



## **STATEMENT BY THE CIDSE – CARITAS NORTH – SOUTH FORUM ON DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

### **EC Cooperation with civil society in the North and the South: creating an enabling environment for poverty eradication**

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Brussels, 4 March 2010**

From 2 – 4 March 2010 the CIDSE – Caritas Europa Forum was held with 19 Civil Society Organisations from Africa, Asia and Latin America, 2 representatives from Caritas field offices and 14 representatives from CIDSE and CARITAS Europa member organizations. The representatives came from Afghanistan, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Honduras, India, Ireland, Italy, Malawi, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Rwanda, Spain, the UK and Zambia.

This was the fifth of a series of meetings between CIDSE and Caritas members (the last two meetings including southern partners) and the European Commission to identify opportunities and formulate concrete recommendations to improve the cooperation at political and operational levels.

The North – South Forum welcomed officials from the European Commission and benefitted from their contributions. We thank all Commission officials that participated, especially Mr. Aristotelis Bouratsis, Director Thematic Operations, EuropeAid, Ms Dominique Dellicour, Head of Unit Quality of Operations, EuropeAid, and Mr. Olivier Luyckx, Head of Unit Aid Effectiveness, DG Development.

#### **The Objectives of the Forum**

The theme of the forum was: “European Commission cooperation with civil society & cooperation between Northern and Southern Civil Society Organisations – exploring roles, space and added value”.

In order to address the concerns of participants, the North – South Forum covered the following topics:

1. How can cooperation between the European Commission and Civil Society Organisations be enhanced?

2. How can the European Commission enhance the space for Civil Society Organisations to contribute to poverty eradication in the context of new aid modalities such as General Budget Support and Sector-wide approaches?
3. How can the European Commission enhance North–South cooperation between Civil Society Organisations to strengthen global alliances for poverty eradication?
4. How can the European Commission create an enabling environment that strengthens cooperation between development partners, such as government, national parliaments, non-state actors, the private sector, trade unions, local authorities, think-tanks, farmers’ organisations and women’s organisations?

## **Exchanges at the Forum**

The European Commission acknowledged that in the past the state was perceived to be the motor of development. Civil society, particularly at the local level played a marginal role. The European Commission officials stressed that the situation has evolved and that now civil society organisations are essential actors in the multi-stakeholder approach to development.

To operationalize the multi-stakeholder approach the European Commission initiated mapping exercises to develop a clear understanding of the local civil society arena, in order to be able to engage with relevant actors at appropriate times.

The European Commission also specifically emphasised the watch-dog function of civil society organisations. The financial crisis highlighted the need for morality and justice to prevent those instrumental for such crises from benefitting from it, while people in poverty suffered consequences which were not of their making. The President of CIDSE, René Grotenhuis pledged that CIDSE and CARITAS would “call for the unconditional commitment to development co-operation.” At the same time, he urged reinforcing self-reliance as an important principle in our development cooperation.

The European Commission contributes approximately € 1 billion annually from its various funding mechanisms through Non State Actors. The participants of the forum welcomed the wish expressed by the Commission to expand co-operation with Civil Society Organisations.

The participants in the Forum reflected on the challenges in future cooperation between the European Commission and Civil Society Organisations. In relation to the question of how funding translates into results: “Much can still be learned to improve development outcomes and prospects. Measuring aid effectiveness has to go beyond quantitative indicators to measure development impacts. Other variables should be included such as the willingness to long term involvement and flexibility, the building of respectful, reciprocal and trustworthy relationships and the fulfilling of commitment.” (Alta Hooker from Nicaragua)

Acknowledging that changes in the cooperation framework between the European Commission and Civil Society Organisation should reflect the Lisbon Treaty’s emphasis on poverty eradication as the objective of development co-operation, the conference offers the following observations and recommendations as a first input to the present structured dialogue process launched by the European Commission.

## **Challenges**

1. Lack of opportunities to present proposals from coalitions and networks due to limitations in the EC’s legal frameworks
2. The lack of sustainability of project-based short-term funding;

3. The complexity of EC application processes, rules and regulations during implementation, especially for southern CSOs
4. The European Commission's limited investment in policy , analytical , advocacy, and watchdog functions of Civil Society Organisations;
5. The limited downward accountability to citizens in general and to people in poverty specifically, resulting in lack of ownership;
6. The limited and inconsistent policy dialogue between Civil Society and their national governments in the South and the need for new aid modalities to ensure the role of Civil Society is recognised and supported;
7. The lack of ownership of development efforts due to the lack of actual relationships between CSOs and national parliaments and the weaknesses of parliaments' roles in providing democratic scrutiny;
8. The limited processes of policy consultation between Civil Society Organisations and the European Commission in developing countries;
9. The limitations of instruments available to the European Commission at present to strengthen Civil Society Organisations in its autonomous role and to help enable an environment where national governments are responsive to Civil Society and accountable to national parliaments allowing healthy multi-actor approaches to development processes;
10. Overemphasis on quantitative impact indicators in measuring aid effectiveness .

**The following opportunities were identified:**

1. To counter fragmentation, find alternatives to the traditional one-to-one activity based funding of CSOs;
2. To stimulate, encourage and support the building of coherent approaches within formal or informal CSO networks;
3. To strengthen coalitions across countries to help enabling environments at national level that are conducive to civil society and understand their contribution to democratic, just and sustainable development;
4. To strengthen accountability of development actions to people living in poverty by all actors, including governments, donors, CSOs and other actors;
5. To build EC cooperation around funding arrangements that are based on network-like cooperation that help build North – South and South – South cooperation, learning and capacity building;
6. To create sustainable long-term and predictable funding arrangements built around the enhancement of the policy, analytical and advocacy capacities of civil society organisations and enhancing their roles as a countervailing power;
7. Strengthening CSO networks and platforms to facilitate the responsiveness of national governments to CSO concerns;
8. To support appropriate roles and responsibilities for different actors in the development process, which go beyond the role of the state, identifying the specific roles of national parliaments, local authorities, CSOs, private sectors, etc
9. Replacing risk averse short-term financial arrangements and a project-based approach by the EC with more flexible mechanisms and a long-term investments that allow strengthening of CSOs and deeper cooperation between the European Commission, its delegations and CSOs, in the North and the South;
10. To engage in existing opportunities for multi-stakeholder dialogue such as the EU quadrilogue and the Open Forum on CSO development effectiveness, in order to deepen mutual understanding of the added value of and the enabling environment needed by each stakeholder.

## **The Forum agrees to the following recommendations:**

### *To the European Commission*

1. Ensure the autonomous role of CSOs and strengthen multi-actor approaches, especially in order to support parliamentary scrutiny of government policy and a conducive space for civil society where its role as an independent countervailing power is recognised
2. Facilitate timely consultation processes between government and CSOs and strengthen consultation processes on policy between the EC and CSOs leading to sustained dialogue;
3. Promote clarification of the role of CSO in new aid modalities;
4. Support public disclosure of information related to national development policies to allow effective involvement of local CSOs in these processes including roles in monitoring at local and national level;
5. To identify mechanisms for downward accountability to people living in poverty and to capitalise on the grass-root linkages of CSOs to strengthen policy approaches to poverty eradication conducive to the ethnic, cultural and historic realities;
6. To extend mapping exercises to CSO networks and to help strengthen greater coherence between activities through coherence created in development networks, whether between North and South, South – South or within countries;
7. To find modalities other than those based on risk-averse financing arrangements, with greater emphasis on impact of actions on society as a whole and in recognition of the greater political role of the EU in policy coherence and consistency in developing countries;
8. Formulate new, more flexible funding modalities that are met by appropriate funding volumes that allow EC headquarters and delegations to:
  - promote longer term support to provide predictability and facilitate sustainability
  - enable network-based activities that provide coordination and reduce duplication
  - build capacity of civil society organisations and network in developing countries

### *To Civil Society Organisations:*

1. Manage CSO diversity by engaging in relevant networks, North – South; South – South and at national level;
2. Ensure genuine downward accountability to communities and people living in poverty and provide evidence of such accountability and differences made for communities or societies in networks and strengthen watchdog functions through networks;
3. To strengthen policy, research and analytical capabilities, organise learning in relevant networks;
4. Organise inclusive processes for meaningful dialogues with government at national level;
5. Acknowledge and help strengthen multi-actor processes to development and especially the support to national governments to provide scrutiny and oversight over national development processes to complement upward accountability to donors with stronger downward accountability to citizens;
6. Organise inclusive processes for meaningful dialogues with the European Commission on EU policies, in country and in thematic areas;
7. Identify concrete mechanisms that can replace the risk-averse, project-based funding by the European Commission with other credible alternative arrangements;
8. Strengthen effective communication of the priorities of the communities and people living in poverty and demonstrate the ability of the CSOs to work effectively with these groups of people to help overcome poverty;

## **Conclusion**

We request the European Parliament and European Commission to implement the above recommendations to strengthen the cooperation and relationship between the European Commission and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) towards global justice. We would appreciate a dialogue on the issues and recommendations we have presented. We acknowledge and appreciate the support of the European Union for its ongoing support to development and poverty eradication.

## Participants

### Name

#### Organisation

Broederlijk Delen  
Broederlijk Delen  
Broederlijk Delen  
Caritas Austria  
Caritas Europa  
Caritas Europa  
Caritas Europa  
Caritas Europa  
Caritas International Beligum  
Caritas International Beligum  
CAFOD  
CAFOD  
CAFOD  
CAFOD  
CCFD-Terre Solidaire  
CCFD-Terre Solidaire  
CIDSE  
CIDSE  
CIDSE  
CIDSE  
CIDSE  
CIDSE  
CIDSE  
CIDSE  
CIDSE  
Cordaid  
Cordaid  
Cordaid  
Cordaid  
Cordaid  
Entraide et Fraternite  
FOCSIV - Volontari nel Mondo  
Horizont 3000/KOO  
Horizont 3000/KOO  
Manos Unidas  
Manos Unidas  
Misereor  
Misereor  
Misereor  
SCIAF  
Secours Catholique - Caritas France  
Secours Catholique - Caritas France  
Trócaire

### Name

#### Organisation

Dirk Willems  
Jef Demolder  
Els Lauriks  
Barbara Reiterer  
Marius Wanders  
Harald Happel  
Blandine Bouniol  
Elisabet Carlsson  
Marc Somers  
Bernadette van Raemdonck  
Andy Waites  
Sophie Arcedeckne-Butler  
James Lambert  
Lorna Fielding  
Alain Bachelart  
Pierre Bastid  
Bernd Nilles  
Steffi Rosenbusch  
Jean Letitia Saldanha  
Fanny Liesegang  
Cayetana Carrion Garcia  
Anissa Ben Brahim Garcia  
Edurne Catalina Portillo Soto  
Neil James Thomas  
René Grotenhuis  
Izabella Toth  
Marlou Geurts  
Albert van Hal  
Myschka Smit  
Florence Thibaut  
Sergio Marelli  
Elisabeth Schreiber  
Thomas Vogel  
Adela González Gallego  
María González-Dyne  
Dorothee Klueppel  
Johannes Weyrauch  
Maria Klatte  
Robert Angove  
Daniel Verger  
Fabienne Bathily  
Michela Lupi



Trócaire  
Adigrat Diocese Catholic Secretariat (ADCS)  
Afghan Health and Development Services (AHDS)  
CAFOD Rwanda  
Caritas Bangladesh  
Caritas Bangladesh  
Caritas Bukavu  
Caritas Colombia  
Caritas India  
Caritas India  
Caritas Man  
Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), Zambia  
Cordaid Afghanistan  
Development and Partnership in Action (DPA)  
Grupo de Sociedad Civil  
Health, Development and Performance (H.D.P.)  
Inades  
Malawian Health Equity Network (MHEN)  
Movimento de Defesa do Favelado (MDF)  
Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan  
(RRAA)  
SDN (Stakeholder Democracy Network)  
Social and Development Commission Ehtopian Catholic  
Secretariat (ECS-SADCO)  
URACCAN  
Uyisenga n'Manzi

Denis Mahoney  
Tewelde Haileselassie Gebre  
Dr. Mohammad Fareed  
Simon Nsabiyeze  
Prodip Stanley Gomes  
Francis Atul Sarker  
Serge Bingane  
Margalida Rueda Gomez  
Fr.Abraham Varghese Mattamana  
Sunil Thottathil Mammen  
Pierre Efoé Aholouvi  
William Chilufya  
Dr. Rohullah Amin  
Sambath Mam  
Héctor Soto  
Christian Habineza  
Francis Ngang  
Charles Gwengwe  
Sueli de Fatima Almeida Machado  
  
Amanullah Jawad  
Inemo Samiama  
  
Dr. Daniel Keftassa  
Alta Suzzane Hooker Blandford  
Chaste Uwihoreye

For more information, please contact Steffi Rosenbusch:  
rosenbusch[at]cidse.org – Tel.: +32 (0)2 233 37 56

---

**CIDSE** is an international alliance of 16 Catholic development agencies working together for global justice.  
CIDSE - Rue Stévin 16 - B-1000 Brussels – Tel: +32 2 230 77 22 – Fax: +32 2 230 70 82 - [www.cidse.org](http://www.cidse.org)

**Caritas Europa** is one of the seven regions of Caritas Internationalis, a confederation of 164 Catholic relief, development and social service organisations.  
Caritas Europa - Rue de Pascale 4 - B-1040 Brussels – Tel: +32 2 280 0280 – Fax: +32 2 230 1658 - [www.caritas-europa.org](http://www.caritas-europa.org)