

## CIVIL SOCIETY

Background on processes towards this round table.

- role
- .....
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CSO Round Table:

- 1) Is there a role for CSOs in the effectiveness agenda
- 2) What are the good practices to pilot
- 3) What can we do to hasten / promote this agenda

### **Rose:**

INTRODUCTION:

What are CSOs:

- voluntary and autonomous associational life
- broad range of actors
- focused on public interest (different areas)

Paris:

→ What is the place of CSOs in the Paris agenda

→ Can and should civil society be gauged against the same principles? Ownership – alignment – harmonization – managing for results – (mutual) accountability?

((→ CSO need their own parameters to be assessed against, to be built on the basis of a consultative process.))

Effectiveness – similar issues:

- often project based funding etc. similar problems that affect their
- donor driven
- fragmentation
- capacity issues

Approaches:

- Paradigm evolved from 'take development to the poor', 'do dev with them', 'empowerment', 'human rights'

Critical and constructive (service delivery) engagement with governments

- Align with govt plans? But what if that does not exist?

Accountability?

Operating (enabling) environment?

- legal
- funding modalities

WHAT/HOW:

- capacity building for sustainability
- funding, predictability
- .....

Conclusions:

- Capacity building facility organised / managed / handled by CS itself
- Some through existing cap building proposals

**Peter Clarke:**

Gulf between abstract aid discourse and reality on the ground

Experience in 20 years in Esteli, town in Nicaragua, strongly aid dependant

Two elephants in the room

- Quite systematic capacity destruction through the way that aid is delivered

Successive fashions (reinterpreting discourses)

Façade compliance

Locally agreed? Cautious! Naïve.

“ We have to build ownership for the PRSP”. Like a sham.

What should be done?

- For ownership to be developed, created it takes much more to really develop own priorities. In stead of participation in preset processes.
- Create own understanding.
- Research, and CSOs to develop capacity for local alternatives.
- Lot of talk on more complex understanding of capacity development. But people do not practice.

Capacity Collective – Create a space that makes more systemic approaches more operational. Action research. Theory – practice. Donors – recipients. Geographic linkages.

Based on grass-roots experience – CSO.

**Apollinaire:**

Civil society has a major role to play as part of the pressure system for accountability etc.

→ But they are deliverers of services as well. So hold them against the same principles? Do the principles apply to civil society?

→ Parliaments and political parties. Are they part of civil society?

→ How does alignment of funding affect the flows of funding to the CSO?

→ Engagement between the donors and CSO / non-state actors? More permanently? Not on a suspicious basis.

→ Umbrella organizations?

**Tony:**

Political parties and chiefs? CSO is for public interest and based on social solidarity. So schools, clinics, lobby organizations, churches, chambers of commerce? .... Distinction is about 'governance'. Parties are therefore not CDO. But they are part of democratic ownership .....

Different roles: mirror, pigeon, workhorse .....

*What would be the most important thing to empower the role of CSO in democratic governance .....*

→ Focus on poverty eradication, stakeholder analysis who are acting in favour  
→ Legal and ownership structure, ownership in control / association with government  
→ Enabling environment: legislation for social recognition. They need a foundation. A legislative mechanism. Secures rights and responsibilities. In many countries legislation is absent, weak, or not supportive/restrictive.

Civil society is about diversity. Paris declaration can not be applicable to civil society. Paris is based on governance.

Civil society is a resource for political parties and for governance .....

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## Civil Society - Main points

### **Introduction**

Definition of CSOs in relation to government. CSO is citizenship and not governance. Explanation CSO processes leading to Accra round table and HLF.

- Advisory group
- CSO parallel forum Ghana
- CSO effectiveness initiative

### **Two main questions:**

#### **A. Can and should civil society be gauged against the same principles?**

- Don't apply Paris declaration on CSOs directly. That would be contrary to the nature of CSOs. They are not about government, but about citizenship and diversity.

#### **B. How can CSOs and attention to CSOs help to realise the Paris agenda and promote aid effectiveness?**

- Create legal recognition mechanisms (different from regulation).
- Promote commitment to participation of a variation of actors in all stages of development processes, including evaluations.
- Alignment and harmonization does not necessarily limit room. It changes and possibly creates room, for innovation, for diversity and for increased engagement.
- Explicit funding flows for strengthening the civil society's capacity under SWAPs and other modalities, such as pooled funds. For monitoring, but also beyond for core funding. Through Southern intermediation, not controlled by state. (look out for instrumentalisation!)
- Incentive systems for government to pay attention to CSOs. Awareness on the broad CSO\ topic is a clear issue.
- Develop monitoring and create indicators for engagement with civil society.

### **Announcements:**

Good practice paper and case book:

- \* accountability to constituencies
- \* CSO networking
- \* N-S relations
- \* Enabling mechanisms
- \* Donor models of support
- \* donor accountability to CSOs in the South

Coming up: Effectiveness of CSOs process starting-up, two year program.