, annual reports on its implementation are required from line ministries and the Government.

Challenges in Upholding Freedom of Information

Access to public information from the public institutions is a right guaranteed by the Constitution. The Law on Access to Public Documents obliges all public institutions to publish all documents and includes important elements such as the time limit to respond to requests for information, sanctions for civil servants who breach the law, etc.

A secondary legislation enacted in May 2015 obliges institutions to publish their annual workplans and draft normative acts. In practice, all public institutions proactively publish adopted legislation for their field of work. Strategic and policy documents are published on the website of the Office of the Prime Minister, but can rarely be found on the websites of respective ministries. The obligation to publish all draft normative acts is not respected.

In the KSCF 2015 data, results show:

- 30% of the CSOs requested access to public information
- 36% of them received the information late
- 16% of them were denied access but were justified and invited to complain

Problems in access were also reported in relation to ambiguity in document classification and civil servant incompetence. At the local level, access is more limited due to multiple layers of governance involved. CSOs also report problems with treatment of complaints as there are no adequate mechanisms in place within institutions.

Currently, the Law on Access to Documents is being revised as part of the Open Government Partnership Initiative and is expected to contain clear provisions on document classification and specific contents that should be made public by government institutions.

Challenges in Forging Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

Some CSOs provide trainings as part of their projects on civil society development funded by foreign donors. However, some state bodies responsible for capacity building have shortcomings. The Kosovar Institute for Public Administration still has no modules on the topic of involvement of civil society for increasing the capacities of civil servants.

The Office of Good Governance or the Office of the Prime Minister, through a Technical Assistance project funded by the EU, has organised two series of trainings for selected civil servants on the Regulation on Minimum Standards for public consultation process. Nevertheless, numerous issues surface on the civil servants' capacity to deliver. Their non-meritocratic recruiting, training, and performance evaluation practices directly reflect their capacity to engage meaningfully in multi-stakeholder dialogue.

While technical information is more accessible, CSOs complain about the high rate of “silent refusal.” Silent refusal is when recipients do not receive answer to their request for information. It also manifests when the sources give irrelevant information or only partial information on sensitive or complex data.

Mongolia

Government-CSO Co-operation

For the first time, Mongolia participated in the monitoring round of the GPEDC. The Ministry of Finance was assigned as the national coordinating body for the country while the Centre for Human Rights and Development (CHRD) served as the local CSO focal point during this monitoring. The following is an excerpt of the full report, capturing the relationship between the Government and civil society in Mongolia.

Official Development Co-Operation with CSOs

According to 31.8% of the research participants, donors organise consultations with their partner organisations within the timeframe of programs and agreements. It is more common for donors not to consult with CSOs. When consultations are organised, these do not take place at relevant levels, and there is no feedback on CSOs' inputs.

Half of the participants also think that donors do not have policy on CSOs, do not finance CSO-defined objectives, and do not promote a CSO enabling environment. They only fund projects within their policy and programme framework. On the other hand, a few believe that donors implement big projects to promote a CSO enabling environment. Nevertheless, when projects end, there is no clear follow-up action.

Donors, on the other hand, mention that legal regulation is important for CSO enabling environment. This establishes a free, open, and capable civil society, and encourages CSO engagement in policy processes. However, legal and regulatory environments do not promote CSO enabling environment. Half of the participants claimed that a topic on CSO enabling environment is not included in the discussion agenda between donors and the government. There is no real clarity on whether the donors and the government discuss CSO enabling environment.

Half of the participants believe that because of rapid change in the government and lack of consistency in policy, it is difficult for donors to cooperate with the government. Some (18.1%) CSOs believe that donors do share information with the government, but the information has no impact.

Legal and Regulatory Environment

Access to public information from the public institutions is a right guaranteed by the Constitution. The Law on Access to Public Documents obliges all public institutions to publish all documents and includes important elements such as the time limit to respond to requests for information, sanctions for civil servants who breach the law, etc.

The right to association, assembly, demonstration and expression is recognised in the Constitution and other laws. However, in some cases, some laws and regulations restrict CSO right to freedom. Data from this research shows that almost all (93.2%) think that the law regulates CSO formation, registration, and operation.



For CSOs in Mongolia, it is easy to register. The grounds for denial of registration and for deregistration is clear and has recourse mechanisms. CSOs are enabled by law and practice to self-define goals and objectives and to regulate their internal governance and affairs. There is no legal, regulatory, policy or political barriers that limit the possibility of marginalised individuals to participate in, join, and operate CSOs.

Some of the participants believe that poor performance and lack of knowledge of governmental officials pose difficulty during registration. Although legal environment enables CSO formation, it is almost impossible to operate a CSO because of fund-raising problems and tax-burden. A few of the respondents said that CSOs can operate without becoming a legal entity, but in practice it is impossible because only legal entities can receive funds and grants.

At times, the regulation environment enables fund-raising for CSOs, while other times it's the opposite. Minority of the participants agrees that legal and other regulations that facilitate access to resource for CSOs are lacking. Most think that government funding to CSO is not transparent: fund is disbursed partially and unreliably.

Legally, all groups are equal. The Constitution declares non-discrimination and humanitarian society for Mongolia. However, a significant number of the research participants said that sometimes certain groups are discriminated and their CSO freedom is violated.

CSO engagement in meeting the Country's Priorities

NGOs are not engaged in defining the country's priorities, goals, and targets. During the final stage of development or just before the approval of these items, public disclosure and consultations take place.

Because NGOs are urged to comment in a very short period of time, the possibility of thinking thoroughly and providing meaningful comments and suggestions is limited.

Most (74%) of the research participants agree that there is no established mechanism for engagement of CSOs. Thus, CSOs initiate coalitions, umbrella organisations, and fora to ensure their representation in the development dialogue.



3 Voices from the Sectors

Trade Unions

Supporting private sector with development funds: Putting the cart before the horse?

By Paola Simonetti, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

This article highlights some of the most controversial issues relating to the role of private sector in development as recipient of development assistance resources. The analysis revolves around the effective use of aid funds, according to the development effectiveness principles and commitments of 'country ownership,' 'accountability,' and 'development results'.

The paradigm around business in development

The role of private sector in development is currently one of the most debated issues in international cooperation. It is inscribed in a wider context where financial resources for official development assistance (ODA) are shrinking, development cooperation is evolving beyond the traditional 'aid' concept, and the actors/entities that can be key players in development are growing. Fortunately, development is seen more and more as a holistic process that should be supported by integrated global policies (such as trade, investments, etc.), bringing about improvements in terms of both economic and social progress, the latter being based on the full respect of human rights.

The pivotal role of business in development discourse is based on the equation between economic growth and sustainable development, (voluntary) corporate social responsibility (CSR), enabling business environment provided by states, and finally public-private dialogues (private sector involved in policy making). The role of business has also been recognised in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

Amongst the various consequences of this paradigm, growing percentages of traditional ODA – public resources – are being destined to support private sector initiatives in developing countries. This brings about serious concerns in terms of accountability, ownership, and, last but not least, development results (see also the article in this issue by K. Miyamoto and E. Chiofalo).

How can it be ensured that businesses really contribute to developmental processes in the countries where they operate? How can responsibility of their actions be granted against development impacts? How can they be kept accountable for spending public money? These seem quite immediate questions. However, they remain to be answered.

Some attempts in this direction have been made but they are still mostly inadequate, such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) indicator on "engagement and contribution of the private sector to development" which is focusing exclusively on the quality of public-private sector dialogue. Obviously this is not sufficient to capture the overall 'developmental' impact of private sector.

The role of DFIs

In recent years, donors have increasingly promoted a new form of engagement: the use of aid to ‘leverage’ the private sector investments for development. The overarching concept is that small amounts of aid can be used to reduce the risk of or remove financial barriers to private sector investments in developing countries, thus mobilising additional funding. Because leveraging combines aid grants with other forms of finance, it is also known as ‘blending’.

Unlike other forms of aid flows traditionally managed by aid agencies, leveraging or blending instruments generally involve more specialised financial institutions. The natural choice of donors has been to rely on development finance institutions (DFIs) to manage aid funds and blend them with other public and private finance.

However, DFIs do not seem to ‘deliver’ when it comes to adhering to the fundamental commitments enshrined in the development effectiveness agenda, in particular country ownership, accountability, and development results. The average performance of a sample of DFIs is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. DFIs performance on development effectiveness

DFI	Ownership		Development results		Mutual accountability	
	Mandate & eligibility	Participation government & social partners	Standard on worker's rights and OFC	Monitoring	Transparency	Complaint mechanism
Bio (Belgium)	poor performance	poor performance	average performance or some good features	poor performance	poor performance	poor performance
CDC Group (UK)	average performance or some good features	poor performance	average performance or some good features	poor performance	average performance or some good features	average performance or some good features
Cofides (Spain)	poor performance	poor performance	average performance or some good features	poor performance	poor performance	poor performance
DEG (Germany)	poor performance	poor performance	average performance or some good features	poor performance	poor performance	good performance
FMO (Netherlands)	poor performance	poor performance	average performance or some good features	poor performance	poor performance	good performance
Norfund (Norway)	average performance or some good features	poor performance	good performance	poor performance	poor performance	poor performance
OPIC (US)	poor performance	poor performance	average performance or some good features	average performance or some good features	poor performance	good performance
Proparco (France)	average performance or some good features	poor performance	good performance	average performance or some good features	average performance or some good features	poor performance
Swedfund (Sweden)	average performance or some good features	poor performance	good performance	poor performance	average performance or some good features	poor performance

■ poor performance ■ average performance or some good features ■ good performance

*Source: TUDCN-CPDE (2016), *The development effectiveness of supporting the private sector with ODA funds*, p. 4

ODA undermines country ownership in Colombia and Peru

Case studies from TUDCN-CPDE research provide a useful illustration of how donors use development aid to further the interests of their national companies rather than to target the needs of the poor. This can be seen in the case of Spanish investments in Cartagena (Colombia), in a water supply programme run by a contractor jointly owned by the local municipality and a Spanish-based company. While the number of households with access to water has increased, from 75% to 90% between 2007 and 2013, so too did the price of water, with monthly rates reaching up to 20% of the minimum wage. Each month, 19,000 inhabitants of Cartagena, many of whom are employed in the informal economy and cannot afford the elevated prices, lose access to water due to the non-payment of their bills.

In Peru, Canada subsidises CSR policies of some of Canada’s largest mining companies. While the project ostensibly aims to develop the agricultural and forestry sectors within mining communities, its greatest focus is on improving the image of the extractive industry in communities affected by social and industrial conflicts resulting from mining operations.

A general bias towards donors' economic interests and business is assessed within DFIs' mandates and practices. When it comes to eligibility criteria, the profitability of the projects (less risky situations) is a key requirement across the board. There are only a few DFIs that include mechanisms ensuring investments are directed to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), focusing on generating employment or targeting investments to challenged countries or circumstances. Moreover, DFIs' policies do not include any requirements on participatory approaches – i.e. consulting with national governments in developing countries – and there is no provision either to include social partners (employers and workers' representatives) in the decision-making processes.

Poor labour standards in Malawi and Haiti

The Shire Barrage upgrade in Liwonde, Malawi, is part of a project funded through a blend of grants and a concessional loan from the World Bank. The project is supervised by a consortium of European companies. Research based on interviews with workers on the project site and government officials demonstrated weak implementation of work standards and limited development outcomes of the upgrade. Although the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) performance standard 2 on labour and working conditions requires workers to be informed about their rights and benefits, none of the workers interviewed were aware of basic labour regulations, and only 23% knew about the existence of a trade union. No on-site monitoring visits were made either by the project funders or the national authorities despite this being foreseen by Malawi labour legislation. These shortcomings represent a clear lack of enforcement of World Bank standards by private sector partners who should have ensured follow-up on these issues given the national context. Furthermore, the project appeared to be using mainly unskilled workers with virtually no training, while skilled jobs have been awarded to foreign experts. As a result, the transfer of skills to local actors has been almost nonexistent.

In Haiti, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and USAID supported the construction of a special economic zone, the Parc Industriel de Caracol, providing infrastructure for a major textile company. Out of the 6,500 jobs created, an overwhelming majority is under appalling conditions. Approximately 87% of the workers fail to reach the daily minimum wage, as they are paid based on production; there have been reports of irregularities with regards to social security contributions and medical leave as well as threats and failure to pay severances.

Labour representation can contribute to strengthen accountability of business, both within DFIs in donor countries (none of the DFIs in the sample are required to have trade unions in their board) and in developing countries where initiatives are implemented.

These examples show that there is still huge concern around the capacity of business, including DFIs, to promote decent work in development countries. This is mainly due to a lack of an inclusive approach, which should always foresee the participation of social partners in all phases of the programme.

Lack of data prevents accountability in El Salvador and Zambia

Case studies in El Salvador and Zambia on programmes to identify and support SMEs, and scaling up lending, proved how impossible it is to obtain information allowing for a thorough assessment of how the funds were being used. No information was available either to assess their impact on the beneficiaries, or detailed information on the specific amounts committed by any of the partners, the specific companies supported, project activities or results.

Without any information on the final beneficiaries or the performance of the project, project stakeholders, including the national government, cannot hold project partners or intermediaries to account. These two studies are therefore clear examples of cases in which accountability only runs upwards.

These case studies show that DFIs cannot generally guarantee a minimum level of public accountability when using aid funds or other public resources. Project information disclosed by DFIs is very scarce, there is no access to old project files after one or two years and only two DFIs make project evaluations accessible. As a matter of fact, only three DFIs of those analysed have created independent mechanisms to deal with project complaints.

Recommendations for a credible approach

Current evidence shows that the 'paradigm' of the role of private sector in development still needs to be unfolded. This will require political will by both public and private entities. While business is needed to foster economic growth, this alone cannot be sufficient to ensure sustainable development, based on rights and democratic governance. In order to achieve this goal, in line with the 2030 Agenda framework, the following elements need to be explored and reinforced:

- Adopting assessment criteria and indicators of private sector interventions in development, shaped against the development effectiveness agenda commitments, such as democratic ownership, accountability and development results;
- Increasing responsibility of donor governments in shaping policies and approaches of DFIs which are currently ill-equipped to manage aid flows in line with development effectiveness commitments;
- Recognising and promoting social dialogue (among employers and workers' representative organisations) in planning and implementing private sector initiatives in development. Social dialogue is fundamental to promote decent work and improve socio-economic conditions overall, also granting accountability of business – as opposed to purely voluntary approaches – to achieve ownership of development policies.

This article is adapted from the TUDCN-CPDE publications: [The development effectiveness of supporting the private sector with ODA funds \(2016\)](#) and [Business Accountability FOR Development: Mapping business liability mechanisms and donor engagement with private sector in development \(2015\)](#), originally published online [here](#).

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Placing the development effectiveness agenda of the displaced

By Aaron Ceradoy, Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)

Migrants



From the right to remain in the country of birth with a decent life to non-discrimination and equality of access to comprehensive rights in a country where they live and work, migrants and diaspora are joining the ranks of civil society organisations (CSOs) advancing development effectiveness and effective development cooperation.

From Istanbul to New York

In October last year, the CPDE organised the first meeting in Istanbul, Turkey to locate the issues of migrants and diaspora within the development effectiveness conversation, and lay down the foundation for outreach, advocacy, and engagement on migration and development effectiveness.

A year later, the CPDE Conference on Migrants, Diaspora, and Development Effectiveness further solidified the analyses and calls of migrants and diaspora organisations on the various issues of development effectiveness and effective development cooperation.

Gathering more than 20 organisations from around the world – mainly grassroots organisations – the conference in New York built on the unities achieved in the Istanbul conference to further firm up understanding on the issues and map out future plans of the proposed CPDE Migrants and Diaspora Constituency.

From the domestic workers in Asia, migrants travelling to the north from different parts of Latin America, the historical migration and export of people from Africa, the refugees in and from the Middle East and North Africa, and the climate refugees and trafficked migrants in the Pacific, lively exchange of situation and sharing of concerns from the lens of development effectiveness were conducted by participants from Hong Kong, South Korea, Nigeria, Senegal, Italy, New Zealand, United States, Canada, Mexico, and Guatemala.

At the core of forced migration, displacement as refugees, and diaspora are the economic, political, and social aspects of development. Among migrants, refugee and diaspora organisations, addressing the vulnerability of people to being forcibly displaced while promoting and upholding the human rights of those living and working in a country other than their country of birth are still the paramount challenges for any development strategy.

For migrants to be effective development actors, the framework of labor exportation and importation of cheap labour should be challenged and changed.

Facilitating and Building the Capacity of Migrants and Diaspora for Development Effectiveness

The latest initiative of the CPDE to gather migrants and refugees for a more systematic participation of the sector in the platform was met positively by participants of the conference.

While recognising the need for further education to grasp the principles and operations of the platform, participants of the meeting recognised the importance of harnessing the collective analysis and action, especially of grassroots migrants and diaspora, in the advocacy work for development effectiveness in various arenas including the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), the engagement spaces in relation to the 2030 Agenda, and the GPEDC.

Additionally, the process of coming up with global compacts on refugees and migrants as indicated by New York Declaration of the UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants that was held on September 19 also poses a challenge for participants to engage on the rights of the sector.

Migrants and diaspora organisations may be “young” in the discourse and engagement on development effectiveness, but definitely – especially the grassroots – they are versed in concretising the issues of the sector and forwarding the comprehensive development agenda they want together with other CSO development stakeholders.

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Conference participants tackled questions on how development effectiveness reflects on the condition of diasporas and migrants in their global regions



Eni Lestari, chairperson of the International Migrants Alliance (IMA), shared the outcomes of the Istanbul meeting as stepping stones towards locking in the agenda of migrants and diasporas on development effectiveness



The New York meeting consisted mostly of grassroots organisations who reached out by participating groups in the Istanbul conference. The priority for the grassroots ensured that analyses made were firmly rooted in the condition of migrants and diasporas on the ground.

Rural

Food sovereignty coalition to be set up in Dakar *People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)*

Dakar, Senegal – Representatives from social movements who attended the *Workshop on Food Injustice and Repression*, held on October 7 at the Al Afifa Hotel in Dakar, Senegal, have agreed to set up a coalition on food sovereignty.

Attendees of the event organised by the PCFS and Africaine de Recherche et de Coopération pour l'Appui au Développement Endogène (ARCADE) agreed that a coalition is important in fighting hunger and upholding the rights of farmers, agricultural workers, indigenous peoples, and other small-scale food producers.

“Before this meeting, different small-scale food producers’ organisations have been doing things separately especially in terms of advocacy. This time, fisherfolks, farmers, rural women, and support NGOs have decided to form a coalition that will consolidate their initiatives towards a stronger advocacy in advancing food sovereignty. We now recognise the need to pool together and heighten social movement initiatives to fight worsening hunger and repression of small-scale food producers. The rural poor and other sectors around the world need to build an alliance to assert the right to food and to end dependence on TNCs and other countries on their agriculture,” said Roy Anunciacion, PCFS Global Secretariat coordinator.

The workshop, which is also part of the 16 Global Days of Action – a coordinated activity of activists from different parts of the globe to mark this year’s World Food Day on October 16 through protests and cultural events – also made a distinction between food security and food sovereignty, and highlighted the importance of the second.



“Food security is only about securing food quantitatively. Food sovereignty is about the deeper reasons for hunger in the world today – policies on GMOs, dependence on importation, food price volatility, lopsided economic and trade agreements,” said **Guy Marius Sagna, coordinator of the Coalition Nationale Non aux Accords de Partinariat Economique.**

For this year's World Food Day, PCFS is highlighting issues and struggles on food injustice and repression, citing cases of state repression against farmers and indigenous peoples in Ethiopia, the Philippines, Colombia, Honduras, Palestine, among others.



"Food sovereignty also embraces issues like illegal fishing, which is one of the reasons for the worsening food crisis in West Africa. Chinese, Russian and European fishing vessels are illegally catching tons of fish in their seas in our waters and government officials are turning a blind eye to this," said Gaoussou Gueye, secretary general of the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional organisations (CAOPA).

Coalition building was extensively discussed in the workshop as participants agreed that the structural problems besetting their country's food system will not be resolved by separate initiatives by different sectors.

"Issues related to agriculture and food systems cannot be divorced from other social issues. They must be connected with issues related to trade, for example, or even militarism. Interlocking issues should mean interlocking alliances," said Demba Dembele, director of ARCADE.

The People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty is a network of various grassroots groups of small food producers particularly of peasant-farmer organizations and their support NGOs, working towards a People's Convention on Food Sovereignty.

ARCADE, on the other hand, is a civil society organization that aims to facilitate orientation of development policies and actions in a manner consistent with the aspirations of the African peoples. ###

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Voices from the Regions



The end of July marked the wrap-up of public consultations held as part of Global Affairs Canada's [International Assistance Review](#), the first major examination of our international cooperation agenda in over two decades. Civil society groups in the international development sector engaged fully in the process during the past months, contributing to a lively discussion on the best ways forward for Canada's engagement with the world.

Whatever direction and priorities the government sets for itself as a result of this review, it is clear that new policies and practices are needed in order for Canada to have a positive impact on the challenges faced by the world today.

Canada has a strong record of contributing to global peace and prosperity. Canada's international development and humanitarian actions have for decades allowed it to play a proactive and positive role on the world stage. But in order to ensure sustainable development in a quickly changing landscape, both domestically and internationally, we must do things differently. New ways of working, fresh innovations and new partnerships are needed to address the root causes of poverty, injustice and conflict. Business as usual is just not an option.

'Canadian civil society is a key partner for government in delivering successful international assistance programs.'

Given the universal nature of the world's global challenges, this will require not just whole-of-government but whole-of-Canada collaboration. The Canadian government must lead the way. It should pioneer approaches for partnership and dialogue that bring all three levels of government together with non-state actors -- including civil society organisations (CSOs), Indigenous communities, youth, academics and the private sector -- to collaborate around meeting Canada's sustainable development commitments, both at home and abroad. Silos must be broken and lack of coherence across different ministries must be addressed.

How Canada Can Become A Leader In Global Development Cooperation

By Julia Sanchez

The government must also ensure that its policies foster effective, innovative, and integrated programming that builds on the many strengths of Canada's diverse and globally-connected communities.

This includes providing incentives and support for the varied actors and organisations that are an integral part of Canada's development ecosystem. Predictable and responsive funding mechanisms must be put in place to engage a wide range of actors in Canada's efforts, and mechanisms for meaningful and sustained dialogue must be nurtured to ensure effectiveness. Canada must also support regulatory and legislative frameworks that allow key actors in the development process, including civil society, to contribute to their full potential.

Canadian civil society is a key partner for government in delivering successful international assistance programs. The government must acknowledge and support the important role of the advocacy, research and policy work that this sector does. It must also renew responsive and flexible funding to civil society, and reverse the declining funding trend of recent years.

'In order to be fit for the new global development era, Canada must also become much more transparent.'

To meet the obligations and opportunities of the [new global development agenda](#), particularly the challenge of "leaving no one behind," innovation will be essential. The working definition of innovation that has emerged through the review consultations includes new partnerships, technologies, behaviours, policies, programs, ways to be efficient, and ways to leverage.

The breadth and inclusiveness of this definition are welcome, and should be reflected through Global Affairs Canada's support for a wide range of innovative proposals -- including those reflecting social, behavioural or attitudinal innovations or policy entrepreneurship. Innovation is a cornerstone of Canadian civil society approaches to development cooperation, and there is already a significant pool of knowledge in the sector around what does, may, and does not work.

In order to be fit for the new global development era, Canada must also become much more transparent. More open and timely information on its development budget must be made available, and policies must be clarified. Over the past decade, a policy vacuum has set in at what is now Global Affairs Canada. Policies that needed to be reviewed or renewed have fallen by the wayside, new policies to respond to emerging issues have not seen the light of day, and there has been a reluctance to make public some of the policies, and strategies that have been developed. This needs to change.

Finally, to be successful, the government must also match its ambitions with commensurate investments. It is time that Canada commit to reaching the long-standing internationally agreed -- and [Canadian-initiated](#) -- target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income for development cooperation. This funding increase should be gradual, predictable, transparent, and focused on the poorest and most vulnerable. The government should work with partners in civil society and elsewhere to develop plans, policies and funding mechanisms to maximize the impact of these growing investments.

Canada can and should be a leader in global development cooperation. Working together as Canadians, we can help build a fairer, more sustainable and safer world.

Civil Societies Advocate for Accountability in the Run Up to the GPEDC Forum

The East African Business Times
18 October 2016
by Tullah Stephen

To leave no one behind is the mantra of the SDGs, however accountability will be essential to live up to that promise

A lack of a robust accountability framework may hinder countries from achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, CSOs have warned. Through their lobby group, CPDE, CSOs will lobby stakeholders to develop accountability mechanisms during the 2nd High-Level Meeting (HLM2) of the GPEDC to be held in Nairobi next month. The four-day meeting that will start on the 28th of November, will bring together over 3,000 delegates and 600 civil society groups to deliberate on ways for effective development cooperation as countries work on achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Accountability is one of the anchors civil society advocates have been looking to build upon the development of the 2030 Agenda for SDGs. "Accountability keeps non-state actors, such as the private sector and foundations, in check, particularly at country level where they must abide by the same principles as their development partners," says Suba Churchill, Chair, CSO reference group and National civil society congress in Kenya.

The SDGs, according to the UN, will lead to significant gains in reducing poverty in the world and promote economic prosperity, social development, and environmental protection. The goals provide powerful aspirations for improving the world and what collectively needs to be done.

"We can enhance the SDG implementation and review by demanding accountability for all development actors in the lead up to the HLM2, and at the conference itself," says Churchill.



Held a year after the United Nations adopted SDGs, HLM2 Nairobi will prioritise actions to make development cooperation more effective. Parliamentarians and representatives of local and regional governments will get to share views on how to efficiently achieve the SDGs through setting specific policies and actions that will minimise transaction costs for developing countries and improve the quality of development cooperation partnerships.

The meeting will comprise two days of preparatory sessions and two days of high-level discussions. The preparatory sessions will include a stock-taking on the second GPEDC monitoring round and opportunities for a range of stakeholders to meet in advance of the high-level segment. The meeting will also feature a marketplace promoting technology, innovation, and successful implementation.

The Global Partnership for Effective Development arose from an agreement reached at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2011. Its main focus has been to maintain political support and to foster engagement among stakeholders in the implementation of the agreements reached in Korea.

Sharing is caring.

This article is originally published online [here](#).

“The HLM2 will discuss how to ensure development effectiveness becomes essential part of the 2030 Agenda. As civil society, we have both a responsibility and opportunity to help deliver effective development results to the people we represent. The most effective way to get these results is to demand accountability in its broadest and truest sense.”
Vitalice Meja who heads regional secretariat Africa CPDE.

5 At the Podium

Notes from the 3rd Busan Global Partnership Forum Forward from Busan to Nairobi

Ma. Theresa Lauron, CPDE Co-Chair for Policy Advocacy, addressed the participants of the 3rd Busan Global Partnership Forum at the opening, middle, and closing sessions. The Forum was conducted at a critical time in international development cooperation, being the first year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 3rd Busan Forum was expected to contribute to the success of the High-Level Meeting by building a positive momentum.

The following is derived from her talking points during the event.



CPDE appreciates Korea's commitment to the GPEDC. We believe that, together with the Co-Chairs and other government members, we can ensure that the valuable work and experience developed by GPEDC here will play an important role at the Second High-Level Meeting of the GPEDC later this year.

CPDE particularly appreciates being in the panel together with Ambassador Kamau, Mexico, and Bangladesh, as we believe taking stock of progress against the commitments made so far is crucial to GPEDC's constructive contribution to SDG implementation.

Since the Busan High Level Forum in 2011, CPDE has been one of the most proactive supporters of the effective development cooperation agenda. We have organised regular training and capacity building workshops on development effectiveness at national and regional level in all continents. Workshops focused, for example, on civil society's role in advancing the implementation of the Busan commitments at local, national and regional level.

One of our main successes since Busan has been to identify civil society focal points in 60 out of the more than 80 countries participating in GPEDC's Second Monitoring Round. We have trained the majority of these focal points, both through face-to-face workshops and webinars, to allow them to gather credible monitoring information, particularly on Indicator Two on the CSO enabling environment. Our experience has been that through this kind of participation and capacity building, several CSO focal points have been able to meaningfully engage in a dialogue with their government and other development stakeholders at the country level. We have also found that initiating this dialogue on GPEDC monitoring can gradually expand to include other topics, such as broader accountability, and/or build on country-level discussions on SDG implementation.

Since Busan, we have pushed for the implementation of the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness by holding Development Effectiveness and CSO Accountability trainings in all continents. We also led a stock-taking exercise on the Istanbul Principles at the World Social Forum in August.

In addition, CPDE has played a proactive role, both as a global platform and through its members, at the UN negotiations in the lead up to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa and the adoption of the SDGs, among others. We have taken opportunities in numerous side events on issues such as institutionalising civil society space in the post-2015 agenda or multi-stakeholder partnerships for inclusive development.

CPDE has strongly supported the work of the Task Team on Enabling Environment and CSO Development Effectiveness and has nominated Brian Tomlinson as the Chair of the Monitoring Advisory Group; he is now the Chair of that group. Last year, we published our Global Synthesis Report, drawing on contributions from 23 selected national CSOs on the current state of development cooperation, CSO enabling environment, and CSO development effectiveness at country level. Earlier this year, we published a Synthesis Report on Indicator Two to inform the second Progress Report that is coming out at the end of October this year. This kind of proactive collaboration within GPEDC can pave the way to CSOs' stronger role and recognition in UN settings.

What have been the main successes of the development effectiveness agenda since Busan? What have been the barriers to progress?

Successes since Busan include:

- **Mainstreaming the development effectiveness principles in development discourse.** The four Busan principles have become widely known and are also acknowledged in the SDG outcome document, although not directly. The principles are an important foundation of development processes in the context of the 2030 Agenda.
- **CSO participation in the GPEDC has proved constructive and complementary,** demonstrating that CSOs are independent development actors in their own right and that multi-stakeholder platforms such as GPEDC can bring strong added value to what used to be a government-to-government exchange only. If done right, inclusive participation can be replicated in other non-GPEDC settings such as the UN.
- We are happy to see **progress in transparency** of development cooperation, particularly with the increasing number of countries and organisations reporting to International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Much more needs to be done, but this is one of the areas where we have seen good progress since Busan.
- We also congratulate recent efforts by members of the Monitoring Advisory Group to **develop a Theory of Change** for GPEDC in collaboration with CPDE. Our joint efforts will hopefully strengthen the HLM2 outcome document and provide a robust foundation to policies and practices that can benefit people and planet. In particular, we are glad to see our recommendations for periodical evaluations and stronger accountability being taken on board.

We also take note of some barriers to moving more progressively:

- **Civil society space continues to shrink despite the rhetoric.** Recent examples include Burundi, Cambodia, and India. CPDE reiterates the need to establish and safeguard adequate policy space for civil society organisations so that they can fully contribute to implementing the Busan commitments. We hope the GPEDC Second High-Level Meeting will also give all of us the opportunity to discuss this topic in depth. We also expect the HLM2 outcome document to reflect these concerns and reaffirm the role of **CSOs as independent development actors in their own right**.
- The political landscape remains **uncertain in many fragile settings**, making it challenging for CSOs to advocate for effective development cooperation, particularly when it comes to protecting human rights, gender equality, decent work, and environmental sustainability. GPEDC should discuss what steps are needed to allow civil society to play a more proactive role in fragile settings.
- **CSO participation** in national, regional and global development discussions remains severely **limited**. In UN settings, CSOs are granted consultative status only. CPDE believes there is a lot to gain in promoting stronger participation from civil society as we are closest to what actually happens on the ground.

How can the GPEDC contribute more to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

1. **Promoting the independent nature of CSOs as development actors in their own right**, as stated in paragraph 22 of the Busan outcome document. Supporting CSOs' proactive role in implementing the 2030 Agenda can help counteract the shrinking civil society space, secure a more enabling environment for CSOs, and ensure they maximise their contribution to development. Both GPEDC and the UN have a lot to gain in promoting stronger, structured participation from civil society, as CSOs are closest to what actually happens on the ground.
2. **Strengthening its global light, country-focused model.** GPEDC can and should put a stronger focus on **developing countries' ownership and leadership**, providing much needed global political support to an agenda that is often insufficiently promoted at country level. GPEDC can take a role in promoting an inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue in support of the actual implementation of the SDGs in developing countries.
3. Reiterating the importance of **monitoring aid and development effectiveness commitments for higher global accountability**. CPDE believes this is a strong distinctive trait of GPEDC. Monitoring and accountability are at the heart of GPEDC's mandate as one of its four core functions. Through the **global monitoring framework**, as well as the mutual exchange of knowledge, GPEDC members can hold each other to account for past commitments, providing valuable lessons to the SDG follow-up and review, including the SDG indicators, and complementing the 2030 Agenda.

Notes from Asian NGOs International
Development Conference 2016
***Moving from MDGs to SDGs –
Implications for Civil Society
Organisations***

Justin Kilcullen, CPDE Co-Chair for Finance and Internal Governance, addressed the participants of the Asian NGOs International Development Conference with the theme, "Asian NGOs in the Age of Transformation: Realising Agenda 2030" with this keynote speech.

**The Emergence of the Millennium
Development Goals (MDGS)**

In 2000, the Secretary General of the UN called an **extraordinary general assembly** of the heads of government of the member states to mark the beginning of the new millennium. This resulted in the Millennium Declaration which set out a **"New Deal" for the world's poorest countries**. The leaders pledged to halve the number of people living in poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015. This was a solemn declaration, the likes of which had never been made before.

But no programme was put in place to deliver on this pledge. As is so often the case, the leaders returned home, happy with their solemn words, and feeling good about themselves. However in the following year, a number of **UN officials** decided to take an initiative and to fill this gap. They **came up with the MDGs**, a set of eight clear objectives that would lead to the targets being met. These were adapted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

The MDGs focused on **reducing the number of people living in hunger and poverty by half by 2015**. There were related goals around women's and girls' development, education, health, and many more. These covered the first seven goals. **Critical** to their success was **Goal Number 8** that set out to create the economic and political environment necessary for the successful implementation of the other goals.

This included a pledge that donor countries would provide **0.7% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as Official Development Assistance (ODA)** by 2015; the reform of global trade rules to favour the developing countries; the reform of debt arrangements; the provision of **new finance**, and in a predictable way, to facilitate planning. The partner countries undertook to tackle **corruption** and improve **governance**, amongst other commitments.

'The SDGs are not transformative. It is still business as usual. There are efforts for consultation, but not participation. The enabling environment for CSOs is resisted, but enabling environment for private sector is seen as highly favorable.

It all boils down to political will. The SDGs are full of hope and aspirations, but actions speak louder than words.

If I were to make a choice, I would make SDG 17 as SDG 1 to make governments account for their performance in achieving the SDGs.

We must persuade governments and donors that active public participation contributes to the achievement of the goals, and is not a threat. We must build alliance with various sectors - governments, donors, etc. We must avoid being co-opted. We must keep our eyes on the big picture and work in all levels to achieve it. Base our advocacy on the evidence from the grassroots, and not be embroiled in technical debates. Promote and implement the Istanbul Principles.

Let us work together not to just build a good life for some, but a profoundly good life for all.'

The MDGs were particularly promoted by the donor countries. Outside of government circles they were **little known in the developing countries**. They became a technocratic device around which development programmes were developed.

In 2005, I was invited to **speak at a conference** in my own country, Ireland, on the progress in **implementing the MDGs**. Ministers came from a number of African countries to report on their efforts in health, education, food production, and so on. All of these issues related to Goals 1 to 7. I realised **nobody would speak on Goal 8!**

As I was speaking in the last session I began by asking who was going to report on Goal 8? Is there nobody here from the **OECD** to tell us how the donors are doing in relation to their side of the New Deal for the world's poor? There was an embarrassing silence. I gave my own views on it, which were that **little had been done**. Development aid was stagnant, the trade talks had stalled, and no additional finance had been forthcoming. How, I asked, were the ministers present supposed to fulfil their targets if the very basis of their success, Goal 8, was being undermined in this way?

It said something about the mindset of the conference organisers, all donor countries, that it never occurred to them that Goal 8 was a central part of the MDGs and should be considered alongside the other goals.

The nature of the MDGs had now crystallised. We would try our best to fulfil the goals but **we will do nothing to tackle the underlying economic and political causes of the hunger and poverty**.

As a result, **by 2015 progress was mixed**. The number of poor people had indeed been halved but still great poverty remained, inequality had increased, and the number of hungry people remained at 800 million.

What success there was had little to do with the MDGs. The fact that global poverty had been cut in half was due to economic reforms in **China and India**, between them having one third of the world's population.

The **least developed countries were still far from many of the targets**. However some did make real but limited progress. Coming from a very low base, but focussing on a number of key issues, **progress was made in food security, in Ethiopia** for instance. Others did well in girl's education, at least in achieving the target by virtue of the number of girls in primary school. The quality of education being given is another issue.

Overall, the **MDGs** were seen as a **minor success**. However critics, including CSOs, had consistently pointed out that they **failed to address the root causes of poverty**, failed to tackle **unjust economic and political structures**, largely **ignored human rights**, and that the donor countries had **failed to meet their commitments in MDG 8** around structural and economic reform.

What they did achieve, however, was to set **an agenda** around development that could not be ignored. Their failure was a reflection of the broken promises of donors in relation to reform, and of partner countries in relation to corruption, democracy and human rights. Governments were becoming sensitive to the criticisms levelled at them.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

It was recognised that their successor, the SDGs, would have to be drawn up in a **very different way** and address the shortcomings of the top down MDGs. The SDGs emerged from **a wide process of consultation** conducted in 83 countries and with eleven thematic consultations.

The UN Secretary General appointed a **high level panel** to advise on how the SDGs would be drawn up. What was really interesting was to see the competition to be on this panel. The chairs ended up being President Yudhoyono of Indonesia, the Liberian president, Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the prime minister of Great Britain, David Cameron.

Now, the question I want to ask is **why would David Cameron**, a very busy prime minister, where overseas aid makes up a very small proportion of his national budget, give up his precious time to co-chair this panel. It was certainly not to obtain votes at home. If anything this would lose him votes. There had to be something there for him. And there was. Because the emergence of a new set of goals would be an enormous benefit to **British industry**, especially if he could shape the outcome to favour the **private sector!**

And **he succeeded**. Perhaps not alone, but his was a very powerful presence there. The UK had pledged to raise their ODA to 0.7% of GDP, and have done so. So their credibility was very strong.

The panel produced a very ambitious agenda. The new goals would be seventeen in number, building on the MDGs but adding global issues such as sustainable development, the marine, sustainable cities, inequality and economic development, amongst others.

They would apply to **all countries**, not just the developing world. There were to be **169 targets**. And there would be no halving of poverty this time but the total **eradication of extreme poverty** and hunger by 2030.

The estimated cost of this matched the stated ambitions: \$2.5 trillion per year. A new global partnership to promote their implementation would be created. And to secure the funds required, the private sector would be at the heart of the whole thing. Wasn't David Cameron a clever man?

Civil society was seen to have played its part too. The theme of the new goals was **"Leave nobody behind."** It's a fine slogan and the CSOs were credited with coming up with it. There would certainly be plenty of work to keep the NGOs occupied in implementing what would be named Agenda 2030.

The question is, with the learning gained from the MGD experience, will the SDGs succeed where their predecessor didn't?

A worrying indicator was that as the agreement was being signed, some donor states were announcing **cuts in their ODA budgets**. The **human rights climate** in many countries is worsening. In order to get universal agreement, it was necessary to water down strong language in the earlier drafts around human rights, democracy and accountability. The agreement would be voluntary and not binding.

The emergence of the **private sector as the new means** to success was also most worrying. The large seventeen-goal agenda allows the possibility for countries to choose which goals to focus on and ignore others, saying they do not have the means to move in all seventeen areas.

The launch of the goals was described by a colleague of mine as thus:

“Nevertheless, at the end of last September, under the shadow of the glimmering New York skyline, the world celebrated the dawn of a new era. **In contrast to the solemnity of the Millennium Declaration fifteen years previously**, the UN Summit on the **SDGs concluded with a massive party** in Central Park, graced by the presence of superstars such as pop singers Shakira and Beyonce, and film star George Clooney. The party was sponsored by Gucci, Citi (bank), Unilever, Google, YouTube, and others.”

Some people had paid upwards of \$10,000 for VIP passes to the party. All proceeds went to charity, of course. There was no sense of a world on the brink of collapse, threatened by environmental destruction and violent extremism. The sense of disconnection between the optimistic atmosphere in some UN quarters and the pessimistic, worried perspectives of others, including Pope Francis, who had addressed the General Assembly, was evident at the Summit.

On the one hand, leading businessmen, UN officials and many states, including Ireland, lined up to **hail the goals as a new beginning**. On the other hand, many wondered whether yet more goals would make any difference at all or even whether they would take us in the wrong direction altogether.

But whatever your perspective, the SDGs are now a universally agreed UN document. The Head of Policy in Caritas Ireland offers this critique:

“While as individual objectives the SDGs are positive, as a global policy framework they are deeply flawed in at least **four ways**.”

Firstly, the sheer **number of goals agreed** and the lack of real interconnection between them has turned them into a shopping list. Everything becomes equally important.

Yet the truth is that **global imperatives exist**. There are critical issues which everyone needs to address if the SDGs are to be achieved. However, the SDGs create a kind of policy fog in which these priorities are lost.

The most important of these is the question of **sustainable development** which comprises the three essential components – the **'economic', 'social' and 'environmental.'** The 'economic' and the 'social', in reality, are **dependent on the 'environmental.'** There is no overarching agreement in the SDGs that pull them together as a coherent integrated strategy with sustainable development at its core. This is a lost opportunity.

Thirdly, however worthy the SDGs are, they are **weak voluntary initiatives** rather than an international treaty. Of course, voluntary initiatives have an important role but they only succeed when they are matched by strong implementation measures. There are no binding accountability measures in the agreement.

Unfortunately, **important policies are being actively promoted** by the same countries that signed up to the SDGs which directly **undermine** many of the goals. One alarming example is the emerging rules around global trade and investment, for example the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (**TTIP**), which is being negotiated between the EU and USA.

Controversial proposals which will effectively facilitate **Multi-National Corporations** to sue sovereign governments for introducing regulations that, in multinational business' view, harms their interests or profit margins. This raises concerns about government's right to regulate on a wide range of public policies, including measures to address extreme poverty and environmental standards. The SDGs do not even enter into these negotiations.

Fourthly, the respective roles of the **state and the private sector** in the SDG development and implementation are deeply concerning. The visibility of the private sector and the pledges made in New York reflect the way that major corporations have managed to turn the agenda in their favour.

One official pledge made by **MasterCard** at the SDG Private Sector Forum is to bring **500 million people** in the developing world into the **credit market**, thus enabling them to achieve Goal 8, concerning sustainable economic growth full employment and decent work.

It is already evident that Multi-National Corporations are using them to their **marketing advantage** whilst not addressing basic human rights and issues such as lack of accountability.

The **UN** appears to have already **lost control of its own message** around the SDGs to the corporate sector through its Global Goals campaign. This was launched during the Summit. In signing a licensing agreement around the Goals with key sponsors such as Gucci, Coca Cola, and others, it effectively transformed the SDGs, a key global public initiative, into private ownership.

A clause in the campaign agreement means that those who use the **goals' branding** must do so in ways which do not damage the partner brands. In effect, if a CSO or an NGO draws attention to the systemic problems of corporate power whilst using the goals' branding, they are in breach of the agreement.

The SDGs may offer some positive **promises**, but the key test is **what is happening** rather than what is being said. The SDGs do little to tackle critical issues of inequality and environmental degradation that are being made worse by other policies. The real challenge for those civil society organisations who believe in justice is to take advantage of the positives within the SDGs, but to remain **focused on the key drivers of inequality** rather than being drawn into a sterile technical debate around implementation of goals.

The CPDE Analysis

The SDGs are **not transformative**. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, it is still business as usual.

There is little evidence in the SDG document of anything other than a **top down approach**. Governments will deliver development to the people. There is little sense of governments working with the people, with civil society organisations, in partnership. There are commitments to consultation but not participation.

CSOs and NGOs are welcome to join in the efforts of government to deliver health, agriculture, and educational programmes in line with policy. There is no authentic commitment to **democratic reform**, promotion of **human rights, local ownership and accountability**.

The **emphasis on the private sector** to drive growth and produce jobs is worrying in many ways. While an enabling environment for civil society is being resisted, an enabling environment for the private sector is seen as highly desirable.

The model proposed is a **liberal economic one**, although it is this very model that has **resulted in growing inequalities** in both the wealthy and emerging countries. Marginalised and indigenous peoples see their livelihoods under threat as resources are privatised and stolen from them.

At the **World Social Forum** in Montreal in August, CPDE hosted a session on the SDGs. There, our **Co-Chair** from **Latin America**, Jorge Balbis, spoke of how Civil Society sees the SDGs in their context. He said the **SDGs** are just another **vehicle for the creation of commodities that can be sold for profit**. The right to an education becomes a private college run on a profit-making basis. The delivery of essential water supplies and health care will be done on the same basis.

He spoke particularly of the **indigenous peoples**, some of the most marginalised communities in the world.

If we are proclaiming “leave nobody behind” then surely forest dwellers would be at the heart of such an approach. Yet they find that the basic resources that sustain their livelihoods are also being commodified, the forests for timber, and their land for mining or agribusiness. Cultures are being uprooted and destroyed.

I have encountered this reality myself in **Honduras** some years ago. Caritas Ireland was supporting indigenous communities who had been forced off their land by unscrupulous business. The community of **La Confianza**, which I visited, had no legal title to their land. Their ancestors had occupied the lands for centuries.

The **businessmen** succeeded in **acquiring the legal right to the land**, with the cooperation of corrupt officials in the provincial administration. Using paramilitary forces, they drove the communities out and acquired thousands of hectares. These were turned into a massive palm oil plantation.

Initially the **oil was converted into bio-fuels** for the North American car market, as an alternative to gasoline. When that was discovered not to be successful, the product was diverted to the cosmetics and soap manufacturing industries.

A **legal battle** began as the communities sought to get their land back. **Young lawyers** took up the cause. They were intimidated by the local police, and shortly before I arrived, one had been murdered. Their struggle continues to this day.

While the SDGs aspire to address these issues, one has to seriously ask if governments have the **political will** to put a stop to this ruthless exploitation and work to safeguard the rights and cultures of these peoples. It seems most unlikely given that economic growth, driven by the private sector, is at the heart of the strategy to deliver the goals.

Let me give you a practical example of what this means in **Pakistan**. There, the British government has decided that it will channel all its aid to the **education** system through the **private sector**. Private education companies have won contracts worth €200 million to run secondary schools.

The UK says it cannot trust the Pakistani government anymore because of **corruption**. And anyway, the basic political philosophy now is that the public sector is inefficient and the private sector will deliver better results.

In **research** carried out on the impact of three such private schools the following was discovered. Certainly, the **educational outcomes** from the private schools were superior to the state run schools. Why is this? Because the private schools paid more so they took the best teachers from the state system. The schools attracted parents who put a value on education and so their children, amongst the brightest students in the state schools, transferred to the private ones. Where a family could only afford to pay the fees for one child, inevitably it was a boy who went to the private school. The girls remain in the inferior state system.

From the point of view of the SDGs, let us see the impact of this policy. **Goal 4** - "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education" – the children of wealthier parents are now benefitting from better schooling; **Goal 5** - "Achieve Gender Equality" – more boys than girls are benefitting; **Goal 10** - Reduce inequality within countries" – the wealthier get a better start thus enhancing their life prospect over their peers; **Goal 17** - "Strengthen the means of implementation." Rather than challenge the government to face up to its responsibilities, the donor has simply walked away. It has weakened democratic ownership of the development process in a critical sector. This is the approach that is now being trumpeted as the best way to achieve the SDGs!

A **similar analysis** can be applied to the concept of **economic growth** as the perceived **driver of development**. This has now replaced the emphasis that was placed on social advancement and human rights-based approaches that characterised many development programmes in the 1990s and the 2000s, and which are reflected in the Busan Agreement.

But **economic growth does not automatically result in poverty reduction**. In Nigeria, the economy has grown by an impressive 6% per year in the past 10 years. However its Human Development Index rating is 153 out of 176 countries. It ranks with some of the poorest LDCs. The **cause** of this is **deep-rooted inequality**. Rapid economic growth in an unequal society results in minimal poverty reduction and even **greater inequality**. Much economic growth produces no extra jobs, and much of the work that is created is vulnerable and non-sustainable. In sub-Saharan Africa, 70% of male workers and 85% of women workers are in vulnerable forms of employment with few long term prospects.

This is all well known. SDG 8 promises “full and productive employment and decent work for all”. So why there is such an **emphasis** on engaging with **large Northern based companies** rather than **local businesses** in the developing countries? The answer is that the **donors** increasingly expect that their development policy should benefit business interests in their own country. This is how the British government justifies its aid budget of 0.7% of GDP when faced with domestic criticism for their policy.

We must not ignore what **local enterprises could achieve** if properly supported. After all, the most effective way out of poverty is to **secure a job that is sustainable and pays a living wage**. The private sector has many faces – small- and medium-sized enterprises, cooperatives, indigenous entrepreneurs amongst them. But there was little evidence of them in New York for the launch of the SDGs.

I attended a side event on the “**new partnership for development.**” Insurance companies were there, the **credit card** companies, **major brand retail stores** such as H&M from Sweden. As CSOs, we have a role to promote local enterprise in particular. These can make a real contribution to sustainable and inclusive growth.

It is important not to leave this issue without giving further consideration to the question of **Gender Equality** which is vital to holistic social and economic development. In Africa, the **economic costs of gender inequality are estimated to be \$95 Billion per year**, four times greater than all development aid to the continent.

A recent UNDP report – “Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Africa” - states that **eighteen of Africa’s sub-Saharan states will not meet the Agenda 2030 target** for eradicating extreme poverty unless they radically empower women. It estimates that an increase in gender equality of just 1 per cent will improve the human development index by 0.75 per cent.

But this is not just a question of economics. Some years ago I met with a **women’s group in a slum in Nairobi**. We were discussing their problems. One woman suddenly spoke with great anger as she announced that she was HIV positive. She said that she had contracted AIDS in her own bed from her own husband. When she discovered this, she confronted her husband who accused her of being unfaithful and beat her.

She could not leave him as she was **totally dependent on him to support her and their three children**. He refused to go for testing. He died of AIDS a year later. His family accused the woman of killing their brother. They took her house as it was considered to be her husband’s property and she and her three children were left homeless.



This is just one small story of five people, but it tells us volumes about the daily life of women the world over marked by lack of access to resources, violence, poverty and economic dependence.

The UNDP report addresses these issues, saying that **gender equality goes beyond politics and the economy**. It cites women's restricted access to assets, such as a widespread inability to inherit land, low secondary education enrolment, and being forced into early marriage, as critical related issues.

While increased opportunities in women's **political representation** are important, these in themselves **do not necessarily change the power structures** that maintain women in inferior circumstances. What is at stake here are deep-rooted cultural beliefs and practices which will require firm political leadership if they are to be overcome.

Indeed, in all that has been discussed above, the solution comes down to **political will**. The SDGs are full of hope and aspiration. There is no doubt that if they were implemented, even to a level of seventy per cent, the world would be a much better place for all. But actions speak louder than words.

In New York last year, a senior diplomat said to me that many governments were signing on to the SDGs with one hand **while ripping up the UN Declaration on human rights with the other**. Some donor governments, including Sweden and Finland, cut their aid budgets while simultaneously agreeing to the SDGs.

Structural Reform

I began with how the MDGs failed to fulfil their potential because of the non-implementation of MDG8.

Well, **MDG 8 hasn't gone away. It's now SDG 17** – “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.” Included in its targets are 0.7% of GDP for overseas aid, first proposed in 1973; additional financial resources; long term debt sustainability; an equitable global trading system, policy coherence for effective development – need I go on? It's all the same stuff with even more added. What are the chances it will be achieved this time?

If I were allowed to make one change to the SDGs it would be to **make Goal 17 Goal No. 1**. That would then give strong expression to the principle that we are determined to make these fundamental changes to the global economic and political system in order to achieve the other sixteen goals.

And when the monitoring and evaluation begins we would start right there, and hold the world's governments to account as to their performance.

The Implications for Civil Society

The title of this conference refers to an **“Age of Transformation.”** I think we can safely say that praiseworthy as the principles behind the **SDGs** might be, they are **not transformative**. Indeed the negotiation process that resulted in the SDGs removed all of the transformative elements from them. It is argued that this was necessary in order to get every country to sign. That may be the reality, but it leaves us with a half-baked cake!

The first implication for civil society is that we must strive to be the agent of transformation in the implementation of the SDGs. We must reinforce our calls for a human rights based approach. We must continue to call for the accountability of governments to their people first, and not just to the donors.

We must demonstrate that development programmes in which the **beneficiaries participate actively** will have better outcomes, be more sustainable, and give better value for money. We must persuade governments and donors that an active citizenship is an asset, not a threat.

Secondly, we can start this **at home**. The **universal nature** of the SDGs means that each country should produce a plan as to how they will be applied. As countries are at different levels of development, each plan will be distinctly different. What is the plan of the **Taiwanese government** in this regard? Are they in dialogue with stakeholders? Does anyone in government have responsibility for this? Is civil society being consulted? If nothing is happening, can civil society be a catalyst in encouraging the government to take on its responsibilities in this regard?

Thirdly, we must continue to be **courageous**. I am confident that this will be so. In New York last year, at the launch of the SDGs, I had dinner one evening with six colleagues from civil society around the world. Three of them had spent time in prison because of their work for the poor and oppressed.

I have never had to face that reality. Those of us who are not asked to make such sacrifices can draw courage from those who do, and continue to **work in solidarity** with those who are marginalised.

Fourth, we must **build alliances** with other sectors. There are lots of good people out there, in parliament, in government, in the local authorities, officials in national and international bodies. Civil society is not alone in what we seek for society. Even if we don't agree on everything, we can work with different groups to achieve joint objectives.

Fifth, we must **avoid being co-opted**. I was surprised in New York, and since, at the unquestioning praise that many NGOs were giving to the SDGs. Even Pope Francis was wary in his speech to the UN General Assembly. He warned us not to be content with "a bureaucratic exercise of drawing up a long list of proposals – goals, objectives and statistical indicators...we must remember that above and beyond our plans and programmes, we are dealing with real women and men who live struggle and suffer, and are often forced to live in great poverty, deprived of all rights."

It is easy to be attracted by government funding schemes to take on the delivery of programmes in health, agriculture, education, and so on, delivering technical results but without questioning anything.

So **six** follows on. **Keep our eyes on the big picture**. Let us not get drawn into the detail of technical outcomes, indicators, and so on. Yes this has to be done, but more importantly is the large political landscape. Here we can work together in our national, regional, and global platforms to pursue a political agenda that reflects the reality of the people we serve.

Seventh, related to the Big Picture, is the question of **Climate Justice**. The climate crisis, and the large scale destruction of biodiversity it has caused, threatens the very existence of humanity. It is critical that this issue is owned by everyone and is not left to organisations that specialise in climate issues.

The SDGs cannot be achieved if we continue to destroy the planet through our failure to tackle the causes of climate change. This issue affects us all, as individuals, as families, as communities, and as nations. We must be part of it, and support the efforts of those with expertise who campaign and advocate for climate justice.

Working at all levels, Civil Society Organisations can influence other stakeholders to pursue a path of true development based on human dignity, decent and properly paid work, adequate food, water and shelter, and universal education for all and the right to lead a full life, both material and spiritual.

Let us work together to build a world that promises, not just the good life for some, but a life that is profoundly good for all.

Eighth, base our **advocacy on evidence** from the grass roots. There is a tendency in CSO advocacy to be drawn into technical debates, to be constantly writing up positions and statements that would be little understood by the communities for whom we speak. We must not be the voice of the poor. Rather we should enable poor and marginalised peoples to speak for themselves.

This is by far the most powerful form of advocacy because it is very difficult to argue with the raw truth of people's lives. So we must stay in touch with these daily realities. I believe we have work to do in CPDE to make our advocacy more authentic and alive with the lived experience of those we represent.

Ninth, promote and implement the **Istanbul Principles**. These were drawn up so that as Civil Society we would be operating to the same high standards that we demand of governments. The eight principles hold us to account too, in pursuing a human rights based approach, promoting gender equality, being transparent in our work and accountable to those we serve, learning from each other, and sharing generously.

Next year CPDE will mark seven years of the Istanbul Principles to review progress and re-launch them in the context of Agenda 2030.

Finally, CPDE is a global platform well placed to promote and facilitate these processes. **We are the civil society voice at the table of the global partnership**. We have built strong alliances with other stakeholders that share all or some of our positions. Our policies address all of the shortcomings of the SDG process as outlined above.

Upcoming Events

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10th CPDE Coordination Committee Meeting Nairobi, Kenya	26 November
4th CPDE Global Council Meeting Nairobi, Kenya	27 November
HLM2 Part 1: Preparatory Forums – Youth Forum and Women Forum Nairobi, Kenya	28 November
HLM2 Part 2: CSO Preparatory Forum Nairobi, Kenya	29 November
HLM2 Part 2: Ministerial Days Nairobi, Kenya	30 November - 1 December
CPDE Coordination Committee Debriefing Nairobi, Kenya	2 December

Contact

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