

CSO PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS (CPDE) STATEMENT ON 1st HIGH LEVEL MEETING (HLM) OF THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (GPEDC)

More than 200 civil society organisations (CSOs) came together as a unified community and participated constructively in the processes leading up to and during the First HLM of the GPEDC in Mexico. The CPDE joins other development actors in recognising the consensus reached in the HLM Communiqué, but flags several bottlenecks, as well as lack of commitments and overall progress since Busan. In light of these concerns, CSOs will continue to press for further progress and, in particular, bring forward development effectiveness needs on the ground into policy discussions.

We acknowledge the efforts of the GPEDC to regain momentum on the road to, and in Mexico by encouraging multi-stakeholder dialogue around key topics such as inclusive development and poverty eradication, domestic resource mobilization (DRM), South-South Cooperation (SSC) and inclusive partnerships.

The HLM Communiqué is an outcome of collaborative efforts among Partnership stakeholders. In this vein, we acknowledge references in the statement to inclusive development, democratic country ownership, enhanced taxation and use of country systems, gender equality and women's empowerment, and the support for CSOs as independent development actors.

However, the progress we have made since Busan is not sufficient – as recognized by most stakeholders, as well as in the Global Monitoring Report itself. The main progress is that we have not regressed. The contribution to the report by a limited number of countries is an indicator of the insufficient advance made, as is the lack of real engagement by countries in collecting data. There was also little focus in the official agenda on the earlier commitments made on aid and development effectiveness – possibly due to the unsatisfactory findings of the report. Ahead of the HLM, CSOs called for the formulation of an Action Plan, containing benchmarks and timetables to gauge global and country-level implementation by all stakeholders. In Mexico, however, no decisions were made to accelerate progress on taking forward the Busan principles and actions.

Civil society maintains that, while the Communiqué respected the commitments made in Busan, it does not bring us closer to the goals of development effectiveness. CSOs have pushed for stronger commitments and objected to several points. We therefore remain critical about several aspects that we have been continuously putting forward throughout the consultations and during the meeting itself:

- **The space for CSOs is shrinking.** Stronger commitments on Human-Rights Based Approaches (HRBA), gender equality standards and enabling environment frameworks (EE) for civil society are urgently needed but are missing from the HLM outcome document:

The shrinking of CSO space and voices is alarming. The curtailing of CSOs' voices is simply rejecting practical solutions to save our economies, environment and peoples' lives. There should be concrete policy actions including better monitoring of CSO EE and inclusive and democratic multi-stakeholder dialogue processes at country, regional and global levels. The diversity and independence of CSOs can be strengthened through such dialogue, and through more enabling regulatory and policy frameworks, as well as the allocation of resources and technical assistance.

At a time, when international development actors are insisting on stronger application and integration of HRBA to ensure the rightful participation of all people, especially marginalized voices such as those of women, indigenous peoples, youth and people with disabilities, the HLM marks a step backwards. HRBA is not included in the main Communiqué. Most UN Agencies, governments and even international financial institutions have agreed to integrate indigenous people's right to self-determined development. It is thus unfortunate that such human rights advances have no space in the GPEDC.

- **The HLM and the Communiqué are characterized by an unbalanced featuring of the role of the private sector,** in particular of multinational enterprises. We specifically criticise the weak accountability norms on private sector investments and actions, as well as the absence of other principles inherent to international cooperation, such as transparency and democratic ownership:

We are deeply concerned that many of the development actors at the Mexico HLM and beyond are advancing and advocating the interest of the private sector, and specifically of big business. With that comes limited consideration as to how uncontrolled private sector development has led to inequality and gaps in basic services provision. Private sector led development often takes place amidst inadequate regulatory frameworks at country level. We call upon governments, private sector and other stakeholders to ensure respect for internationally agreed social, economic, labour, environmental, gender equality, and development effectiveness standards through appropriate regulatory and policy frameworks, so that the private sector contributes to positive sustainable development outcomes.

Countries are yet to address the contradiction between promoting partnerships and investments with national and multinational corporations and the fact that multinationals are responsible for two-thirds of the capital flight from developing countries. Private sector engagement in development should benefit societies, who should take part in the planning and implementation of national development programs and projects, guided by the highest transparency and accountability standards and monitored by all stakeholders. Inclusive processes should be promoted, respected, and implemented, since unfettered economic growth by itself is no guarantee of sustainable and just development.

- **The HLM was supposed to deliver the “how” of the post-2015 process.** What we witness, however, is a lack of value added in the Communiqué, with no proposal for a roadmap underpinning this goal:

A Global Partnership that defines the “how” of the post-2015 process indeed should do so based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and capacities in the pursuit of sustainable and just development. However, this would need to be backed by a decisive push towards policy coherence between the GPEDC and the post-2015 processes. However, we feel that the GPEDC is being reframed as “partnerships” between governments, multilateral agencies and large multinational corporations, which undermines the core principles of development effectiveness – including inclusiveness. Governments have a primary obligation to provide public goods and services and promoting and protecting people’s rights. A post-2015 implementation strategy needs to entail a rights-based understanding of people as rights-holders and governments as duty-bearers, accountable for their human rights obligations.

- **There cannot be two standards.** In Busan, CSOs expressed concerns over the voluntary nature of relevant principles, commitments and actions related to SSC. In Mexico, while reference to accountability standards in SSC was included last minute in the Communiqué, commitments remain on a voluntary basis and important development effectiveness principles remain side-lined:

We highlight the need to strengthen development effectiveness of SSCs through strong national policy and institutional frameworks that promote democratic ownership, and the highest standards on transparency, accountability, and development results. This should also include an enabling environment for CSOs to facilitate participation in SSC policy debates, investment and development programs. The creation and support of CSO networks that foster knowledge-sharing and technical cooperation would contribute to this process. Indicators for evaluating the social and environmental risks and actual impacts of SSC should also be developed.

CSOs will encourage stakeholders to take forward the commitments made in Paris, Accra, Busan and Mexico. The failure to commit to several key issues leaves us deeply concerned. This also concerns the lack of focus on crisis and conflict regions, where conditions for a sustainable and inclusive development are impaired. The GPEDC is well placed to address the lack of interventions in many places in the world that gives rise to terrorism and other forms of inhuman acts (human trafficking, etc.).

Next Steps

In developing the GPEDC further, the CPDE will urge for a more nuanced approach, which includes support for multi-stakeholder monitoring, social dialogue and respect for country ownership, as well as international human rights, including women’s rights and decent work standards on business activities in development cooperation. We will advocate for and

commit to our oversight roles in monitoring progress at country, regional and global levels on transparency and accountability standards in DRM and on private sector activities, including in PPPs.

Moving into next phase of the GPEDC post-Mexico, we hope to see a stronger commitment by all stakeholders to progress, inclusive and democratic values, mutual accountability and transparency starting by the governance of the Partnership itself. A serious shortcoming of the Steering Committee was the way the process was driven by the three co-chairs, undermining its purpose. If the process is to remain credible, the new co-chairs will have to create a stronger role for the Steering Committee as a whole.

The GPEDC should promote the same at regional level and create an inclusive space for consultations to take into account local priorities. This would feed into preparations of global decisions and provide substantive inputs to accelerate the implementation of past commitments in truly meeting the populations' needs as well as by monitoring the progress attained. Setting up such regional spaces will have a double impact: giving more substance to the global dialogue process and encouraging national governments to be more effective in implementing their engagements.

On concrete actions, civil society feels strongly about the need to improve indicators and data collection of the Global Monitoring Framework. We encourage greater involvement by all stakeholders including CSOs in the monitoring processes. Defined responsibilities of all actors at the national, regional and global level should be introduced. Future discussions and the work on indicators have to be part of a participatory process – which was lacking in-between Busan and Mexico.

We will push for a clearer commitment to policy coherence for development between the Partnership and the ongoing UN post-2015 discussions and other related processes including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties.

Civil society remains committed to engage and contribute meaningfully, at the national, regional and the global levels, to the GPEDC. We will continue to assert our rightful space and to advance viable solutions and options for a sustainable world.