DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FORUM 2000
OWNERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP: THE ROLE OF SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN CIVIL SOCIETY IN POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES

DRAFT PROGRAMME AND LETTER OF INVITATION

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To the Heads of Delegations represented on the Development Assistance Committee

Madam, Sir,

Development Partnership Forum 2000

Ownership and Partnership: The Role of Southern and Northern Civil Society in Poverty Reduction Strategies

10-12 December 2000

Draft Programme and Letter of Invitation

Following the discussion in the DAC on 12 September, please find attached the revised programme as well as a letter of invitation, from Mr Jean-Claude Faure, Chairman of the DAC, and Mr Jorge Braga de Macedo, President of the Development Centre, for the forthcoming Development Partnership Forum, jointly organised by the Development Centre and the DAC. The final version of the programme and provisional list of participants will be issued shortly, as DCD/DAC(2000)23.

As explained at the DAC meeting, this Forum on the role of civil society in poverty reduction strategies should be seen as the first of a more regular consultation with Southern and Northern civil society organisations. Therefore, one of the concrete outcomes of the Forum should be an agenda of issues to be addressed in that context. In addition, the discussions and findings of the meeting will be published.

The revised programme takes account of submissions received from Delegations and comments made at the DAC meeting of 12 September. While the main focus of the programme is on the African continent, we have invited representatives from other continents (e.g. as chairs of thematic sessions) who should be able to provide relevant lessons and experiences. Finally, while identifying issues that should be addressed in the future is one important objective, the focus on poverty reduction strategies is expected to allow the drawing of lessons for immediate implementation.

Should this draft programme give rise to questions or further suggestions from delegations, please contact Henny Helmich at the Development Centre or Fritz Meijndert at the DCD (see contact details on document cover page).

Yours sincerely,

Richard Carey
Acting Director
To:

Members of the Development Assistance Committee and other invitees

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FORUM 2000

Ownership and Partnership: The Role of Southern and Northern Civil Society in Poverty Reduction Strategies

Paris, 10 (evening), 11-12 (a.m. only) December 2000

We hereby invite you to participate in the Development Partnership Forum 2000, jointly organised by the DAC and the OECD Development Centre. A provisional programme for the Forum is attached. The final version of the programme and provisional list of participants will be issued shortly, as DCD/DAC(2000)23.

The Forum will begin on Sunday 10 December with a dinner for Heads of Delegation, hosted by Mr Jean-Louis Bianco, Chairman of the French Haut Conseil pour le Développement. Plenary sessions will begin on Monday 11 December and continue to 13.00 on Tuesday 12 December.

Development Partnership Forums have been organised by the DAC since January 1998 to enable discussion and exchange of information between DAC Members and Observers, international organisations, and experts and representatives from developing countries on issues related to implementing the partnership strategy. So far, Development Partnership Forums have been organised on Implementation of the Development Partnership Strategy: Ownership and Donor Procedures (January 1998); Untying, Procurement and Capacity Development (December 1998); and From Aid Co-ordination to Development Partnership (December 1999), together with the World Bank and the UNDP. This year’s Forum will focus on the role of Southern and Northern civil society in establishing and implementing poverty reduction strategies.

The partnership strategy recognises the essential role of local ownership of policy reform and setting policy objectives by civil society. This role meets demands for greater efficiency and responds to more pluralistic and decentralised political systems. The strengthening of civil society in itself is part of the objective of institutional development which covers not only the institutions of political and economic governance, but also norms and values and the ways in which actors in pluralistic societies interact with each other.

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As stated in the DAC Chairman’s paper “On Common Ground: Converging views on development and development co-operation at the turn of the century”, the principle that “country-owned development strategies and targets should result from an open and collaborative dialogue between developing country authorities, civil society and the private sector, on their shared objectives and their respective contributions to the common endeavour” is a key building block of the recently emerged country-level frameworks -- such as CDF and UNDAF -- as well as of the process of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. There is no consensus so far regarding the design of good governance systems. Accordingly, the OECD Development Centre’s programme of work, with the general theme Globalisation and Governance, recognises the importance of “policy reforms to be completed by rules and institutions [including civil society] which provide options and incentives at the micro level so as to encourage participation”.

In this context, recognising that the current work with Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers also raises a number of these issues, the Forum will address them with a view to clarifying challenges, arriving at policy recommendations for governments and DAC Member country NGOs and sharing experiences of collaboration in fostering the role of civil society in establishing poverty reduction strategies.

As with previous Forums, the forthcoming Forum will again be organised back-to-back with the DAC Senior Level Meeting. It is therefore hoped that Senior Level participants will also participate in the Forum. In addition, DAC Members are encouraged to include in their delegations representatives of their civil society organisations. Since the seating capacity of the meeting room is not unlimited, we would appreciate your discretion as far as the total size of your delegation is concerned. We would also appreciate receiving the names of the Heads and members of your Delegations as soon as possible. For any questions on this or other matters related to the Forum, please contact Mr Henny Helmich (OECD Development Centre, e-mail helmich@oecd.org) or Mr Fritz Meijndert (Development Co-operation Directorate, e-mail fritz.meijndert@oecd.org).

We would appreciate hearing from you at your earliest convenience and look forward to welcoming you in December in Paris.

Jean-Claude Faure
Chairman
Development Assistance Committee

Jorge Braga de Macedo
President
Development Centre
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FORUM 2000

OWNERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP: THE ROLE OF NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CIVIL SOCIETY IN POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Jointly organised by the Development Assistance Committee and the OECD Development Centre

10-12 December 2000

Location: OECD Headquarters, Château de la Muette, Paris

Preliminary Programme

Sunday 10 December 2000

Welcome working dinner, hosted by Jean-Louis Bianco, Haut Conseil de la coopération internationale (Location to be confirmed.)

Monday 11 December 2000

OPENING

9.30 - 9.50 Opening of Conference by the co-sponsoring organisations: Jean-Claude Faure, Chairman, Development Assistance Committee Jorge Braga de Macedo, President, OECD Development Centre

GENERAL SESSION: How to Strengthen the Role of Civil Society: North-South Civil Society Partnerships

Chair: Odile Sorgho-Moulinier, Director, UNDP, Geneva.

In some countries a dynamic civil society has emerged while other countries do not have an active civil society at all. How can actors from OECD countries (governments, civil society organisations) strengthen civil society in developing countries? What are the policy lessons from the perspective of Northern and Southern civil society actors?

The two general introductions will open the debate to clarify challenges, with the aim of arriving at policy recommendations for governments and DAC Member country NGOs and sharing experiences of collaboration in fostering the role of civil society in Poverty Reduction Strategy processes in the South, with a focus on Africa.

Those participating in Poverty Reduction Strategies, including the private sector and civil society, put much effort into arriving at an agreement on policies between donor governments and partner governments.
At the same time, civil society organisations in both the North and the South are concerned about their autonomy and identity. Northern civil society organisations stress their comparative advantage as agents of change and capacity builders in their partnerships with Southern civil society.

Results-based development approaches suggest that concentrating on countries with a positive governance environment has the greatest chance of making a successful impact. In view of scarce ODA resources, this points towards the need for greater country selectivity. As a consequence, policies of DAC Member country governments can be observed on the one hand to “invite” DAC country civil society actors to join with them in the selected countries to strengthen impact on the ground, and on the other hand, to “recognise” the specific role of their civil society actors in countries outside of the selected group. These latter countries may be weak in governance or may be in conflict and the only option for continuation of humanitarian engagement or capacity building for post-conflict reconstruction is to use the partnership of civil society in the North and South for capacity building and service delivery.

9.50-10.10 Candido Grzybowski {to be confirmed, IBASE, Brazil
10.10-10.30 Sylvia Borren, General Director, Novib, the Netherlands
10.30-11.00 Open discussion
11.00-11.20 Coffee Break
11.20-11.50 Open discussion (continued)
11.50-12.00 Concluding remarks by the Session Chair

THEMATIC SESSION I. How to Strengthen the Role of Civil Society within Country-Level Frameworks

Chair: Irene Tokarski, Foro Jubileo 2000, Conferencia Episcopal, La Paz, Bolivia

Official donors have increased their attention to in-country donor co-ordination, notably with the partner country government “in the driver’s seat”. The drafting of Poverty Reduction Strategies is a process performed by partner countries with civil society participation. In Uganda, useful lessons have been learned with active civil society participation in the mobilisation of participation in the design of Poverty Reduction Strategies. Initiatives to this end have been undertaken in partnership with Northern civil society supported by an official donor.

The Uganda Debt Network (UDN) (www.udn.or.ug) is a coalition of NGOs from Uganda, formed in 1996, following mounting civil society concerns that Uganda’s debt had reached unsustainable levels. At that time, while the country was being considered for HIPC debt relief, Uganda’s debt problem was perceived as a matter between governments with almost no dialogue with civil society in Uganda. Through activities of civil society dialogue, debt and debt related issues are now debated widely within Uganda. UDN participated in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), in a review of the budgetary policies and public
expenditure in the social sector and is engaged in the organisation of an anti-corruption civil society coalition. The network has 66 members (including international and national NGO and has relationships with religious groups, members of parliament, trade unions, students, and the Uganda Manufacturers Associations (UMA).

12.00-12.20 Zie Gariyo *(to be confirmed)*, Uganda Debt Network

12.20-12.40 Mary Muduuli, Director of the Budget, Ministry of Finance, Uganda

12.40-13.00 Bella Bird, Department for International Development, UK, Uganda office/civil society unit

13.00-14.30 *Working lunch, Room George Marshall: Civil Society Collaboration in Aid Reform*

El Hadji Ibrahima Sall, former Minister of Planning, Senegal, Convenor of the Aid Reform Group Southern Branch

Paul Hoebink, University of Nijmegen, Convenor of the Aid Reform Group Northern Branch

Thematic Session I - *continued*

14.30-15.20 *Open Discussion*

15.20-15.30 *Concluding Remarks by the Session Chair*

THEMATIC SESSION II. How to Promote and Strengthen Civil Society Partnerships in National Programmes

Chair: G. Rajasekaran, General Secretary of the Malaysian Trade Union Congress, Malaysia

Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAps) are attracting considerable attention as a mechanism for better integrating aid delivery with development strategies on a co-ordinated basis. Ownership by the partner country of these new approaches is considered to be very important.

While some Northern civil society actors have expressed concerns with such approaches, fearing adverse effects on their capacity to act as partners on a projects basis, North-South civil society collaboration has produced some interesting experiences where civil society in developing countries, supported by DAC country civil society, has been able to strengthen policies and operational programmes, as for example in Ghana in the field of education. The Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC - Accra, Ghana) brings together 25 Ghanaian civil society organisations, concerned about falling standards of education and diminishing access to education by poor Ghanaians, working to support good quality and productive basic education for all and to increase accountability by education policy makers to citizens. It works for gender equality in opportunity and equity in the distribution of education resources.
The Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC - Accra, Ghana) is the convenor and organiser of the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition. The Christian Coalition of Ghana acts as representative for the Campaign. GNECC produces regional state-of-education reports to feed into a national report, liaises with the international Campaign and carries out research on the state of education in Ghana, the state of education in Northern Ghana (with particular reference to Muslim children) and the role of the donor community in education in Ghana. The research focuses in particular on policy making, privatisation and effects on gender, ethnicity and income. The GNECC has been funded by 20% domestic resources (e.g. the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs in Ghana) and by several Northern NGOs (e.g. OXFAM) and UN organisations (including UNICEF).

15.30-15.50 Emanuel Kuyole, Programme Officer, ISODEC, Accra, Ghana,
15.50-16.10 Tony Burdon, Policy Advisor, Oxfam, Oxford, United Kingdom
16.10-16.30 Coffee Break
16.30-16.50 Eva Jespersen, Policy Adviser, Division for Evaluation, Policy and Planning, UNICEF
16.50-17.50 Open Discussion
17.50-18.00 Concluding Remarks by the Session Chair

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Tuesday 12 December 2000

THEMATIC SESSION III. How to Strengthen the Role of Partnerships with Civil Society in Results-Based Approaches

Chair: Luciano Vecchio, former Member of the European Parliament and Advisor to the Minister of Co-operation for Relations with the Parliament, Italy

A shift away from project implementation and social service delivery activities to capacity building and monitoring/advocacy activities to better inform government policy making and donor responses in a participatory way is one direction of change in the role of civil society.

In some countries, interesting initiatives are being undertaken in which civil society actors are involved in national budget/expenditure monitoring initiatives, strengthening the focus on results, increasing accountability and transparency of resource allocation within countries and creating capacity in the future implementation of agreed Poverty Reduction Strategies.

The Gender Budget Initiative in Tanzania, a collaboration of civil society actors, supported by both donor governments, private foundations and international NGOs, aims to influence general planning and budgeting processes to focus on both practical and strategic gender issues of marginalised
communities. It works with Tanzanian government ministries to achieve a more effective and gender equitable utilisation of government resources.

In a democratic country such as Tanzania, the efforts of Northern donors in partnership with Tanzanian civil society organisations have in the past raised "ownership" concerns with Tanzanian government and political parties during the run-up to elections. Several Northern partners, government as well as civil society, became so involved in the debate about government allocation to basic education and health that the civil society organisations were perceived as a competing political influence. In a different period of evolution of the Tanzanian democracy, the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP - www.tgnp.co.tz) presently works to facilitate the process of mainstreaming gender equality at national and local levels. It collects and generates information, undertakes research, training and capacity building programmes, and is involved in lobbying and implementation. TGNP is invited by the Government to be a part of the Tanzanian Public Expenditure Review and the Tanzania Assistance Strategy. TGNP is currently supported by the European Union, the Governments of Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands, the Southern African AIDS Training Programme, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and several other civil society partners. It also generates financial resources itself through consultancy.

9.30- 9.50 Aggripina Mosha, Programme Officer, TGNP, Dar Es Salaam
9.50-10.10 Winfried Jung {to be confirmed}, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Germany
10.10-10.30 Sweden {to be confirmed}
10.30-11.00 Open Discussion
11.00-11.20 Coffee Break
11.20-11.50 Open Discussion (continued)
11.50-12.00 Concluding Remarks by the Session Chair

CONCLUDING SESSION: Which Policies Work in Strengthening Civil Society?

Chair: Jorge Braga de Macedo, President, OECD Development Centre

12.00-12.45 Panel
Judith Randel, Development Initiatives, UK
Faith Dube, Deputy to the Managing Director, Inter-Press Service, Zimbabwe
Henny Helmich, OECD Development Centre

12.45-13.00 Reflections on Preliminary Policy Recommendations for the DAC:
Jean-Claude Faure, Chairman, Development Assistance Committee

13.00 Close of the Conference