

INPUT FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL DEBATE ON THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION FOR A TRANSFORMATIVE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA, 9-10 FEBRUARY 2015, NEW YORK

Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment

17 January 2015

What actions are needed to scale up mobilization of financial resources from all sources: domestic public financing, domestic private financing, international public financing (including ODA), international private financing (FDI and remittances), trade, and partnerships?

CONTINUE to engage meaningfully with diverse development actors to ensure that all stakeholders benefit from the various resources available to them.

Individual and joint participation of various stakeholders – each with their own resources and comparative advantages – is needed to tackle the complex challenges the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek to address. “Bringing to bear the energy and resources of everyone concerned with development – governments at all levels, international organisations, civil society, businesses, foundations, academics and people in all walks of life – is our singular challenge” (2013 Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda).

Diverse development actors possess a range of different resources that can be individually and jointly employed to contribute to realizing a transformative and inclusive Post-2015 Agenda that leaves no one behind. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are often trusted development actors that succeed in leveraging individual and corporate private financial contributions to their development efforts. CSOs in Development Assistance Committee member countries raised at least USD 32 billion in such contributions in 2011 (2013 OECD Report *Aid for CSOs*). And although the mobilization of financial resources is crucial for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the mobilisation of non-financial resources – such as the knowledge, expertise, and linkages to poor and marginalized populations that CSOs often bring to development initiatives – is equally significant. An important action is therefore continued engagement of various stakeholders, including civil society, in the design and implementation of initiatives to achieve the SDGs. The implementation framework should furthermore promote the use and merging of the various resources available, including through multi-stakeholder partnerships.

PROVIDE and protect an enabling environment for civil society and other stakeholders.

To be able to benefit from the resources – financial and otherwise – that diverse development actors and multi-stakeholder partnerships have to offer, an environment needs to be created that is conducive to the mobilization and utilization of such resources in a transparent manner. An enabling environment for civil society implies law, policy and practice consistent with internationally agreed rights including *inter alia* the freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association and freedom of expression, which the UN Secretary General has recognized as “enablers of sustainable development.” The freedom of association encompasses the right of CSOs to seek and secure funding from national, foreign and international sources. The necessity of an enabling environment is highly significant in light of major challenges civil society faces in many countries, where the space in which they can operate is shrinking and restrictions on their access to resources are increasing, as recognized by Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in his 2013 report.

ENHANCE national frameworks to stimulate financing for development by and for CSOs.

CSO fund-raising abilities can be enhanced through policies, laws and regulations enabling CSOs to leverage domestic and foreign resources. Examples of favourable policies include tax deductions and other incentives to encourage private contributions to CSOs; tax exemption for CSOs; regulations that allow CSOs to engage in income generating activities; and regulations that enable CSOs to access resources internationally. An inclusive approach to scaling up financing for development can help ensure CSOs’ right to seek and secure funding from domestic, foreign and international resources, which is a critical element of an enabling environment for CSOs.

ENHANCE Domestic Resource Mobilisation to fund development initiatives, also in collaboration with civil society.

Domestic Resource Mobilisation (DRM) is important for sustainable and long-term investment in a country’s development and should complement Official Development Assistance. Sound tax systems are central to DRM not only for building a tax base, but also as an element of governance and public management. CSOs can contribute to strengthening tax systems and to stemming illicit flows through the pursuit of transparency and accountability of the private sector, governments (including tax authorities) and CSOs themselves.

MAKE Official Development Assistance (ODA) a significant component of the financing framework.

Though there is an emerging position that ODA needs to adapt to a changing landscape, the significance and relevance of ODA is still widely acknowledged, including in the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (ICESDF) which highlights the importance of countries continuing to fulfil their pledge of using 0,7% of Gross National Income for Official Development Assistance. A commitment to fulfil this pledge remains essential to achievement of the SDGs.

What is required of the different development actors to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the use of available resources for sustainable development?

Actions required from ODA providers & recipients

To be able to benefit from the resources various development actors have to offer, jointly or individually, there is a need for an enabling environment consistent with international human rights, which is conducive to these actors fulfilling their envisaged roles (see question 1 above).

PURSUE official development cooperation with civil society in line with effectiveness principles.

The Task Team echoes the Secretary General's recognition in his Synthesis Report that there is a need to invest in civil society's capacity to perform their critical and independent roles and recommends that resources – financial and otherwise – be directed to support CSOs in these roles. This can be supported through civil society policies – developed in collaboration with civil society – that aim to strengthen civil society, promote CSOs' role in public awareness raising, facilitate access to capacity-building and allow collaboration through policy dialogue and mutual learning. The effectiveness of CSOs as development actors can be further enhanced by implementing standardized reporting requirements and by implementing reporting requirements that emphasize mutual learning.

ENSURE good financial governance – including transparency and accountability – for public and private financial flows.

As noted by the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing in its report, “a central element of good financial governance is proper planning and execution of the budget” and “this should be based on transparency, legitimacy, accountability and participation of citizens.” CSOs can play a role in holding governments to account by ensuring that public spending is consistent with sustainable development strategies and their various social, economic and environmental dimensions. Shared responsibility must be part of the new global ethic.

Actions required from CSOs

The Task Team recommends pursuance of enhanced CSO development effectiveness through the promotion, support and implementation of CSO-managed accountability and transparency frameworks such as represented by the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness. Amongst the envisaged activities to this end are awareness raising and adoption of practice consistent with the Istanbul Principles; building synergies and mutual learning among CSOs and with governments; advancing CSO transparency with effort to publish to the International Aid Transparency Initiative standard; and strengthening CSO capacity to monitor and evaluate their development results.

Actions required from the UN

LOOK TO the GPEDC as a key Post-2015 Agenda implementing body and a model for multi-stakeholder partnership on the question of how to implement the Post-2015 Agenda.

As the SDGs and the contours for the implementation and monitoring framework are developed, attention could be paid to other fora such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). The Task Team echoes the Secretary General's recommendation in his Synthesis Report to consider how the GPEDC can help review and strengthen the global partnership for sustainable development. The GPEDC serves as a model for multi-stakeholder partnership and is a significant source of ideas and experience concerning the 'how' of the implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda, including in relation to boosting the effectiveness of development cooperation and monitoring achievements. The GPEDC seeks to advance efforts in realizing more effective development cooperation, with attainment of global development commitments such as the SDGs at its core. In addition to traditional Official Development Assistance, the GPEDC actively pursues effective development cooperation partnerships and financing, including through DRM, South-South and triangular cooperation and knowledge-sharing, and involvement of the private sector and CSOs.