



Thematic Session on Rights-Based Approaches to Development

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

I. Objectives

- i) To present the role of a rights-based approach in advancing development effectiveness and results for development co-operation overall
- ii) To formulate and encourage concrete political action to better integrate it - as well as inclusive and participative mechanisms - into development co-operation.

II. Moderators and Participants

Moderator: Henri Valot, CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Panel Members:

- Heidi Hautala, Minister for International Development, Finland.
- Maina KIAI, Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Wellington CHIBEBE, Deputy Secretary-General, International Trade Union Confederation
- Azra SAYEED, Executive Director, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
- Juan Carlos Alurralde TEJADA, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bolivia
- Elisabetta Belloni, Secretary General for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy
- Anthony LAKE, Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund
- Christian Friis BACH, Minister for Development Co-operation, Denmark

III. Key issues discussed

The Rights-based approach to development in practice.

The rights-based approach can be seen as a development objective in itself, in addition to a means of achieving other objectives. RBA strengthens the principles of ownership, transparency and accountability, which again are important elements for achieving results in many other areas. There are some good examples of how the rights-based approach to development has produced good results on the ground, but progress has been mostly on the normative side. In many countries, government and private sector actors often decide on national issues in people's absence.

Operational challenges and opportunities for greater development results

Despite some significant advances on recognising human rights principles, there are still difficulties in translating them into practice in development co-operation. Information is key in order to uphold human rights, and sufficient capacity of duty bearers and rights claimants is an essential condition: Without capacity to deliver, the principles are just rhetoric. The rights-based approach focuses on the demand side of development, and process is often as important as results. The rights-based



approach must be seen as being about compliance not about conditionality imposed from the outside. There is a need to recognise collective rights as well as individual rights. Translating human rights into development co-operation projects means that human rights should be a cross-sectoral issue and not a self-standing issue. A challenge is how to marry human rights principles with practice on development and public policy in general. Moreover, practice without principles is rudderless.

The change ahead: engaging post-Busan towards more inclusive development.

There is a strong commitment to move beyond aid effectiveness and focus instead of development effectiveness. This is a new approach, a new focus. Development effectiveness means a deeper focus on impact of aid and non-aid. We still face the challenge of shoring up the way that a rights-based approach has helped and how it produces results. This will be a challenge for practitioners. Civil society capacity and their ability to demand and defend rights is an essential and crucial element of the rights-based agenda, and the focus must be on widening civil society's space for action. We need to break down the separation between development effectiveness and rights, and show that a rights-based approach produces results. For example studies show that where there are safety nets in place, economies are better able to weather crises through stabilising demand.

IV. Main conclusions:

- It is time to break the divide between human rights, aid, and economic policies. Human rights and the rights-based approach should be shared values and principles for all development stakeholders.
- The rights-based approach is not about conditionality but about shared commitments of both donors and partners countries.
- There have been concrete measures and initiatives to ensure non-discrimination and empowerment of marginalised groups. Social protection floor policies have proven it works. The Rights-based approach allows a move from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness.
- There are issues about the shrinking space for civil society. All stakeholders should ensure an enabling environment and adequate participation mechanisms for people to claim their rights and enhance accountability.
- Development co-operation results must be assessed with indicators that reflect both on outcome and processes. There is a need to produce disaggregated data that allow the measurement of progress towards equity and breaks the invisibility of marginalised groups.
- We need to work together in the follow up of Busan to further develop guidance and indicators that allow for a full integration of rights-based approaches in development co-operation.