



Thematic Session on Ownership and Accountability

Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness
Busan, Republic of Korea- BEXCO Centre
29 November 2011

I. Objectives

The 2008 Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) recognised the growing consensus over the importance of including all stakeholders in national development processes; all actors count and make complementary contributions to development. This also implied that accountability on development should not be understood as a two-sided relation (between donors and recipients governments) but needs to be inserted into the complex system of domestic “accountabilities” (local and regional governance, public-private mechanisms, constitutional checks and balances etc.).

Aid can influence the balance of power and accountability in society. Care must be taken to understand how aid can positively contribute to inclusive, equitable and effective domestic modes of decision making, regulation and peaceful conflict resolution in the management of public affairs. How can all stakeholders play an effective role in decision making so as to achieve development results that benefit all citizens, particularly the poor and marginalised?

II. Moderators and participants

Moderator: James DEANE, BBC World Service Trust

Panel members

- Thomas STELZER, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Co-ordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- Amanda ELLIS, Deputy Secretary, Development – Foreign Affairs, New Zealand
- Ibrahim Assane MAYAKI, CEO, New Partnership for Africa’s Development
- Abdala KIGODA, Member of Parliament, Tanzania
- Rosa Ines OSPINA, Co-Director, Regional Initiative for CSO Transparency and Accountability
- FAUMUINA Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga, Finance Minister of Samoa
- Martin DAHINDEN, Secretary of State, Head of the Swiss Agency for Dev. and Co-operation.
- Amina ROUCHATI, Regional Council of Tanger - Tetouan. Morocco

Discussants

- Wismana Adi SURYABRATA, Deputy Minister for Development Funding, Indonesia
- Krzysztof STANOWSKI, Under-Secretary of State for Development Co-operation, Poland
- Hyun-sik CHANG, Vice President, Korean International Co-operation Agency
- Ransford SMITH, Commonwealth Deputy Secretary General
- Akihiko NISHIO, Director of Operations, World Bank Institute



III. Key Issues discussed and main messages

Some messages emerged during the thematic session on how accountability and ownership could be put into practice:

Commitment and political will in a country: Mechanisms of accountability and ownership are basically in place. There is no need to invent or create something new. What is still missing often is political will. Once democratic intensity has reached a sufficient level, the culture of accountability that we are seeking will fall into place. Tunisia used to be seen as a good example of development but it imploded due to a lack of democratic accountability.

More involvement of parliamentarians and local governments: Even if parliaments and local governments are now more recognised as development actors, there is still room for improvement. Lacks of capacity and legal constraints in some countries are still some of the challenges that these institutions are facing, and should directly support them.

Importance of an enabling environment for Civil Society: In many parts of the world, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are facing a hostile environment, limiting their capacity to act as development actors, despite commitments made in Accra. Legal and practical mechanisms need to be implemented to ensure CSO participation.

More efforts to increase accountability: The Paris Declaration and the UNDCF Survey show that the mutual accountability commitment made in Paris was not met. More efforts need to be made, which implies strong leadership from partner countries and behaviour change from donors. The Cairns Compact experience showed that, with political will, advances are possible.

Citizen capacity: There is a need for a long-term vision for development that directly involves citizens. This involves writing a development history, in which citizens would play a major part.

IV. Possible next steps

In order to improve ownership and accountability, efforts should be directed to the following:

- Sound and honest information need to be made available to all stakeholders.
- Practical and enforceable institutions and mechanisms that ensure accountability as a basis for ownership have to be reinforced.
- Elaborate the right indicators to keep track of how we are all performing on ownership and accountability, both at country and international levels.