



PHILANTHROPY FORUM

Partnering for Development: A Balancing Act

29 November 2016 | Nairobi, Kenya

STATEMENT*

Now, more than ever, the development community is focusing on delivering impact at scale. Partnerships between non-profits, government agencies, foundations and businesses, are a key to delivering greater and more sustainable impact on people’s lives, as per SDG 17. Partnering is the accelerator that all development actors need in order to be able to identify previously unimagined solutions to complex social problems.

Foundations have a critical role to play in achieving the 2030 Agenda agreed upon by the international community. They provide financial and non-financial support that is often innovative, agile and quick. They also contribute knowledge and expertise, acting as catalytic agent of resources and networks of actors.

Partnerships between foundations and governments hold strong potential to achieve greater impact in support of the 2030 agenda. Yet, building strong and effective partnerships between foundations and governments requires a balancing act.

Foundations need to balance their main comparative advantages, such as autonomy, flexibility and appetite for risk and innovation with the need to align at least some of their work with national or local priorities and strategies.

For governments the tension is considerable between the willingness to engage with philanthropy in support of global goals and the compromises to be made to include some of philanthropy’s own priorities and strategies.

Foundations need to further develop a data culture and the capacity to collect, process and share data. Data and knowledge are key to eradicating poverty, and are no longer optional to work effectively within the broader local and global development ecosystem.

Foundations should also share data and track impact more openly. There is limited data on how philanthropy contributed to the MDGs. Better tracking mechanisms on philanthropy’s role in supporting the 2030 agenda would increase understanding of philanthropy’s role in achieving these goals.

Governments need to make it easier for foundations to invest in the 2030 Agenda. Many foundations and civil society organisations will want to commit to frameworks and work in partnership to deliver the 2030 Agenda.

Philanthropy is not merely a resource to be tapped. Rather, it is a delicate but fundamental part of the development ecosystem that must be nurtured by creating a culture of giving which is underpinned by an enabling legal environment, fair and transparent regulation and tax incentives. Furthermore, philanthropy is empowered by the cross pollination of ideas and resources and as such must be protected from excessive measures that raise barriers to the sending or receiving of funds across borders.

The freedoms of association and assembly and the right to free speech are crucial to the development of philanthropy as they underpin the agency of philanthropy and its ability to carry out or fund activities which are challenging and transformative.

Efforts at systematically strengthening cooperation between foundations and other development actors are fairly recent. As a response to the Global Partnership principles, foundations have developed [Guidelines for Effective Philanthropic Engagement](#)^[1]. The Guidelines represent an important effort from the philanthropic community to clarify their co-operation and collaboration aspirations. Institutionalised avenues for greater dialogue between foundations and other development actors should be strengthened as they create pathways for deep philanthropic commitments towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. The Global Partnership can be a forum to foster these opportunities by building on convening power and technical expertise of existing philanthropic networks, such as the OECD netFWD.

** The Statement has been developed by the OECD Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD), in partnership with other philanthropic networks and organisations, including, among others, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), the Arab Foundations Forum (AFF), the East Africa Association of Grantmakers (EAAG), the Foundation Center, the Kenya Philanthropy Forum, the SDG Philanthropy Platform and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).*

The Statement articulates key policy messages and expectations of the philanthropic sector on challenges and barriers that foundations face in working with governments and other development partners. The Statement has been developed based on discussions held at the Philanthropy Forum “Partnering for Development: A Balancing Act” that took place on 29 November 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya, in the margins of the Second High Level Meeting (HLM2) of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC). The document has been shared with the Co-chairs of the GPEDC, and participants of the HLM2.

^[1] The Guidelines have been developed under the leadership of the OECD's Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD), with support from Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS), the European Foundation Centre (EFC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Rockefeller Foundation and Stars Foundation.