FROM THE
GROUND UP

Assessing Country-Level CSO Actions
and Advocacies for Effective Development

CSOPartnership
for **Development Effectiveness**

2017-2018 Global Synthesis Report

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Abbreviation and Acronyms

AFRODAD	African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
AGPN	Arab Group for the Protection of Nature
ANC	Asociación Nacional de Centros de Investigación Promoción Social y Desarrollo
ANFS	Arab Network for Food Sovereignty
ANND	Arab NGO Network for Development
APF	Africa Philanthropic Foundation
BPEDC	Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
CAP	Active Citizenship and Human Rights Partnership
CBO	community-based organisations
CCBACC	Civil Coordinator Building Active and Critical Citizens
CONGOMA	Council of NGOs in Malawi
COSADER	Collective for Food Security and Rural Development
CPDE	CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness
CPDG	Council for People's Development and Governance
CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Center
CSO	Civil society organisations
CSRG	Civil Society Reference Group
DONC	Development Observers NGO Coalition
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EDC	Effective development cooperation
FANGO	FSM Alliance of Non-Government Organizations
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FNDP	National Forum on Debt and Poverty
FoRS	Czech Forum for Development Cooperation
FWNGO	Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan
GMSL	Green Movement of Sri Lanka
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation
HCCD	Dr. Haider Abdel Shafi Center for Culture and Development
HLF	High Level Forum
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INDIES	Institute for National and Democracy Studies
MCIC	Macedonian Center for International Cooperation
MCPAD	Myanmar Civil Society Partnership for Aid and Development Effectiveness
MSDI	Management and Sustainable Development Institute
NCSC	National Civil Society Congress
NGO	Non-government organisations

NIDAA	Sudanese Development Call Organization
NWF	New Woman Foundation
ODA	Official development assistance
ONG – CCONG	Colombian NGO Confederation
PACD	Partners Albania for Change and Development
PCFS – IPTK	Coalition for Indigenous Peoples
RDO	Rwanda Development Organization
SDG	Sustainable development goals
SR	Synthesis Report
SSC	South-South Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNECOSOC	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VOICE	Voices for the Interactive Choice and Empowerment
WB	World Bank

ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

Executive Summary

As the efforts of civil society organisations at all levels shift towards the global goals to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Synthesis Report (SR) for 2017-2018 looks at country-level initiatives, priorities, and actions of civil society organisations (CSOs) based on new and previous pledges to contribute to the realisation of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and ensure development cooperation and effectiveness. This SR is part of the mechanisms and modalities developed by CPDE to guide the implementation of its country mandate, in order to increase the capacities of CSOs to uphold effective development cooperation (EDC) commitments in their respective countries. The context of the current SR is the ongoing trend of shrinking civic spaces, as well as the continuing predominance of corporate interests in development agendas across global and country arenas.

This SR also touches on the baseline stocktaking of the "core of effectiveness" in the previous SR 2016 report, which gauged the status of democratic ownerships, results focus, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and accountability based on country reports. For SR 2017-2018, the country narratives focus on actions in line with principles codified in previous High-Level Forums in Rome, Paris, Accra, and Busan. In sum, this report assesses — through the complementary lenses of the Istanbul Principles on Development Effectiveness and the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to Development Partnerships — the progress made by civil society in participant countries, as divided into three thematic lots:

1. EDC Commitments and Agenda 2030
2. CSO Development Effectiveness and Accountability, and
3. CSO Enabling Environment.

KEY FINDINGS UNDER LOT 1: EDC COMMITMENTS AND AGENDA 2030

- The emerging country-level advocacy priorities among Lot 1 countries include advancing the rights of marginalised sectors, increasing the knowledge of civil society as well as other development actors regarding Agenda 2030, building the capacity of civil society to fulfil their development role in achieving the SDGs, and situating and localising Agenda 2030 and EDC commitments in the specific context of conflict-ridden countries.

- Given the new challenges, priorities, and opportunities presented by Agenda 2030, CSOs have a crucial responsibility to address the problem of limited information and engagement among governments and other development actors regarding SDGs and other EDC commitments.

- There is significant room for improvement when it comes to the fulfilment of the CSO's duty of tracking EDC commitments using concrete indicators at the country level, primarily due to the lack of permanent and effective mechanisms for the inclusion of CSOs in development processes, given their special role as watchdogs demanding accountability of the state and other development actors.

- Another crucial task of CSOs in the implementation of Agenda 2030 is the creation of multi-sectoral alliances and partnerships, in order to ensure institutionalised, long-term coordination and cooperation across various divisions in pursuing a people-centered development agenda.

- It is more important than ever to concretely and thoroughly integrate the HRBA into the development frameworks of all countries, with CSOs working to align country-level SDG targets and EDC commitments with HRBA principles.

KEY FINDINGS UNDER LOT 2: CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The emerging country-level priorities, as seen in the Lot 2 narratives, show that CSOs have been steadfast in acting to fulfill their EDC commitments and uphold the Istanbul Principles and the Busan Principles, although with varying levels of success, given the different and often difficult political contexts for civil society actions.
- An important aspect of CSOs'

continuing efforts to assert themselves as independent development actors is their focus on building their own capacities to better contribute to development. CSO capacity-building is crucial to improving their work as agents of social change through mobilisation and empowerment of communities, especially amidst the disturbing trend of shrinking civic spaces.

- CSOs have exerted significant efforts in developing internal and external transparency and accountability mechanisms for their own operations, as required by internationally-agreed principles of effective development. CSOs have also worked to ensure accountability for other stakeholders in development cooperation, especially in monitoring and assessing governments and other development actors in implementing their EDC commitments in the Agenda 2030 and SDGs.

- The CSO-initiated country compacts under Lot 2 are a vital step towards the institutionalisation of effective and credible mechanisms for transparency and accountability, as well as being crucial indicators of development effectiveness.

KEY FINDINGS UNDER LOT 3: CSO ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- The global trend towards a shrinking space for civil society is evident in countries under Lot 3, many of whom reported varying degrees of restrictions placed on the ability of CSOs to enact their unique development work. Despite these

attacks on civic spaces, CSOs persist in their struggle to forge clear, institutionalised, and substantive roles for civil society in development processes.

• The country-level priorities that emerged in the Lot 3 narratives are centered on the need to counter and adapt to the constraints and limitations that hinder the development work of CSOs. These counter-measures include engaging in long-term and comprehensive solidarity-building initiatives across the ranks of civil society; and broadening civic spaces to include and empower marginalised sectors.

• In this context, one apparent strategic advantage of Agenda 2030 is its potential to serve as common ground for CSOs and other development actors, especially the State, to agree on shared development goals and programs. Achieving the SDGs and other EDC commitments requires broad collaboration at the country-level, providing opportunities for CSOs to build long-term partnerships with other development actors.

• The role of CSOs is significantly affected by their legal and regulatory environment. CSOs have exposed and lobbied against regulations that create a disabling environment for themselves, while drafting and pushing for policies that would enable them to fulfill their development tasks.

• The critical role of CSOs in adapting the HRBA to local contexts situates them as both rights-holders and duty-bearers, with the right to freely operate and engage in development tasks, and the duty to uphold and defend the human rights of the marginalised peoples who look to them as representatives and advocates in development processes. The HRBA is thus crucial not just to fostering an enabling environment for CSOs, but also to empowering the people to become active participants in development.

Introduction

The Synthesis Report (SR) 2017-2018 contributes to the assessment of the overall landscape of development effectiveness by looking at the key role of CSOs as independent development actors in specific country contexts, in line with the methodology and structure used by the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) in previous SRs. The scope of this year's SR is wider than ever, increasing to 43 country narratives from 18 country reports in SR 2016, reflecting the shift in CPDE's mode of country support. In 2016, CPDE commissioned research reports showing the state of effective development cooperation (EDC) at the country level. On the other hand, the SR 2017-2018 is based on narrative reports of CPDE-funded country actions implemented between October 2017 and April 2018.

Some returning contributors from SR 2016 allow for an updated look into the issues raised in the previous report, while also enriching the input provided by new countries. The qualitative country reports included in this synthesis were submitted as part of a call for proposals by the CPDE, with grants awarded for initiatives with the objective of renewing country-level advocacies for EDC and other development commitments.

Table 1. Distribution of Country Actions by Region
*Returning contributors marked with an asterisk

Region	No. of Awards	Countries
Asia	9	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan*, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Vietnam
Africa	10	Cameroon*, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Niger*, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo
Latin America & Caribbean	9	Bolivia*, Chile, Colombia*, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua*, Peru* Venezuela
Middle East and North Africa	5	Egypt, Gaza, Jordan, Palestine*, Sudan
Europe	6	Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic*, Macedonia, Moldova
Pacific	3	Australia, Micronesia, New Zealand
North America	1	Canada

All these country actions fall under three thematic lots that correspond to CPDE's current strategic plan and program of action. The countries are divided into lots based on three advocacy priorities, which serve as the central framework for the SR 2017-2018, namely: (1) EDC commitments and Agenda 2030, (2) CSO development effectiveness and accountability, and (3) CSO enabling environment.

Table 2. Distribution of Country Actions by Lot
*Unspecified Lots marked with an asterisk

Lots	Description	Countries
Lot 1. Core Business: Unfinished EDC commitments and Agenda 2030	• Initiatives aimed at continuing the discussion and monitoring the fulfillment of unfinished EDC commitments • Actions that support efforts aimed at better public understanding, planning, and implementation of Agenda 2030 in the country level • Actions that tackle country issues based on the EDC/ A2030/ Human Rights-Based Approach to Development framework	1. Australia 2. Egypt* 3. Gabon 4. Jordan* 5. Kyrgyzstan 6. Micronesia 7. Mongolia 8. Mozambique 9. Myanmar 10. New Zealand 11. Rwanda 12. Sri Lanka 13. Togo 14. Venezuela
Lot 2. Country compacts for CSO Development Effectiveness	• Actions that result in country compacts for CSO Development Effectiveness. A country compact is an agreement negotiated by CSOs who pledge to implement commitments made on the issue of development effectiveness • Actions that advance, promote, and implement the Istanbul Principles on CSO Development Effectiveness	1. Bolivia 2. Cameroon 3. Colombia 4. Côte d'Ivoire 5. Kenya 6. Malaysia 7. Moldova 8. Philippines 9. Vietnam

Lots	Description	Countries
Lot 3. Advocacy on CSO Enabling Environment	• Initiatives that focus on the linkages between CSO enabling environment issues and maximising efforts by various CSOs to contribute to Agenda 2030 and the country priorities for SDGs • Actions that advance the calls for an enabling environment for civil society, consistent with the International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness, the HRBA, the outcome documents from CSO forums in Busan and Nairobi, among others, and other related documents	1. Albania 2. Armenia 3. Bangladesh 4. Bosnia and Herzegovina 5. Canada 6. Chile 7. Czech Republic 8. Dominican Republic 9. El Salvador 10. Gaza* 11. Indonesia 12. Macedonia 13. Malawi 14. Mexico 15. Nicaragua* 16. Niger 17. Palestine 18. Peru 19. Sudan 20. Tanzania

The CSOs of each participating country are all part of the CPDE platform. These actions were proposed by the CSOs themselves and emanate from pressing development cooperation-related issues on the ground. Each country action is thus reflective of the challenges that directly affect development effectiveness work, and embodies the aspirations of civil society as well as the challenges they continue to face. They are assessed in this SR vis-à-vis the Development Effectiveness Principles, Istanbul Principles and the human rights-based approach to development.

Table 3. Forms of country-level actions/initiatives

Initiative	Countries
Development of country compacts for CSO development effectiveness	Kenya, Ivory Coast, the Philippines, and Malaysia.
Participation in voluntary national reports or the development of shadow reports on SDG implementation	Dominican Republic, Palestine, Tanzania, El Salvador, and Canada.
Development of Code of Ethics for CSOs	Cameroon, Vietnam, and Moldova
Creation of multi-stakeholder platforms or alliances	Kyrgyzstan and Sudan
CSO capacity-building workshops and training sessions	Palestine, Egypt, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Togo, Myanmar, Australia, New Zealand, Venezuela, Niger, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Gaza

Multi-sectorial workshops, policy dialogues, and consultation meetings	Jordan, Mongolia, Gabon, Malawi, Rwanda, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, Mexico, and Peru
Research studies and advocacy for policy reform	Mozambique, Armenia, Colombia, Chile, Albania, Czech Republic, Macedonia, and Indonesia

A. THE BUSAN PRINCIPLES

The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (BPEDC) serves as the current global consensus on the principles and mechanisms for monitoring EDC commitments, as concretised in four principles supported by a wide range of governments and other development actors. These development effectiveness principles form the foundation of cooperation for EDC at all development levels:[1]

1. Country ownership of development priorities
2. Focus on results
3. Inclusive development partnerships
4. Transparency and accountability

The Busan Development Effectiveness Principles established the need for an EDC framework that would emphasise the contributions, responsibilities, and unique roles of all stakeholders in development, including not only developed and developing countries as traditional aid donors and recipients, but also civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector as co-equal players in the development arena. New focus was also given to the evolving relationships between these actors, especially with the rise of South-South Cooperation (SSC) and the increasing importance of grassroots-level and human rights-based models for implementing and assessing development initiatives.

B. ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES

The Istanbul Principles are a guide to improving CSO's development effectiveness and accountability. These eight principles are centered on core concepts of human rights, social justice, gender equality, democratic ownership, and environmental sustainability. They highlight the crucial role of CSOs in people's empowerment, as well as the need for civil society to be transparent and to stand in solidarity with each other.

Formulated in 2010, after several years of global consultation, the Istanbul Principles are "a statement of common values and approaches... a dynamic set of standards that should guide CSOs as independent development actors."[2] The growing acceptance of CSOs as coequal partners in the development landscape meant that there was a need for CSO commitments; in particular, a commitment to transparency and accountability similar to those pledged by governments, the private sector, and other development actors. Civil society's affirmation of the ideas enshrined in the Istanbul Principles, from Busan in 2011 to Nairobi in 2016, cemented its key role in contributing to development effectiveness at every level.

Table 4. Istanbul Principles

The Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness
1. Respect and promote human rights and social justice.
2. Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girls rights.
3. Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership, and participation.
4. Promote environmental sustainability.
5. Practice transparency and accountability.
6. Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity.
7. Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning.
8. Commit to realise positive sustainable change.

C. HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The growing global acceptance of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) to development is matched by the increasing need to operationalise it across a spectrum of different development contexts.

The HRBA is "a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards."[3] This basic framework is not static but dynamic, as it lays down principles of integration and adherence to evolving international conventions and laws on human rights and development effectiveness.

Table 5. The International Human Rights Network's HRBA Principles[4]

Five Core Principles of the HRBA:
1. The explicit, accurate use of the international human rights framework;
2. Participation in development decisions as a right;
3. Empowerment as a right and a precondition for effective participation;
4. Non-discrimination and prioritisation of groups vulnerable to human rights violations;
5. Accountability of duty-bearers to rights-holders.

The integration of human rights into development cooperation, according to the UN, should "further the realisation of human rights," while using international human rights standards to "guide all development cooperation and programming" and developing "the capacities of duty-bearers to meet their obligations and/or of rights-holders to claim their rights."[5]

This emphasis on the obligations of duty-bearers, such as governments, to rights-holders means that development actions which integrate the HRBA must pay close attention to how state institutions and policies affect vulnerable and marginalised sectors. CPDE notes that as "neoliberal policies dominate development strategies" — evident in the liberalization, privatization, and deregulation policies that are predominant both in global and country-level development approaches — "the more governments downplay or even deny their human rights obligations."[6]

Such contextualization reflects the strong analytic component of the HRBA, which is intended to pinpoint the power imbalances and consequent human rights violations that are at the root of development problems. Moreover, the HRBA is also intended to be practical, geared towards the concrete and operational protection of human rights. This makes it a strong complement to Agenda 2030, as the SDGs are essentially aimed at realizing human rights on all levels.

Thus, the HRBA veers away from a "narrow focus on economic growth" and instead pushes actors to see development as a process, where people are "able to fulfill their full potential through realising their human rights."[7]

Table 6. CPDE Policy Research on HRBA Implementation in Development Partnerships[8]

Recommendations to Reinforce Rights-based Partnerships for Sustainable Development:

1. Analyse human rights in the context of power relations
2. Empower rights-holders, especially women and the most marginalized, by fully respecting their right to organize
3. Institutionalise participation of rights holders at all levels of governance
4. Allow local actors to take the lead in defining priorities and strategies for the development agenda
5. Build the capacity of duty-bearers to fulfill human rights
6. Enhance transparency of development partnerships
7. Conduct rights-based audits
8. Improve the accountability of duty-bearers

I. EDC Commitments and Agenda 2030

The multi-stakeholder platform Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) states that "smarter cooperation and stronger country-level partnerships are keys to achieving sustainable development."9 This is also articulated in the main objectives of the CPDE, which aims to help facilitate co-operation between development actors to secure positive development outcomes. CPDE represents CSOs in the GPEDC Steering Committee (SC). The accomplishment of this role rests on improving the capacity of CSOs for engagement, while creating an enabling environment for civil society.

Table 7. GPEDC Monitoring Framework

Ten indicators for monitoring and tracking EDC commitments at the country level[10]

1. National/Country-led results framework. Do development partners use countries' own results frameworks and evaluation processes?
2. CSO enabling environment. Are CSOs engaged in the development effectiveness process?
3. Public-private dialogue. What is the quality of public-private dialogue?
4. Transparency. Is information on development cooperation publicly available?
5. Predictability of development co-operation. How reliable is the disbursement of funding by development partners? Are development partners sharing forward-looking information on planned funding with partner countries?
6. Budget scrutiny. Do partner countries' legislatures have oversight over development funding?
7. Mutual accountability. Are partner countries conducting inclusive mutual reviews with development partners?
8. Gender equality and women's empowerment. Do partner countries track public allocations for gender equality?
9. Effective institutions. How robust are countries' national public financial management and procurement systems? Are development partners using country systems?
10. Untied aid. Is aid untied?

Today, the context of the continuing emphasis on EDC commitments is Agenda 2030, a global agenda for sustainable development adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. The realisation of the resolution — "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" —necessitates a high degree of development cooperation in order to ensure the effectiveness of development actors. The "scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda"[11] is spelled out in 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, and is intended "to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what these did not achieve."[12]

Agenda 2030 is underpinned by inclusive development partnerships, aligned with the landmark acknowledgement during the Busan High Level Forum (HLF) of non-state actors as full, equal participants in the global development agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlights common objectives while recognising the necessity for common but differentiated commitments and responsibilities, due to differing and shifting roles of development actors over time.

The SDGs are primarily centered on poverty eradication, including goals specific to ending hunger and inequality, while ensuring access to health care, education, water, and energy, among others. Agenda 2030, "a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity" rests on the core concept of sustainable development, with goals that are "integrated and indivisible" while balancing the economic, social, and environmental aspects of development.[13]

Table 8. Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development Goals
1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

Civil society is crucial to the Agenda 2030 and EDC as CSOs play an important role in various aspects of development work, from information dissemination to grassroots organising and mobilisation, to demanding accountability of governments and other development actors – at both the national and local levels –to initiate and adhere to development commitments. Overall, this review of how governments and other actors have performed, with regards to their EDC and Agenda 2030 commitments, reflects the uneven state of development in general.

A. EMERGING COUNTRY-LEVEL ADVOCACY PRIORITIES AMONG CIVIL SOCIETY

The advocacy priorities of the countries included in this study, while grounded in different contexts, all demonstrate the importance of CSOs in providing progressive perspectives and representing marginalised sectors in the development process. People-centered concerns dominated the country narratives, evidencing the

continuing efforts of civil society to shift development discourse beyond quantitative to more qualitative concerns, in matters ranging from inequality and gender issues to aid allocation and monitoring EDC and SDG indicators.

A.1 PERSPECTIVES OF MARGINALISED SECTORS

In Australia and New Zealand, PacificWIN focused on the advancement of development cooperation from the perspective of migrant rights. Both Pacific countries are characterised by marginalised migrant populations, who continue to struggle to carve out a space for themselves in both country-level and global development discourse.

The New Woman Foundation in Egypt zeroed in on the need to strengthen mechanisms for the implementation and follow-up of Agenda 2030 commitments, emphasising human rights — especially women's rights — in its workshop to train partner NGOs. Similarly, the Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan (FWNGO) underscored women's rights and gender equality through the creation of a multi-stakeholder platform for discussion of effective implementation of Agenda 2030.

A.2 KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

Dynamique OSCAF in Gabon and Development Observers NGO Coalition (DONC) in Mongolia launched multi-sectoral activities, which narrowed the discussion to specific EDC principles and goals, country commitments to various international conventions, and the accomplishment of the SDGs under Agenda 2030. This was the pattern also

followed by Rwanda, where the Rwanda Development Organization (RDO) sought to fill in gaps in knowledge of Agenda 2030 by conducting a series of consultations and capacity-building sessions intended to enhance CSO participation in the government's efforts to achieve the SDGs. Togo's Association Welfare launched activities intended to mainstream indicators for measuring the achievement of the targets set in the SDGs, while building the capacity of CSOs to conduct monitoring and make recommendations to the government and other stakeholders.

In Micronesia, the FSM Alliance of Non-Government Organizations (FANGO) joined stakeholders from all sectors of the country in discussions of the government's declared commitment to cooperate with civil society in the enactment of SDGs in the country. FANGO paid special attention to the impact of official development assistance (ODA) policies on the country's priorities and actions. Similarly, the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) focused on assessing the blending of financial flows in Mozambique. AFRODAD conducted a research study on the state of ODA and the unique challenges faced by the country as an aid recipient. In the same vein, Myanmar Civil Society Partnership for Aid and Development Effectiveness (MCPAD), sought to develop a multi-sectoral platform as a mechanism for improving national coordination and cooperation on matters of aid and development in Myanmar.

A.3 CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN CRISES

Jordan's Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS) and Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (AGPN), operating in the context of the protracted crises on food and nutrition in Jordan, sought to optimise the effectiveness of development actors involved in the movement to ensure food security in the region, per specific SDGs on hunger, health, and poverty in Agenda 2030.

Both Sri Lanka and Venezuela are facing internal conflicts and humanitarian crises within their borders. This served as impetus for the Green Movement of Sri Lanka (GMSL) and the CSO network Sinergia in Venezuela to engage in country activities intended to strengthen CSO capacities and engagement in development processes, and solidify the enactment of SDGs and the monitoring of progress on Agenda 2030 commitments.

B. LIMITED INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT AMONG GOVERNMENT ACTORS ON EDC AND AGENDA 2030 COMMITMENTS

The high ambition of the scope of Agenda 2030 requires significant and dedicated efforts from the international community, with all stakeholders embracing their differentiated roles and responsibilities in order to contribute to achieving the SDGs. An assessment based on the indicators for tracking EDC commitments at the country level reveals that there is still major room for improvement, especially when it comes to vital criteria such as transparency and predictability in the disbursement of ODA, and effectiveness and

accountability on the part of recipient countries in the use of such funds.

The concept of EDC commitments antedates the declaration of Agenda 2030 as the new global blueprint for sustainable development. In light of Agenda 2030, however, new challenges and priorities have taken shape. Countries are embracing new commitments based on the SDGs most relevant to their localised concerns, and the tasks of all development actors must be reframed accordingly.

A primary concern raised in many Lot 1 country actions was the limited awareness on the part of governments, the private sector, and the public regarding Agenda 2030. Knowledge sharing, as established in the Istanbul Principles, is a crucial component of the commitment to achieve the SDGs, as other resources such as financial aid cannot be maximised without information dissemination as an "accelerator of global development," with country leadership established as "the heart and essence of knowledge sharing."[14]

Since its declaration in 2015, the Agenda and its component SDGs have not yet been widely integrated and implemented by governments. CSOs are thus uniquely positioned to address this gap, with their accumulation of practical, specialised, and grassroots-level knowledge, as well as their capacity to share knowledge at the country level, and to take the initiative in forming platforms and partnerships where various sectors and stakeholders can have an equal voice.

In Rwanda, for instance, the government developed and recently launched a seven-year National Strategy for Transformation, which would also act as the country's primary mechanism for achieving the SDGs. However, despite advances made by the Rwandan government towards heightened development cooperation, RDO reported that there is still inadequate knowledge on the part of civil society and the private sector regarding the nature of Agenda 2030 and their role in its implementation. Thus RDO initiated a country action which mobilised over 60 CSOs and private sector entities in a series of capacity-building sessions and engagement meetings with government and development partners. This was an effective step in the country's efforts to improve awareness of Agenda 2030, and led to the formation of an SDG steering committee with an action plan for monitoring the national strategy. Participating CSOs also pledged to facilitate grassroots initiatives based on the SDGs they chose to adopt into their operations.

Egypt had a similar focus on the dual need to inform civil society of their role in implementing Agenda 2030, and to train partner non-government organisations (NGOs) on how to use international mechanisms and indicators for monitoring and tracking government efforts to implement the SDGs. The NWF noted that accomplishing these goals would entail research and field studies, legislation, the capacity for network-building, and provision of access to training opportunities, among others. As observed in the discussions held

as part of NWF's country action, such efforts would be necessary to equip civil society not just to monitor government commitments, but to propose suitable recommendations and alternative policies.

The capacity for knowledge sharing by civil society is built on the capacity of CSOs to ensure the efficiency of their own internal procedures and to build on their own human and other resources. For instance, an important subject of the activity in Micronesia was FANGO's official ODA policy which was produced in 2013. While the document was assessed to be an important tool for guiding stakeholders in the principles, strategies, duties, and processes embedded in ODA, the organisation reported that despite plans to revisit the policy every two years, it has not been updated even with the onset of urgent developments. Moreover, the ODA policy document was not adequately disseminated due to lack of outreach at the national, state, and community levels.

> " **Agenda 2030 and its component SDGs have not yet been widely integrated and implemented by governments. CSOs are uniquely positioned to address this gap, and to take the initiative** "

Knowledge sharing is also vital in identifying priorities for long-term institutional changes across various sectors in order to achieve development goals. This is evident in the narratives of Mongolia and Mozambique, where the DONC and AFRODAD produced and disseminated documents

intended to increase the awareness of key stakeholders, especially the government, regarding key development issues at the country level. The DONC emphasised that the country's national development priorities were not fully aligned with EDC principles — in addition, the absence of permanent, effective mechanisms for inclusive participation of CSOs and the private sector in development cooperation efforts equated to an absence of accountability for government actions. Meanwhile, AFRODAD's research study and final output, a policy brief, sought to study and contextualise Mozambique's development challenges and make appropriate policy recommendations. The government indicators for Mozambique reflected the gradual decline of government stability in recent years. Thus, the viability of blending as a mechanism for aid effectiveness rests on the compensatory strength of other country stakeholders— particularly CSOs that advocate for untied aid based on local needs, private sector inclusion, and better regulatory legislation for blended finance and private flows. AFRODAD's policy brief recommended greater inclusivity in existing development cooperation mechanisms, as well as increased focus on the technical expertise of state institutions tasked with implementing development projects in Mozambique, in order for blending to be used more effectively to enhance development outcomes.

Knowledge sharing also helped facilitate development efforts in Togo. The country action of Association Welfare, intended to measure the effectiveness of SDG 17, brought crucial concerns to the attention of government officials, civil society, mass media representatives, and other development partners. The finalisation of a long-term development plan is one of the conditions set by international agencies before Togo can start receiving funding for the implementation of Agenda 2030. Raising this issue was described in the country's narrative report as an "eye opener" to participants regarding the complementary role they could play in helping the country improve its development cooperation efforts. In particular, stakeholders were made aware of specific indicators and mechanisms for monitoring the accomplishment of the SDGs in the country.

C. ACTIVE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE CREATION OF INSTITUTIONALISED MULTI-SECTORAL ALLIANCES AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

The legitimacy of development efforts rests on institutionalised, long-term coordination and cooperation across various sectors, with civil society filling in the gaps left by the government and the private sector. Effective and inclusive development partnerships arise from a recognition of "the different and complementary roles of all actors."[15]

Even among civil society actors, there is great variety in CSOs' commitments to different development tasks — these include, among others, pushing for policy reforms, engaging in disaster relief efforts, delivering social services, and representing marginalised populations silenced by conflict or other humanitarian emergencies in the broader national and international community. Yet the role of civil society is not limited to supplementing these gaps

— CSOs also have a duty to demand accountability from the state in its provisions for basic social services and the protection of human rights.

Whatever specific role CSOs may fill, it must include the need to ensure not just CSO participation in various development platforms, but also the need to take the lead in forming multi-sectoral alliances at the country and global level. Istanbul Principle 6 underscores the importance of equitable partnerships and solidarity in fulfilling development commitments. The clear implication is that any development framework will succeed only if it is forged from the solidarity of a diverse range of development actors working towards common goals.

The inclusion of CSOs, given their representation of public interests at the grassroots level, also ensures that progressive development discourses are incorporated into shaping and implementing development policies. Civil society emphasises an approach based on human rights and democratic participation, which puts a spotlight on gender equality, issues faced by indigenous peoples, and other core concerns of marginalised communities.

Efforts in this direction were evident in the country action of Sri Lanka, for instance, where the regime change in 2015 became an opportunity for civil society to assert the inclusion of human rights in the promises of good governance from the new ruling party. Sri Lanka's model of development had previously been characterised by "mega-projects" in the infrastructure sector, funded by loans and tied aid from China, India, the International

Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (WB), among others. With the paradigm shift in their government, the GMSL immediately stepped in to ensure that civil society would have a permanent voice in the country's efforts to achieve the SDGs.

This was also the case in Kyrgyzstan, where the country action sought to strengthen advocacies for gender equality and women's rights through the organisation of a multi-stakeholder dialogue and planning for the insitutionalisation of women's organisations in broad partnerships and alliances under the framework of national development and the accomplishment of Agenda 2030. *(See Box 1.)*

Box 1.

Kyrgyzstan: Focus on women's rights and gender equality

The Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan (FWNGO) reported that development cooperation in the country was hindered by several issues, primarily the lack of transparency and accountability, and problems with coordination between development partners. These core concerns were especially evident in the area of women's and gender rights. FWNGO decided to address these concerns with the aim of implementing Goal 5 of Agenda 2030 in Kyrgyzstan: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."

The value of the multi-stakeholder partnership approach is clear in Kyrgyzstan's country narrative, as FWNGO noted that institutionalisation of the practice — "one of the major trends towards [the] success of national sustainable development" — would be an important step towards translating abstract commitments into concrete achievements in the area of women's and other gender issues.

In Kyrgyzstan, "women's rights is an area of development that is 'at its lowest' in the country," stresses FWNGO, as they reveal little support from the state on women's issues, while CSOs and women's groups themselves are unable to push for participation in national platforms. A national strategy, including financing strategies, to guide the implementation of Agenda 2030 is currently being created by the government. The process, however, is not inclusive of women's rights organisations and many other CSOs. FWNGO added that challenges in fulfilling commitments on women's rights are based not only on the lack of funds for state programs, but on a larger extent on the lack of a system for transparency and accountability in development partnerships. Gender mainstreaming in policies and budgeting is not supported by concrete mutual accountability processes at national and local levels, lacking wide participation of civil society.

FWNGO thus pushed for the creation of the first issue-based multi-stakeholder partnership in the country that would focus on gender equity and women's rights to advance the implementation of SDG 5 in the country, together with the drafting of the Kyrgyzstan National Plan of Action on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. Notably, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development expressed interest in the country action, in line with FWNGO's goal of inspiring greater state co-ownership of the initiative.

Indeed, CSOs have the potential to play not just a part but a core role in policymaking, given their unique standing relative to state institutions, the private sector, and other development actors. The private sector is crucial, as discussed in the Busan Outcome Document, to innovation, job creation, and delivery of goods and services. The government also has, as its very raison d'être, the mandate to advance the public interest and uphold and defend people's rights. To these complementary functions, civil society must act as a check and balance. CSOs remind the private sector that development is not just measured in terms of economic growth — often concentrated in the hands of local elites — but in terms of equitable and measurable improvement in all peoples' socioeconomic conditions. CSOs remind the State that, instead of operating based on the mechanical commitment to satisfy aid conditionalities, every country has the right to ownership of their own development agenda and processes.

In Gabon, where the country's debt amounts to over 50% of its GDP, Dynamique OSCAF-Gabon observed that the lack of alignment between aid flows and the state budgets prevented the country from achieving their development goals. As the CSO is part of the multi-sectoral Joint Committee, a state agency intended to "guide, evaluate, and follow-up on the country's development cooperation initiatives," they launched a workshop intended to bring together participants from civil society, government, and other development partners to assess Gabon's EDC commitments, reinforce the

adoption of EDC principles, and propose reforms for improving Gabon's performance in these aspects. The outcome was a "comprehensive diagnosis of the state of EDC in the country," which consequently led to increased awareness and the reestablishment of differentiated commitments, including the need to institutionalise civil society participation in the creation and implementation of the country's development agenda. Likewise, RDO in Rwanda focused on enhancing CSO and private sector participation in implementing Agenda 2030 — especially with regard to coordination with the government, as the government's Ministry of Finance committed to engage in concrete mechanisms for collaboration with the CSO network in its SDG-based initiatives.

The MCPAD in Myanmar sought to underscore the need for CSO participation in development effectiveness, primarily by building civil society capacities through education on how to transparently and effectively allocate aid. Though the long-term target was to establish mechanisms among CSOs and key stakeholders for improving aid and development cooperation in Myanmar, the MCPAD country action demonstrated that before building alliances with other sectors, CSOs must strengthen their own organisations and linkages with each other. This process includes sharing information and spreading key skills such as research and data gathering for evidence-based advocacy.

Given these narratives, it must be a priority for civil society to ensure that the State and other development

actors have mechanisms for obtaining and integrating CSO input into policy dialogues. The inclusion of CSOs should go beyond occasional invitations to sit at the table; a space for civil society in inclusive platforms for development must not just be encouraged but mandatory, protected by legislation and anchored by the recognition of their duty to contribute to the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of development work. Such country-level partnerships and alliances would be ideally situated to identify and address country-specific challenges, with CSOs providing a critical perspective and emphasising people-centered development outcomes.

D. LACK OF GENUINE INTEGRATION OF HRBA IN CURRENT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

Agenda 2030 is supposedly integrated with internationally accepted human rights covenants and treaties. As declared in the core principles of the HRBA, human rights are not supposed to be a footnote, or one goal among many. Instead, human rights are intended to serve as the foundation for effective development cooperation, a goal embedded in all targets, and the organising principle for the entire development agenda. In practice, however, "human rights commitments and standards were largely invisible in the articulation of the Agenda's 17goals and 169 targets."[16]

Subsequently, very few of the country narratives made any explicit mention of the HRBA as a component in the conduct and content of their activities. Despite the strong alignment between the various SDGs and the HRBA's reframing of development as primarily

people-centered, most of the Lot 1 countries did not use language that presented "empowerment" and "participation" as rights. Nor were developing and developed countries treated as duty-bearers and rights-holders by the majority of CSOs in looking at ODA. Just as the HRBA has been neglected in development processes by government actors, CSOs themselves largely failed to assert the importance of the HRBA in ODA assessment. Instead, CSOs mainly focused on the practical aspects of transparency and efficiency in the disbursement of SDG-related aid.

Notable exceptions to this trend were the countries whose narratives shone a spotlight on the plight of vulnerable sectors. In Australia and New Zealand, migrant rights — specifically, the right of migrants to participate in development processes — were framed as human rights. The impact of the HRBA was evident in the design of PacificWIN's country actions. The emphasis on enabling migrants to take a genuine and active role in shaping, enacting, and monitoring the development agenda of Australia and New Zealand are, in this sense, a development of their capacities as "right-holders" to assert and claim their human rights.

Another core principle in the HRBA is the universality of basic human rights regardless of political or cultural landscape. This can be seen in the narratives of Egypt and Kyrgyzstan, where CSOs continued to assert the inalienability of women's rights as human rights, despite facing significant challenges from their own social and legal institutions.

Meanwhile, in Jordan and Venezuela, ongoing political struggles — with attendant outbursts of violence and state repression — served as the backdrop for civil society to demonstrate the correlation between conflict and human rights violations. It is in such situations that the interdependence and indivisibility of human rights becomes apparent, as any solution would require a holistic approach to addressing intertwined root causes.

For instance, the political instability in the Middle East fuelled the sharp rise in food insecurity in Jordan. This led local CSOs ANFS and AGPN to frame the need for political commitments to address hunger and food insecurity not just as a matter of meeting SDG goals, but as a matter of contextualising those problems as a human rights crisis. The solution, therefore, would be to recognise the negative consequences of one-dimensional interventions by development partners, and instead shift the discourse to the need for a conflict-sensitive approach aimed not just at short-term provisions of resources, but long-term development and sustainable peace.

Venezuela's situation is equally volatile, especially amid the ongoing political struggles in the majority of Latin American countries. Sinergia refers to the issues of Venezuela as a "complex humanitarian emergency," and overtly mentions the need to incorporate the HRBA at all levels in the application of a development cooperation framework in the country. The recognition of the complexity of the crisis necessitates the systemic coordination of different stakeholders with each other, with CSOs establishing human rights as the baseline for all regional and global development objectives.

Under the HRBA, the key requirement for CSO engagement to be considered as genuine rather than tokenistic would be the institutionalised and substantive inclusion of civil society in development discourse and processes. This inclusion must be based on a recognition of the irreplaceable role that CSOs play as crucial proponents of a social justice and human rights perspective in setting targets and ensuring democratic ownership at both the grassroots and national level of the country's development priorities.

II. CSO Development Effectiveness and Accountability

As a general principle, development effectiveness reflects how the actions of all development actors and stakeholders intersect and contribute to long-term, sustainable development. It must address the roots, as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality, and marginalisation. In line with the Busan document, the Istanbul principles, the HRBA, and other core concepts that govern the contemporary development landscape, CSO development effectiveness, in particular, refers to the impact of CSOs and their actions on development. This impact may be measured by the results of CSO actions which aim to enact genuine social change.

This relatively new framing of development effectiveness — itself is a term that has replaced the use of "aid effectiveness" in the context of EDC and Agenda 2030 — counters outdated development discourse that used to be economy-centered instead of people-centered. The emphasis now is on the effect of CSO actions on people's rights and welfare as opposed to simple economic gains.

CSO development effectiveness principles, otherwise known as the Istanbul Principles, are statements of values and qualities that define the socioeconomic, political, and organisational operations followed by civil society in order to contribute to the achievement of development goals. Articulating these principles at the country level is highly dependent on the context of CSO actions, as determined by local factors such as the enabling conditions for CSO presence, practice, and operations, quality of government, the nature of relevant policies, and the scope of existing relationships between civil society and other sectors. Still, despite the nuances of application at the country level, there are universal points of reference formulated by international consensus for ensuring CSO development effectiveness.

Table 9. Siem Reap Consensus on a Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness

Selected Key Messages on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment[17]

1. Reaffirm CSOs as independent development actors in their own right and the importance of multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.
2. Commit to and promote and enabling environment for CSOs as independent development actors both in law and in practice, at minimum in keeping with existing commitments in international and regional instruments that guarantee fundamental rights.
3. Assure that the Paris Declaration principles, including ownership and alignment, are not in any way interpreted or applied to narrow the enabling environment for CSOs.
4. Implement donor models of support that can contribute to CSO effectiveness... through policies and requirements that are appropriate to promote CSO roles as effective, independent development actors in their own right.
5. Acknowledge existing efforts and progress in demonstrating CSO's accountability... [while] CSOs recognise the need for continued progress and commit to actively strengthen the application of self-managed accountability and transparency mechanisms and standards.
6. Encourage context-specific adoption and application of principles of aid and development effectiveness, including the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness, accompanying guidelines and indicators, and CSOs' own ongoing efforts to implement and monitor these self-regulating standards and tools.
7. Recognise that all development actors have a responsibility to be accountable for their aid and development efforts, and share responsibility to promote each others' accountability.
8. Encourage efforts by all stakeholders to increase transparency... in keeping with their respective access to information regulations, [and] the scale of resources and agreement on modalities that do not jeopardise the continued operations, safety and security of CSOs or individuals associated with them.

Actions categorised under Lot 2 have resulted in country compacts for development effectiveness. Country compacts are time-bound agreements among development actors, in which they pledge the implementation of all their respective development effectiveness commitments.

These compacts aims to advocate for universal application of EDC commitments guided by development effectiveness principles and human rights standards. These also aim to create a mutually-agreed framework on increased development effectiveness efforts while recognizing the different capacities of stakeholders and to address the challenges on the implementation of effective development cooperation.

Country compacts are essential to the realisation of Agenda 2030. To promote development effectiveness in light of these ambitious goals, civil society has stepped up its efforts at development cooperation, focusing on outreach, capacity development and delivering results.

The recent reframing of development cooperation distinguishes it from the old concept of ODA, traditionally understood as a one-way flow of financial aid from donor to recipient countries governed by specific conditionalities or terms of concessions. As defined by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-ECOSOC), development cooperation "support[s] national or international development priorities, is not driven by profit, discriminates in favour of

developing countries, and is based on cooperative relationships that seek to enhance developing country ownership."[18]

CSOs, as independent actors in development cooperation, are vital to developing revitalized global partnerships for sustainable development. CSOs are mandated to actively forge inclusive partnerships positions, while serving as watchdogs for accountability and representatives of marginalised sectors, to ensure that development cooperation efforts entail firm adherence to development effectiveness principles.

As part of its strategy, the CPDE has encouraged the forging of country compacts that adopt the Istanbul Principles, supporting the efforts of civil society to establish networks with governments and other major development actors, as well as collating the data to build a complete picture of country-level priorities over the next several years. The CPDE has set the number of achieved country compacts, and the number of countries that apply CSO effectiveness through the Istanbul Principles, as key indicators of development effectiveness.

A. EMERGING COUNTRY-LEVEL ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

Country actions aimed at developing country compacts centered around three county-level advocacy priorities: (1) compacts for development effectiveness, (2) compacts to study, monitor and promote the integration of the Istanbul principles, and (3) compacts to strengthen the enabling environment for CSOs.

A.1 INTEGRATING ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES IN CSO PRACTICE

Some country actions focused on compacts that assess, monitor and promote the Istanbul Principles in their respective countries, through varying actions including researches, workshops, dialogues, and meetings.

The Coordinadora de la Mujer (Women's Coordinator) and the Coalition for Indigenous Peoples PCFS (IPTK) in Bolivia developed a compact with different government bodies through a series of dialogues and meetings between government and CSOs aimed at strengthening the application of the Istanbul Principles on a national level.

In Colombia, the Colombian NGO Confederation (ONG - CCONG) prioritised the research on the progress of adoption and recognition of the Istanbul Principles in the Value Offer of Colombian CSOs as their country action. Through consultations and data gathering, their study gauged the level of knowledge and adaptation of the Istanbul Principles and how these principles are recognised by the different political, social, private, and cooperation actors

Cote d' Ivoire's National Forum on Debt and Poverty (FNDP), on the other hand, focused on improving the knowledge of CSOs on Effective Development Cooperation and on the Istanbul Principles to enhance their capacity and performance. Their action resulted in a country compact to facilitate and coordinate CSO actions on the CPDE framework.

Cameroon's Collective for Food Security and Rural Development (COSADER) and Moldova's Platform for Active Citizenship and Human Rights Partnership (CAP) both focused on developing a CSO Code of Ethics in accordance with the Istanbul Principles.

A.2 STRENGTHENING CSO CAPACITIES

Various actions prioritised developing country compacts for development effectiveness aiming to enhance CSO capacities and performance as actors in development cooperation. Some of these actions have achieved significant results in advancing inter-CSO, multi-stakeholder and CSO-government cooperation at the regional and national level.

In Kenya, for instance, the Civil Society Reference Group (CSRG) worked in partnership with the National Civil Society Congress (NCSC) and Poverty Eradication Network (PEN) to launch a series of meetings, seminars, and conferences that set out concrete parameters for the enactment of a country compact. This effort served as an opportunity to forge a consensus, with participants committing to the creation of a mutually agreed-upon framework and understanding among stakeholders for increased development cooperation at the national level during the first quarter of 2018.

Meanwhile, in Vietnam, the Management and Sustainable Development Institute (MSDI) developed a Code of Partnership among CSOs to enhance their capacities and to promote accountable and equitable partnerships among local CSOs and aid partners to

advance their EDC commitments. It was signed by 70 local CSOs and aid partners.

A.3 PROMOTING ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR CSO PRACTICES AND OPERATIONS

Despite these advances, it has been evident that CSOs continue to be undermined in their role as equal development actors across the globe. Thus, developing compacts for strengthening the enabling environment for CSOs have been among the key advocacy priorities of country actions categorised under Lot 2.

This can be seen in the country action of the Council for People's Development and Governance (CPDG), who worked with a state agency to draft a country compact for safeguarding an enabling environment for CSOs and improving CSO development effectiveness at the country-level. Though still at the consultative stages, CPDG expressed confidence that the draft would be signed in the coming years. Meanwhile, the Borneo Dayak Forum International of Malaysia worked to draft a country compact document for CSO Enabling Environment, Private Sector, and Multi-Stakeholder Engagement for Development Effectiveness that would contribute to safeguarding the enabling environment for indigenous peoples' organisations.

> **The integration of the HRBA with development frameworks has positioned CSOs as both rights-bearers and duty-holders**

These priorities are in line with the general trend of CSOs recognising the need for capacity-building in civil society in the context of meeting Agenda 2030 targets. In addition, the integration of the HRBA with development frameworks has positioned CSOs as both rights-bearers and duty-holders, who must assert their right to participate in development processes, while bearing the mandate of ensuring a democratic, people-centered, and inclusive development agenda.

B. DEVELOPING EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CSO MECHANISMS FOR TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The recent expansion of the role played by CSOs in the development arena has been marked by a consequent increase in the need for internal and external monitoring mechanisms intended to strengthen CSOs' commitment to transparency and accountability. As noted in the Busan Outcome Document[19], transparency is required in order to ensure accountability, which then falls under two classes: "mutual accountability" among civil society, the private sector, governments, donors, and other actors; and "accountability to the intended beneficiaries of our co-operation," including citizens and other constituents.

On the anniversary of the Istanbul Principles in March 2017, CSOs signed the Bangkok Unity Statement, committing to taking "proactive actions to improve and be fully accountable for our development practices, including by expanding CSO accountability frameworks and developing national and sectoral CSO effectiveness compacts."[20]

However, there remain great challenges at both external and internal levels. With regard to external accountability mechanisms, the inconsistent recognition of civil society as development actors means that few stakeholders make genuine and concerted efforts to acknowledge and promote CSO operations and commitments. Internally, attempts by civil society actors to improve organisational standards and safeguards for transparency and accountability are often constrained by lack of financial, human, and other resources.

Accountability is especially important for countries in the Global South, where democratic spaces continue to shrink due to restrictive state policies and regulations. Another challenge is the increasing private sector dominance in development cooperation. One vital way for CSOs to assert their equal status in the development arena is to highlight their unique capacities, such as their relative autonomy from financial and political pressures as compared to business and government entities, which enable them to act as a check-and-balance to other development actors as necessitated by the Busan principle of mutual accountability.

Indeed, effective accountability mechanisms can greatly improve CSOs' legitimacy and effectiveness as development actors. Accountability helps build up the integrity and reputation of CSOs not just in the view of donors and state or private institutions, but also in the eyes of the public, which is essential, because an important component of accountability is responsiveness to people's needs. Such responsiveness cannot be achieved unless CSOs have the capacity to conduct activities at the grassroots level, an endeavour which relies on a foundation of mutual trust and respect between CSOs and the people who are both beneficiaries and active participants in the development process.

As evident in the country narratives for Lot 2, over the past several years, civil society actors have exerted significant efforts in advancing mechanisms for transparency and accountability in the context of upholding and promoting the Istanbul Principles. Various CSOs report the use of various tools that promote transparency, including reports, audits, consultations, and monitoring and evaluation documents.

For instance, the MSDI has moved closer to the goal of developing a code of partnership for local CSOs and aid partners in Vietnam. *(See Box 2.)* Meanwhile, in Cameroon, COSADER's country action resulted in the validation of a Code of Ethics on CSO accountability. This was hailed as a significant step, as previous attempts to develop such a code were unsuccessful. The Code of Ethics includes articles on CSO Governance, financial management and accountability, human resources management and conflict management, communication and networking, and CSO integrity and independence.

Box 2.

Vietnam: Code of Partnership for Sustainable Development

The Management and Sustainable Development Institute (MSDI) focused on advancing Accountable and equitable partnerships between CSOs and development partners in Vietnam by developing a Code of Partnership and a roadshow of training workshops on implementing the Code of Partnership in three major cities. The goal of this action was to promote accountable and equitable partnerships and solidarity between local CSOs and aid partners in advancing their EDC commitments.

Signed by 70 LCSOs and aid partners, the Code of Partnership serves as a country compact containing principles, checklist and monitoring terms that promote the adaptation and upholding of the Istanbul Principles. The six main principles of accountable and equitable partnership cited in the code are:

Principle 1. Partnerships are based on shared vision and values
Principle 2. Partnerships are based on Transparency and Accountability
Principle 3. Partnerships are based on Equity and Equality
Principle 4. Partnerships are developed to ensure capacity building
Principle 5. Partnerships are based on a mutual commitment to long-term and sustainable change
Principle 6. Partnerships are developed for added values

The MSDI sees the Code of Partnership as a tool to advance the fulfillment commitments of the Nairobi Document and contribute in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and SDGs. The document can be used for CSO capacity building and help in developing effective strategies in CSO accountability.

As a country compact, the MSDI's Code of Partnership provides a significant mechanism in promoting transparency and accountability in development cooperation not only for CSOs but to other development actors as well.

In Bolivia, there were difficulties in implementing the Istanbul Principles, primarily posed by tax impositions and other types of financial deductions by the Bolivian government that had a negative impact on CSOs. Yet the Coordinadora de la Mujer and Coalition for Indigenous Peoples PCFS (IPTK) still managed to establish guidelines for policies on transparency and accountability. These guidelines include internal mechanisms, such as periodic reports and annual assemblies, and actions that enable monitoring by outside institutions, such as a public action plans, audited reports, and in-depth co-operation and networking with other stakeholders.

However, CSOs faced the greatest challenges in the employment of mutual accountability mechanisms in their work with government and private actors. For example, Kenyan CSOs, which promote human rights, civil liberties and good governance, are also publicly demanding greater transparency and accountability from the government. They have thus become targets of state intimidation and policies that undermine their civic space, treated by government agencies as competitors for aid financing.

In the Philippines, CSOs are challenged by the aggressive engagement of the private sector in development cooperation, which CSOs fear may result in the proliferation and re-establishment of ODA regime concessions and conditionalities, a set-up with severe transparency and accountability issues.

These narratives show that CSOs must continue pushing for the institutionalisation of consistent and reliable methods for ensuring transparency, holding, not only state and private actors, but also themselves to the high standards laid out in development effectiveness principles and other internationally agreed development goals. Moreover — confronted by biased accountability measures, hostile development actors, and constraints on developing their own organisational capacities — CSOs must remain vigilant in campaigning not just for tokenistic gestures of transparency, but for genuine accountability to citizens in ensuring people-centered development outcomes.

C. Diverse political contexts of country compacts

Development compacts arising from country actions under Lot 2 were formed in a diverse array of political contexts. CSOs reported that they faced political repression, insufficient financial capacities, government tax impositions, and private sector undermining of their role in development cooperation in their respective countries. Despite these challenges, the majority of CSOs found ways of adapting to difficult political and financial conditions, coming up with their own strategies for overcoming often significant hindrances to development effectiveness.

In Colombia, the Philippines, and Bolivia, the efforts to establish country compacts were marked by political persecution and repression against social movements. In Bolivia, for instance, civil society actions have been complicated by constraining state regulations. CSOs were slapped with

financial deductions due to government tax impositions, and faced increased legal restrictions due to the passage of a law that purportedly grants legal standing to CSOs, but in practice added more red tape and restrictions to the process.

In Colombia, the CCONG conducted their research on the status of CSOs even as they described "a constant state of persecution [including the] threatening and murder of social leaders" and an "environment of uncertainty" permeating the peace negotiations between the government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). The state also implements fiscal control regulations which endanger the short-term staying power of social organisations. Still, CCONG succeeded in holding actions intended to increase knowledge and raise awareness among various development actors regarding key development principles, for example, as they embedded the Istanbul Principles in their recommendations to political candidates in the lead-up to local elections.

Meanwhile, CSOs working with the Philippine government's National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) in drafting a country compact remain threatened by the increasingly shrinking democratic space for CSO enabling environment, especially under the presidency of Rodrigo Duterte, who has gained international notoriety for creating a climate of gross political repression. The country narrative also included a report of the alignment of big private corporations with development partners and multilateral and bilateral funding

agencies in projects for the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022. The CPDG countered this trend towards profit-driven development by scaling up its mobilisation and alliance-building efforts across civil society, creating a wide network of support for a more people-centered development agenda. The blatant human rights violations of the incumbent regime has also helped foster cooperation among the diverse civil society actors in the country, who are united in challenging state oppression despite varying perspectives on development.

Development cooperation also played a key role in Cote d' Ivoire's economic development after the military and political crisis of 2002-2010. This gave CSOs an opportunity to enter partnerships and contribute to the forging of two national development action plans. However, the government has yet to adopt laws that would provide financing for CSOs' capacity-building and other development actions.

Overall, country compacts focused on advancing the Istanbul Principles and strengthening the enabling environment in order for CSOs to adapt to, cope with, and overcome the shrinking of democratic space for civil society. This demonstrates that CSOs recognise the need to enhance their capacities in order to overcome these problems, an endeavour which is compatible with the need to promote and advance a human rights-based approach to development amidst the growing political repression in many countries.

III. CSO Enabling Environment

The success of civil society as development actors depends on their impact on the communities where they work and the people whom they serve. For CSOs, success is measured in the concrete results of their representation of people's concerns in different political spaces and processes. A strong grounding in the development landscape at the country level is crucial to the determination of development priorities and initiatives, so that CSOs can design campaigns, contribute to policymaking, and engage in actions that have a tangible and positive impact on the poor and marginalised.

The Siem Reap Framework[21] defines an enabling environment for CSOs as "the political and policy context" created by various stakeholders that "affect the ways CSOs may carry out their work." Meanwhile, enabling standards are articulated as "a set of interrelated good practices by donors and governments — in the legal, regulatory, fiscal, informational, political, and cultural areas — that support the capacity of CSO development actors to engage in development processes in a sustained manner." While there are varying indicators used to determine whether an enabling environment is in place or not, they are all rooted in the recognition of universal democratic principles, such as the right to free speech and the right to freedom of association. Currently, however, these basic rights are in danger, and CSOs are greatly challenged by an increasing global trend of shrinking and closing civic spaces.

Table 10. Report on Defending Civil Society by the World Movement for Democracy

International Principles Protecting Civil Society[22]

1. *Right to Entry (Freedom of Association)*. The right of individuals to form, join, and participate in civil society organisations.
2. *Right to Operate Free from Unwarranted State Influence*. Once established, CSOs have the right to operate free from unwarranted state intrusion or interference in their affairs.
3. *Right to Free Expression*. Civil society representatives, individually and through their organizations, enjoy the right to freedom of expression… CSOs are therefore protected in their ability to speak critically about government law or policy, and to speak favorably about human rights and fundamental freedoms.
4. *Right to Communication and Cooperation*. Civil society representatives… have the right to communicate and seek cooperation with other representatives of civil society, the business community, and international organizations and governments, both within and outside their home countries.
5. *Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly*. Civil society representatives… enjoy the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. [CSOs] should not be required to obtain permission [to hold assemblies].
6. *Right to Seek and Secure Resources*. Within broad parameters, CSOs have the right to seek and secure funding from legal sources..
7. *State Duty to Protect*. The State has a duty to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the obligation to protect the rights of civil society.

In the context of Agenda 2030, there is a heightened awareness among civil society actors regarding the importance of addressing persistent concerns in creating an enabling environment for CSOs. The Siem Reap Consensus, the HRBA, the BPEDC, the Nairobi Outcome Document[23], and other related instruments all assert that a CSO enabling environment is crucial to crafting a people-centered development agenda and attaining difficult development targets. Limitations on the capacity of CSOs to conduct their work also hinder the capacity of countries to meet the SDGs, for there can be no genuine development framework that does not include civil society as active participants.

A. EMERGING COUNTRY-LEVEL ADVOCACY PRIORITIES AMONG CIVIL SOCIETY

The country narratives under Lot 3 demonstrated the persistence of civil society in the face of oppressive constraints placed on CSOs, which ranged from barriers to their inclusion in multi-stakeholder dialogues to legal policies that hampered their operations. CSOs met the challenge in various ways.

A.1 COLLABORATION FOR AGENDA 2030 IMPLEMENTATION

An important trend was how CSOs leveraged Agenda 2030 in order to engage in meaningful dialogue with other development actors. The unique value provided by civil society in localising the SDGs was evident in the majority of the Lot 3 actions,

as CSOs launched multi-stakeholder activities under the framework of state incorporation of Agenda 2030 into broad national development plans or the more specific programs of particular government agencies.

For instance, several country narratives showed how local CSOs mobilised to collaborate with and monitor government actors in the implementation of Agenda 2030. El Salvador's Movimiente de Ong's para el Desarrollo Solidario de El Salvador (MODES) sought a "social oversight" function in monitoring the country's National Sustainable Development Agenda, while the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) participated in the formulation of a national report on country-level implementation of the SDGs, with civil society focused on ensuring a transparent and inclusive monitoring process.

The Council of NGOs in Malawi (CONGOMA) brought together stakeholders from the government, media, business, and civil society, in order to engage in discourse on the integration of the SDGs into Malawi's national development framework. Alianza ONG in the Dominican Republic prepared the country's first civil society report on the SDGs, an endeavour which required coordination with various government officials, and which would also serve as a baseline for future monitoring of Agenda 2030 implementation. In a slightly different vein, the Africa Philanthropic Foundation (APF) focused on improving the capacities of local CSOs to monitor Tanzania's implementation of SDGs,

as embedded in the country's Five-Year Development plan.

In all these cases, CSOs attained varying degrees of success in their efforts to institutionalise civil society involvement in state efforts to comply with SDG targets. Some found that the quality of CSO participation was limited to nominal inclusion in government-led processes.

Armenia, for example, formally incorporated the SDGs in their nationalisation process through the establishment of a multi-stakeholder Inter-Agency Committee, which included civil society representatives in its working subgroups. The Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) conducted a study to monitor and evaluate the state commitment to the implementation of the SDGs, with particular emphasis on the enabling environment for CSOs. However, the CRRC concluded that the potential of CSOs to contribute was not maximised, with local organisations describing a formalistic rather than genuine involvement in the process of drafting and implementing a national roadmap for achieving Agenda 2030.

Mexico's DECA, Equipo Pueblo, and AC also reported that their participation in policy dialogues regarding the country's compliance with Agenda 2030 was inconsistent. Some government officials minimised the role of civil society in several forums where CSOs were supposed to be involved more substantively in the design, implementation, and monitoring of Mexico's strategy for implementing Agenda 2030.

A.2 LEGAL AND REGULATORY HINDRANCES TO CSO ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Another emerging priority in the Lot 3 narratives was the legislative situation in their countries. The Partners Albania for Change and Development (PACD) identified gaps, such as lack of knowledge and capacities on the part of tax authorities to deal with CSO concerns, in the fiscal regulatory framework governing local non-profit organisations. Meanwhile, Chile's ACCIÓN conducted a study on the legislative and regulatory framework of Chilean international cooperation and civil society's role therein. Similarly, Peru's Asociación Nacional de Centros de Investigación Promoción Social y Desarrollo (ANC) prepared an aggregation of legal initiatives intended to strengthen the enabling environment for CSOs in the country's international cooperation efforts. The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) also advocated legislative and regulatory reforms to address problems facing local CSOs, such as insufficient inclusion in public funding processes, and lack of institutional support for CSO activities.

More alarmingly, the Institute for National and Democracy Studies (INDIES) in Indonesia shone a spotlight on their country's controversial law on mass organizations, known as the Ormas Law, which grants the state the power to dissolve CSOs perceived as a threat to the state. The Voices for the Interactive Choice and Empowerment (VOICE) also reported that despite the stated intention of Bangladesh to abide by development principles, the government has implemented legal and regulatory policies that undermine CSO participation in policy dialogues and their role as development actors.

A.3 MULTI-SECTORAL DIALOGUES AND ALLIANCES

A third country-level priority was the basic task of networking and alliance-building, as CSOs now recognise the need for solidarity and systematised co-operation with other development actors amidst the shifting of state priorities each time a new political faction comes into power. This was a particular concern of the Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (FoRS), which sought to increase awareness of Czech government officials about the role of civil society in sustainable development, while ensuring the continuity of CSO actions through the development of stable mechanisms for partnerships, funding, and capacity building among CSOs.

Likewise, the Sudanese Development Call Organization (NIDAA) established a multi-stakeholder platform—the Sudan Platform for Development—which will forge a broad alliance on development effectiveness and cooperation toward the realisation of SDGs in the country. Civil Coordinator Building Active and Critical Citizens of Nicaragua (CCBACC) focused on engaging in policy dialogues with development actors in the Pacific, North-Central and Autonomous Atlantic regions, in order to paint a comprehensive picture of the situation of local CSOs.

A.4 BROADENING CIVIC SPACES FOR MARGINALISED SECTORS

Finally, several CSOs focused on the particular needs of specific sectors,

with country actions that aimed to improve the enabling environment for CSOs by empowering marginalised groups and broadening the civic spaces in their countries.

The country actions in Gaza and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, were targeted towards the youth sector. Gaza's Dr. Haider Abdel Shafi Center for Culture and Development (HCCD) focused on creating a platform for democratic participation and youth empowerment in the Gaza Strip by forming the HCCD club, which initially would consist of participants of the workshop and training sessions. Meanwhile, the PRONI Center for Youth and Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina worked to developing cooperation among various youth organisations by establishing a Youth Council.

Niger's FOSCAO/Reseau des ONG de Developpement et Associations de Defense des Droits de l'Homme et de la Democratie strategically targeted community-based organisations (CBOs) outside the capital region, deliberately expanding the civic space in Niger to the marginalised regions of the country, through capacity-building actions to establish multi-party frameworks for dialogue on development effectiveness. On the other hand, through workshops and policy reviews, Palestine's Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) focused on the right to health across various sectors, especially as nutrition, hunger, and other relevant issues remain a major social concern amidst ongoing violence and political conflict in the region.

B. SHRINKING CIVIC SPACES AND CSO ADAPTATION MEASURES

The Busan Document states that CSOs "play a vital role in enabling people to claim their rights, in promoting rights-based approaches, in shaping development policies and partnerships, and in overseeing their implementation."[24] Indeed, this reflects one of the major triumphs of CSOs in their long struggle to assert themselves as co-equal, independent actors in sustainable and legitimate development. It is now accepted as a given that, in order to be effective development actors, CSOs should have space to operate, speak out, and participate in democratic processes — especially policymaking — in the development arena.

Yet civic spaces for CSO continue to shrink, especially in developing countries or countries in the global south. Governments and private actors, despite their stated aid and development effectiveness commitments, have posed various degrees of restrictions against CSOs' functional, financial, and political space. Such restrictions on CSO space include the enactment of policies and laws challenging CSO enabling environment, as well as reduction of the role of civil society representatives to mere tokenism. Worse, in some countries, CSOs and development workers in the civil sector

> **" CSOs should have space to operate, speak out, and participate in democratic processes in the development arena "**

have been victims of state persecution and gross human rights violations.

The Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung in their recommendation to European institutions cited that "63 countries have passed restrictive laws, shrinking civil society space and increasing the criminalization of and discrimination against NGOs worldwide."[25] A 2018 report by CIVICUS states that 6 in 10 countries are now "seriously repressing civic freedoms," describing it as "a continuing crisis facing [CSOs] and activists around the world.".[26]

The global trend towards the shrinking of civic spaces is also evident in the narratives of Lot 3 countries. Local CSOs report restrictions faced by CSOs in their various functions, such as the delivery of services to the poor and marginalised, and the contribution of key inputs to development discourse.

However, as other actors have recognised the importance of CSOs in development, CSOs have gained the confidence and skills necessary to push back against government and private-sector imposed limitations. With shrinking civic spaces being the "new normal"[27] in the development arena, CSOs have focused on undertaking country actions that serve as adaptive measures to cope with the challenges of this disturbing trend. These actions aim to broaden democratic spaces and build an enabling environment for CSOs at the country level. These adaptive measures include the efforts by CSOs to forge clear, institutionalised, and substantive roles in development processes, particularly in policymaking.

For instance, the Council of NGOs in Malawi (CONGOMA) and the Voices for the Interactive Choice and Empowerment (VOICE) of Bangladesh reported that their respective governments have undermined CSOs' role in national development. The Malawi government has increased registration fees, forced disclosure of project components to district councils, and amended the Malawi NGO Act of 2001 without consultation. In Bangladesh, the government refused to include CSOs in formulating a national aid policy even as overly bureaucratic processes led to delayed implementation of development actions.

In response, CONGOMA and VOICE held multi-stakeholder dialogues and meetings with government officials, among others, to assert their right to participation in policymaking. CONGOMA reached an agreement with the government on strengthening coordination and collaboration between CSOs and local councils. And while VOICE's action did not include an official agreement with state representatives, their action contributed to enhancing the capacity and experience of CSOs in coping with challenges to their civic space.

Likewise, FoRS of the Czech Republic spearheaded a dialogue between local CSOs and the Czech government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) intended to build partnerships and engage in capacity-building programmes. The action was instrumental in providing an opportunity for CSOs to advocate for greater recognition of civil society by the government in the development process.

In Mexico, the network of CSOs led by the DECA, Equipo Pueblo and AC held policy dialogues with the Office of the President of Mexico, other government officials, and representatives from multilateral agencies such as the UNDP and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). This action was intended to push for the active inclusion of CSOs in the implementation of Agenda 2030. Banking on the prestige, experience, and track record built by local CSOs in past years, Mexican civil society asserted their participation in dialogues on Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. However, there are still challenges regarding the extent and nature of CSO participation. After the National Council on Agenda 2030 was established, 24 state councils were formalised, but only two of these integrated civil society representatives.

Some country actions have focused on developing mechanisms to promote and strengthen an enabling environment for CSOs. One such mechanism is the establishment of long-term relationships among local CSOs and with other development actors.

This was evident in the multi-stakeholder alliances formed through the country actions of NIDAA in Sudan and the CCBACC in Nicaragua. The NIDAA established a multi-stakeholder "Sudan Platform for Development" which will forge a broad alliance on development effectiveness and cooperation toward the realization of SDGs in Sudan. CCBACC meanwhile focused on developing the process of policy dialogues to enhance sharing and analysing among CSOs regarding the implementation of the

Istanbul Principles and Agenda 2030. These alliances helped CSOs at the country level to display a united front in assisting with national plans to achieve the SDGs.

Another type of adaptive mechanism is the conduct of research and the collation of evidence on two levels: first, to support the need for CSO participation in the country-level implementation of Agenda 2030 and other development plans; and second, to provide recommendations for improving and enhancing the role and actions of CSOs in this regard. In Armenia, the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) did research on the status of CSO involvement in monitoring implementation of Agenda 2030 and SDGs. This helped CSOs to reconsider and improve their mechanisms for engagement with the government in the SDG nationalisation process. This study can also be used as a baseline and template for similar studies on country-level SDG implementation in the future.

Bucking the global trend, there are also countries where CSOs have positive work relations with governments and are being given space to function and play their roles in the development process through monitoring SDG and Agenda 2030 implementations.

CSOs in Canada and the Dominican Republic have been effectively engaged in monitoring their respective National Voluntary Reports on the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and SDGs. The CCIC participated in Canada's Voluntary National Review (VNR) drafting to share their reporting methodologies

with the government as an accountability tool. Through this, CCIC hoped that CSOs would be able to provide valuable inputs regarding the reporting on specific indicators for the Canadian VNR. This could also pave the way for a joint government-CSO drafting of the VNR, although that has not been finalised. In the Dominican Republic, Alianza ONG worked with the government's Ministry for Economy, Planning and Development (MEPyD) in developing a monitoring report on the implementation of SDGs in the country for the VNR to be presented at the 2018 UN High Level Forum. Their report tackled public policies and challenges for each of the five SDGs prioritised, as well as key recommendations to further improve the effective participation of civil society in the implementation process.

Another positive CSO-government partnership was reported by El Salvador's MODES, in their action to develop a social oversight mechanism on the compliance with SDG targets in the country. To work towards greater civil society participation in the decision-making, monitoring, and review process of public policies, MODEs collaborated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRREE). This led to the signing of a joint work plan by MODES and the MRREE, together with the Presidential Chief Administrative and Planning Office, within the framework of El Salvador's National Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Overall, it is notable that CSOs are finding ways to develop effective adaptive measures to assert their role as key actors in the development arena.

However, much still needs to be done to promote and ensure an enabling environment for civil society. CSOs must work together to build their capacities in advocacy, lobbying, dialogues, building alliances, and developing partnerships in order to enhance their engagement in the development process and challenge government policies that hinder their effective participation. It is also important to develop strong grassroots work that would strengthen their legitimacy and prestige.

C. INADEQUATE LEGAL AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENTS

The actions of CSOs to promote development effectiveness are significantly impacted by the legal, regulatory, and policy environment in which they operate. The Istanbul Principles include commitments to people's empowerment and participation, as well as equitable partnerships and solidarity, yet many of the laws and regulations governing CSOs tend to severely hinder civil society engagement at the country level.

The majority of the country narratives in this synthesis, whether explicitly or implicitly, reflect the experience of CSOs in dealing with a disabling legal and regulatory environment that prevents them from actualizing their role as development actors. The nature of a "disabling legal environment" in this context can be described along a continuum, ranging from harmful legislation that actively circumscribes civil society to the complete absence of any clear legal framework for CSOs. The latter causes uncertainty in CSOs and leads to arbitrariness in the attitudes of other development actors towards them.

In Macedonia, for example, the general objective of MCIC was to strengthen the enabling legal and financial environment for civil society, especially in the context of "the trend of deterioration of democratic government in Macedonia" and a lack of "mutual cooperation and inclusion [of CSOs] by state institutions" in the country's efforts to achieve the SDGs. MCIC cited the need for reforms in regulations pertaining to state funding and taxation of CSO operations, and pushed for basic legal guarantees of the rights and freedoms necessary for CSO activities. Likewise, in Albania, PACD reported that the government has long imposed burdensome tax laws and fiscal restrictions on CSOs, especially on financial and non-financial donations by private donors. PACD sought to review these practices in order to recommend the necessary changes to improve the enabling environment for CSOs.

In Peru, ANC reported that the government has subjected CSOs to supervision and auditing through the state-led Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation. This undermines CSOs' right to association, as well as to operate freely and to seek resources from partners and donors. However, through the arduous engagement efforts of the ANC with the state, CSOs are improving their relations with the APCI, particularly in monitoring SDG commitments in global and multi-party agreements. The ANC has also set up a Work Group with the representatives of the APCI to evaluate the laws and procedures on Peruvian CSOs, and push for positive legal amendments.

Still, the legal threats to CSOs go beyond fiscal and supervisory measures, to more severe human rights violations. Among the worst restrictive legal environments for civil society was reported by INDIES — in October 2017, the Indonesian government passed the Law No. 17/2013 on Societal Organisations (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 17 Tahun 2013 tentang Organisasi Kemasyarakatan), commonly known as the Ormas Law. This law has since been widely criticised not only by INDIES and other CSOs, but by watchdogs in the international community.

" Many of the laws and regulations governing CSOs tend to severely hinder civil society engagement at the country level "

Box 3.

Indonesia: CSOs condemn Ormas Law as a threat to freedom of association

With the enactment of Presidential Decree No.59/2017 on the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Indonesia appears to be committed to implementing Agenda 2030. This national commitment, however, is being undermined by another statute, also passed in 2017, called the Law on Mass Organizations or Ormas Law.

Under the Ormas Law, the meaning of "mass organizations" is overbroad, covering essentially all organizations that are non-state and non-market actors. This includes CSOs across all sectors (workers, peasants, women, urban poor, indigenous people, fisherfolk, youth, and students, etc.), official labor unions, associations of professionals in occupations like the media, anti-corruption alliances or platforms, human rights defenders, good governance groups, advocacy groups for education and the environment, and research institutes, among others.

The Ormas Law has been criticized as a threat to various marginalised sectors in Indonesia. For civil society in particular, the vague provisions of the Ormas Law can be interpreted in ways that may further shrink CSO spaces and hinder the achievement of the SDGs. Indeed, the Ormas Law undermines international principles protecting civil society, as it violates the rights of local CSOs to freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly. It also curtails CSO's mechanisms for seeking resources. Through the Ormas law, the government can, arbitrarily and without due process, dissolve CSOs perceived by the Indonesian government as threats to the state.

The Institute for National and Democracy Studies (INDIES) conducted a comprehensive study on the law, published as *The Return of the Dark Age: The Impacts of the CSO Law Enactment on the Implementation of SDGs and Freedom of Association in Indonesia.* Based on the study, INDIES is now calling on all CSOs and concerned development partners in Indonesia to challenge the Ormas Law. INDIES also held a multi-stakeholder dialogue, which resulted in several key recommendations to the Indonesian government with regards to the Ormas Law and other issues affecting the role of CSOs in implementing Agenda 2030. These recommendations include a call for the immediate revocation of the Ormas Law, a call for the government to integrate the SDGs into the country's development programs (particularly in the area of land reform), and a call for CSOs across all sectors to "remain steadfast in advancing criticism in development, particularly in the implementation of SDGs, strengthening organizations, mobilizing education and campaigns, and developing alliances and cooperation to stop all forms of policies that threaten democracy and suppress the people's rights to freedom of association, assembly and expression in Indonesia."

While the enactment of Presidential Decree No.59 of 2017 on the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) makes it appear that Indonesia is committed to implementing the Agenda 2030, this is contradicted by the Ormas Law, which gravely threatens freedom of association and other democratic rights in Indonesia. The implementation of the Ormas Law also contradicts the Indonesian government's international and legal obligations as a State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

It is clear that governments must also be educated and pressured to more seriously live up to the Busan Principles and other international commitments. CSOs must work to ensure that governments repeal or amend restrictive policies against CSOs and open up more space for CSO participation in development policy making. In fact, this is only in line with the existing state obligations to generally uphold and safeguard people's democratic rights. Donors can also help in coping with the challenge of shrinking civic spaces by supporting CSOs capacity building programs and by strengthening their partnerships with CSOs beyond funding agreements.

D. REAFFIRMING THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF DEVELOPMENT ACTORS UNDER THE HRBA FRAMEWORK
The application of the HRBA at the country level means that all stakeholders must be educated on their differentiated rights and duties to each other. The State, for instance, is one of the most powerful actors in the development arena and thus has

varied duties towards everyone else, including civil society and the public at large. Donor countries, similarly powerful, also have both negative and positive duties as development actors, not only to embed a respect for human rights in the provision of aid to developing countries, but to actively avoid engaging in any practice that would lead to the suppression of human rights. The UN classifies these as three classes of obligations: (1) to respect or not interfere with rights; (2) to protect or prevent others from interfering with rights; and (3) to fulfil or adopt appropriate measures towards the realization of these rights.[28]

CSOs — diverse, people-centered, and community-oriented — are critical to the adaptation of the HRBA to local contexts. Under the HRBA framework, CSOs have a unique dual role: first, they are rights-holders, with the State, the private sector, and other development actors thus vested with the duty of recognising the right of civil society to participate in creating and implementing a development agenda at the national and local level. In addition,, CSOs are duty-bearers, tasked with the responsibility of upholding and defending the human rights of marginalised peoples who look to them as their representatives in multi-stakeholder dialogues, policymaking, and other development processes.

Without the recognition of fundamental human rights, there can be no genuine participation of civil society in development processes. Development effectiveness requires a commitment to democratic principles. Among these principles are inclusion, non-

discrimination, and equality, which are implicit in the third Istanbul Principle: "Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation." A congruent idea is also reflected in Agenda 2030, in its vow to "leave no one behind" in the attainment of its ambitious goals, primarily the full eradication of extreme poverty.

Thus, one emerging priority among the countries included in this study is the need to empower marginalised sectors, such as migrants, women, and rural populations. Two countries under Lot 3 — Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Gaza — specifically aim to improve the capacity of the youth sector to take part in development cooperation and programming. The youth are often cited for their potential to contribute to development, especially given the rising youth population in many countries.

Bosnia & Herzegovina's PRONI Center of Youth Development, for instance, sought to strengthen an existing youth organization as a platform for youth representatives to coordinate with each other and advance their participation in political and civic spaces. PRONI Center also conducted training for the youth in the field of advocacy and implementation of campaigns, an activity which would maximise the participants' mastery of social media and other contemporary means of information dissemination.

In Gaza, seeking to raise the awareness of the youth regarding their ability to contribute to the attainment of long-term goals of peace and democracy, the HCCD likewise launched a training session that specifically focused on social justice, community development, and human rights, in order to encourage the youth to engage in lobbying, advocacy, and other campaigns.

Meanwhile, in Niger, FOSCAO/Reseau des ONG de Developpement et Associations de Defense des Droits de l'Homme et de la Democratie strategically targeted community-based organisations outside the capital region, and who were not yet members of national coalitions. The purpose of this capacity-building action was to expand the civil society network in the country and give voice to a sector that has traditionally been disregarded by their country's centralised network of development actors: rural communities, including farmers, village cooperatives, and local youth and women's groups. Setting up mechanisms for dialogues with these distant organisations fits in perfectly with the HRBA and its emphasis on proactive engagement with marginalised sectors.

There are also specific challenges to the application of a HRBA framework rooted in the nature of power dynamics in different countries.

> **" One emerging priority is the need to empower marginalised sectors, such as migrants, women, and rural populations "**

The ANND in Palestine stated in their country narrative that "the occupation is the primary and absolute obstacle towards the achievement of any development or justice for the Palestinians." Local CSOs thus have

the task of integrating the SDGs with the political realities in Palestine, recognizing that Agenda 2030 can only be implemented with an understanding of Palestinian occupation and its attendant problems, such as rising poverty, poor health services, and declining levels of education.

It is clear from the narratives included in this synthesis that there is no single, fixed blueprint for the adoption of the HRBA at the country level. It is also clear that the HRBA, however it is applied, is crucial to the creation of an enabling environment for CSOs, and that CSOs themselves are essential in empowering citizens as active participants in development. The HRBA does not designate marginalised people as victims or charity recipients; instead it provides them with the agency to claim and defend their rights. CSOs must likewise actively assert their roles and work to improve their capacities, forging unities with other development actors to institutionalise the HRBA as a tool for more effective development cooperation.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this SR underscore the significant and multifaceted role of CSOs in development. Empowering CSOs is the key to translating effective development cooperation principles at the country level, and ensuring the achievement of development goals, including Agenda 2030. As the grim political and socioeconomic conditions in many developing countries have had negative repercussions on civil society, building the capacities of CSOs becomes more crucial than ever, so that they may be equipped with the resources, skills, and knowledge to help shape development agendas at the local and national level, while ensuring that their participation in policymaking and other development processes results in real and positive impact on the poor and marginalised populations of their countries.

The reports showed that with the growing trend of shrinking civic spaces and continued dominance of corporate interests in the development arena, the CPDE can take on these challenges by sustaining and enhancing its work and actions on the country-level. Country-level actions are crucial to development effectiveness as specific country contexts determine the development priorities and actions. It is also where CSOs can have direct and evident impact on the poor and marginalized. Legal, regulatory policies that restrict CSO space are also shaped on the country level and, therefore, the countermeasures of CSOs must primarily be enacted in the same arena.

The following recommendations reflect CPDE's country mandate in the context of the findings drawn from the included narratives. They reflect the aspirations of civil society to advance the role of CSOs to implement and practice internationally-agreed principles of effective development and development cooperation, towards addressing current problems in the development landscape, increasing the spaces for civil society engagement, and strengthening the capacities and voices of CSOs in pushing for people-centered and sustainable development.

A. FOR CSOS

► **Comprehensively integrate the HRBA into development agendas.** Development cooperation agendas must be fully and concretely integrated with major human rights concerns, in particular, empowerment and equitable partnership of peoples, and gender equality and women's rights. A rights-based framework for all CSO proposals and projects would ensure that development is sustainable, democratically-owned and people-centered.

► **Increase knowledge sharing regarding Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.** All stakeholders in development need an increased awareness of Agenda 2030 and SDGs. CSOs are crucial in this respect, as they must take the lead in providing opportunities for multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral dialogues and workshops.

► **Pursue the formation of inclusive partnerships.** The continuing problem of inadequate mechanisms for development partnerships and multi-stakeholder platforms requires that CSOs enhance their capacities to pursue their key role in country-level dialogues and engagement with other actors.

► **Enhance capacities and practices for transparency and accountability.** Mechanisms for monitoring and assessing EDC commitments must be assessed, developed, and increased as necessary, in order to ensure transparent operations and accountability for all development actors.

► **Ensure democratic ownership of development initiatives.** Development policies and priorities must support the genuine participation of all peoples and the mutual accountability of all stakeholders to each other. Marginalised groups in particular must develop their agency as development actors in their own right, through CSO-initiated efforts at widening civic spaces for grassroots-level input and actions.

► **Expose and challenge the trend of shrinking civic spaces.** CSOs must actively push back against the increasing legal, political, and financial restrictions on their rights as development actors. They must work to build alliances with other stakeholders and initiate actions that raise awareness on international principles protecting democratic spaces and promote an enabling environment for CSOs. CSOs must enhance their capacities in advocacy, campaigning, and mobilization to contest legal and regulatory mechanisms that adversely affect civil society at the country level.

► **Build long-term alliances and institutionalise CSO engagement.** The role of CSOs as development actors, often challenged and restricted at the country level, must be solidified by building support across various sectors and building networks and alliances to enhance mutual respect among CSOs and other development actors, in accordance with their different and complementary development tasks.

B. FOR GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

► **Fulfill EDC commitments with utmost adherence to the Busan Principles and HRBA.** Governments and other development actors must fulfill their EDC commitments in accordance with the principles of democratic ownership, results focus, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and accountability. The state, in particular, must uphold the centrality of human rights in matters of aid and other aspects of development cooperation, working to strengthen legal and regulatory mechanisms founded on global human rights, labor rights, and environmental standards.

► **Adopt and implement sustainable and alternative approaches to development.** Pursue efforts for effective and sustainable development based on respect for people's rights, solidarity, empowerment, social justice and gender equality. Utilise the HRBA in Agenda 2030 projects such as infrastructure development and programs for education, health, and other social services.

► **Institutionalise CSO inclusion and participation in development partnerships.** CSOs must be recognized and reaffirmed as independent actors in their own right, and provided greater opportunities for genuine and substantive participation in policymaking and other development processes.

► **Uphold mutual accountability.** Governments, CSOs, and other development actors must develop mutually accountable partnerships with each other, by adopting comprehensive accountability mechanisms at the local, country, and global levels.

► **Provide enabling environment for CSOs.** Governments and other actors must honour their commitments to provide an enabling environment for CSOs to operate freely and participate equitably and inclusively in all development processes, particularly those concerning development cooperation and the achievement of the SDGs.

► **Reverse current trends of shrinking civic spaces.** Governments must repeal or amend laws and political and financial policies that restrict civic space, and replace them with legislation that is consistent with international human rights laws and in accordance with the state duty to uphold and safeguard the rights to freedom of association, assembly and expression.

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Work on the ground has always been vital for civil society. This is a central tenet reflected in this Synthesis Report, which brings together the narratives of actions implemented by civil society organisations in over forty countries during 2017 and 2018. These country actions were intended to aid in enacting local development priorities and initiatives, while increasing capacities for mobilisation, monitoring, and knowledge sharing. The country actions also correspond with three priorities that serve as the central framework for the assessments and perspectives provided in this report: effective development cooperation commitments and Agenda 2030; CSO development effectiveness and accountability; and the creation of an enabling environment for CSOs. With this report, the CPDE shows how its advocacy priorities are translated at the country-level, and highlights the contributions of local CSOs to the universal application of effective development principles and the implementation of Agenda 2030 and sustainable development goals.