

The Accra Civil Society Consensus on Africa's Position on Aid and Development Effectiveness

Introduction

We, representatives from African Civil Society Organisations, including women's organizations, think tanks, advocacy networks and the media drawn from 13 countries met in Accra, Ghana on the 20th -21st September 2011. We discussed the draft Africa Position paper (September 2011): *The African Consensus and Position Paper on Development Effectiveness: Aid Reform for Africa's Development*, which is due for consideration at the Third African Regional Meeting on Development Effectiveness in Addis Ababa on 28th – 30th September 2011. We considered this position paper ahead of the 4th High Level Forum in Busan, South Korea, which is to be held from the 29th November to 1st December 2011.

Noting the various extensive discussions and consensus reached among Africa CSOs at the:

- First and Second Regional Meeting on Aid Effectiveness in Pretoria in March 2010 and Tunis in November 2010, respectively
- Joint Meeting of the Open Forum, Better Aid, Reality of Aid and the Africa CSO Platform on Aid and Enabling Environment held in Nairobi, February 2011;
- Len-CD meeting in Cairo in March 2011,
- Africa CSOs meeting held in Cameroon by FEMNET in collaboration with Reality of Aid in May 2011, and
- Several related international assemblies (Istanbul in May 2011, Cambodia in June 2011, and Brussels in June 2011);

Further noting the collective position under Better Aid Coordination and the Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness (April 2011 and June 2011) as well as the International Women's Consultations on Gender and development effectiveness in June 2011);

We reviewed the African Consensus and Position Paper against the backdrop of the outcomes of the implementation of **PD** and **AAA**;

Recalled that the main objective for the adoption of the Paris Declaration (PD) in 2005 and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) in 2008 was to accelerate the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015;

Noted that the UN MDG Report 2010 had concluded that without a major push forward, many of the MDG targets are likely to be missed by developing countries especially in Africa, and that the independent evaluation of the Paris Principles on Aid Effectiveness has raised several shortcomings by key parties in achieving agreed targets and commitments;

Acknowledged that from 2005 many African governments, donor agencies and regional institutions have taken actions aimed at transforming the delivery and management of development aid and have made significant progress towards the implementation of the principles in the Paris Declaration;

Noted further that despite the resolve of all the key actors to focus the aid effectiveness agenda squarely on delivery of development results, the operating environment remains challenging and capacities are limited;

Concerned that Africa's sustained economic growth has not translated into improved quality of life for the majority of its peoples and has failed to address inequality and equity issues effectively and that most of the fragile states in Africa are in need of accelerated partnership to achieve the objectives agreed under the International Dialogue on Peace and State Building;

Cognisant of the challenges faced by all parties in view of the changing development trends, and particularly the increasing role of non-Western aid providers including emerging partners and philanthropists;

WE THEN REAFFIRMED THAT for Africa to realize fundamental change in the quality of life of its people, sustainable development including the delivery of commitments made to advance human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment are essential and must be emphasized as central pillars in the aid effectiveness agenda;

WELCOMED WITH APPRECIATION the decision of the 17th African Union Summit (July 2011) for a common African position on negotiations on the post-PD and AAA development cooperation framework and the subsequent formulation of a common African position paper focused on the critical areas of capacity development, aid effectiveness, South-South cooperation, mobilization of domestic resources for development and innovative financing;

FULLY SUPPORTED the key messages of African Civil Society on Aid and Enabling Environment as well as the Africa Women's position on gender and aid effectiveness;

WE REAFFIRM the call on African Governments to consider and adopt the following recommendations:

- *That although* there is considerable progress in the implementation of the PD and AAA which we embrace as African actors this should be consolidated within the new aid architecture and existing gaps aligned for effective resolution of related and emerging issues including climate change and food security challenges, youth unemployment and management of the vast natural resources in Africa.
- *That* the priority on capacity development included in the position paper should focus more on specific human and institutional capacities as well as building enabling environments to advance Africa's development effectiveness agenda within a decade through the delivery of development results that benefit both men and women across the public sector, the private sector and civil society.

- *That* development partners should live up to their outstanding commitments under the PD and AAA in order to attain the MDGs and the Monrovia Objectives for Peace-building and State-building within the specified timeframe and also contribute to the implementation of other internationally agreed development goals even beyond 2015.
- *That* African governments and leaders should prioritize partnerships that strategically advance the attainment of Africa's development effectiveness agenda including south- south cooperation, strengthen the generation of domestic revenue in order to reduce dependency on international aid and pursue other viable options for alternative development financing without undermining Africa's leadership, collective ownership and citizen participation in the formulation and implementation of the development effectiveness agenda;
- **That** Africa Governments should reaffirm the role of citizens, and more importantly the acknowledgement of citizen voices as important in the development processes and foundational to all agreements, including any national vision or compact;
- *That* political and economic reforms that advance development effectiveness at the national and international levels should also be designed to enhance the strengthening of the linkages, capacities and coordination of Africa's regional integration programmes;
- *That* the meaning of "development effectiveness" should be clearly defined in the position paper to reflect the aforementioned objectives such as accelerated reduction of poverty, inequalities and inequities, as well as citizen empowerment and respect for human rights in the pursuit of economic growth in order to transform African economies and societies and anchor sustainable development across all African countries; .
- *That* the African position paper is not sufficiently informed by evidence of the progress and challenges in the implementation of the PD and AAA including that generated by civil society actors. Specifically it does not emphasize the gains and successes made by our countries, and how these have shaped the choices for achieving development effectiveness beyond Busan.
- *That the concept of "African ownership"* is not confidently articulated and operationally defined and asserted in the position paper. It is recommended that this should be done separately in the position paper in order to situate the role of development partners clearly. Their role should facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the development effectiveness agenda as defined by African governments, their citizens and regional and continental institutions.
- *That* African civil society should be supported to strengthen platforms for consultation, dialogue and advocacy and to form strategic alliances and partnerships that enhance the monitoring and evaluation of development results including the generation of gender desegregated data. ***And that these Platforms should be recognized as legitimate*** in the Africa common position paper and supported by African ***governments as*** constructive mechanisms for facilitating citizens' participation.
- *That* the promotion of democratic, just and accountable governance in Africa is pivotal to the attainment of the development effectiveness agenda and requires enhanced support in the post-Busan international development cooperation order.

Adopted on September 21st 2011