

Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness

A Synthesis of Advisory Group Regional Consultations and Related Processes January – December 2007

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Acronyms

| | |
|------|---|
| AG | Advisory Group |
| CCIC | Canadian Council for International Cooperation |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| HLF | High Level Forum |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PBA | Program-Based Approach |
| SWAp | Sector-Wide Approach |

Executive Summary

1. The Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG) is coordinating a dialogue among civil society, donors and developing country governments in the lead-up to the September 2008 High Level Forum (HLF), which will review the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Between August and November 2007, the AG conducted regional multi-stakeholder consultations to improve understanding of three issues in keeping with the AG's three outcomes¹: 1) the roles of civil society organizations (CSOs) as development actors and as part of the international aid architecture; 2) the applicability and limitations of the Paris Declaration for issues of aid effectiveness of importance to CSOs, including their contribution to aid effectiveness; and 3) good practice related to civil society and aid effectiveness by CSOs, by donors and by developing country governments.
2. The AG is sponsoring a global multi-stakeholder International Forum in February 2008 to reflect upon civil society and aid effectiveness. This Forum is organized around three thematic issues related to the AG outcomes: 1) Recognition and Voice: the roles of CSOs as development actors and as part of the international aid architecture; 2) Applying and Enriching Implementation of the International Aid Effectiveness Agenda; and 3) CSO Aid Effectiveness: CSOs as aid donors, recipients and partners.
3. This *Synthesis Paper* is an AG background paper for the International Forum. It summarizes key issues and proposals arising from the six regional consultations, as well as from related independent processes. Although the AG regional consultations largely reflected civil society perspectives,² the *Paper* also draws on ideas from donors, and to a lesser extent from governments of developing countries.
4. Several crucial issues arising from these consultations will inform the International Forum and the subsequent advice of the AG to the OECD/DAC-based Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, and to the Accra HLF.

Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness: Situating the Paris Declaration for CSOs

5. Participants welcomed the Paris Declaration as a positive commitment to a “new paradigm” for aid. But they also saw discrepancies between the principles of aid effectiveness and the practice and impact of aid on the ground. Women’s organizations pointed out that the Paris Declaration is largely “gender blind” in its commitments and indicators of impact. Most participating CSOs thought that Paris Declaration commitments were too focused on implementing and measuring mechanisms for managing aid delivery, and that the quality of Paris Declaration reforms should be measured by their contributions to *development* effectiveness. Aid should be understood as a “global public good”, “as a resource to be held in trust for those living in poverty,” and as an instrument for realizing justice and human rights, including gender equality.

¹ See the Advisory Group’s *Concept Paper* for an elaboration of these outcomes [Advisory Group 2007b].

² This is in part the product of the relatively high level of CSO engagement in the AG’s consultative process. CSOs were mandated with the lead in organizing the regional consultations, and made up a large proportion of participants.

Strengthening CSO Roles and Voice as Development Actors within Current Aid Architecture

6. Defining the identity and roles of CSOs: CSOs were widely seen as expressions of the rights to peaceful assembly, free association and to free speech embedded in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They facilitate peoples' claim to their political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. CSOs are autonomous membership-based, cause-oriented, or service-oriented organizations, which share a common defining identity – *social solidarity* with the people in society they serve or represent.

7. CSOs as development actors in their own right: CSOs are seen as distinct development actors, different from donors and governments, whose significance extends beyond their role in aid architecture. Many saw the strength of the Paris Declaration in its commitment to the ownership and leadership of government as the legitimate representative of people under its jurisdiction. Conversely, the development roles of CSOs derive not from any claim to represent society as a whole, but rather from their defining characteristic of social solidarity. They enable people to express their aspirations and they help improve the conditions for diverse, poor and marginalized groups in society. CSOs are also “bridge builders”. They are an essential feature of democracy, seeking to express peoples' organized action in the public sphere for public benefit and change.

8. The diversity of CSOs' roles is their strength: The thousands of CSOs in development cooperation have many roles, sometimes within one organization. The consultations identified a range of roles under five main headings: a) Mobilizing grassroots communities, poor and marginalized peoples to claim their rights; b) Monitoring government and donor policies and practices: holding national and multilateral development agencies to account through local knowledge, research, advocacy, and alternative policies; c) Delivering services and innovative development programming; d) Building coalitions and networks for greater civil society coordination and impact; and e) Mobilizing and leveraging Northern financial and human resources in North/South CSO partnerships.

9. In recognizing these roles and voices for CSOs as development actors in their own right, the AG consultative processes focused on four inter-related issue areas: 1) CSO legitimacy; 2) CSO accountability; 3) Value-added contributions in North/South CSO relationships; and 4) Political will and opportunities for sustained CSO policy dialogue and participation in aid relationships.

10. CSO legitimacy: CSOs' legitimacy and representativity were raised repeatedly in discussions on the voice of CSOs in development cooperation and policy dialogue. Given the demands for democratic governance and the value of CSO diversity, “representation” is an important question for all stakeholders. Democratic governments have an obligation to ensure universal representation. CSOs' commitment to social solidarity implies that any given CSO will represent only segments of society. The issue is whether those CSOs invited to the policy or program table are *sufficiently* representative of different perspectives on the policy or program. Governments and donors are concerned that they are in dialogue with the “right” CSOs and perceive CSOs as highly fragmented. Criteria for inclusion and legitimacy can include knowledge and local experience, technical skills, innovation, ability to influence public opinion, internal democratic governance, and a capacity to mobilize people for social change. Several CSOs described their exclusion from governance and their perception that governments or donors did not wish to hear critical voices including the often marginalized voices of those committed to women's rights. There were

also differing experiences with regulatory regimes to determine CSOs' "legitimacy"; CSOs argued mainly for self-regulating accountability regimes that ensure transparency and participation.

11. CSO accountability: CSOs recognized their responsibility to be accountable as organizations in the public realm, many with memberships and constituencies. Participants identified a complex web of accountability involving, often simultaneously, members and internal CSO governance, constituencies (such as poor communities or marginalized women, etc.), the public, and official donors and governments. Managing such accountability is complex. Participants repeatedly observed, however, that *contractual* obligations and power assured accountability to donors, including Northern CSOs, and often trumped the *moral and ethical* obligation of democratic accountability and control expected by communities, Southern CSOs' constituencies, and the public at large. Several consultations stressed the importance of "prior informed consent" by affected populations.

12. Role and voice in North/South civil society relationships All CSOs in the consultations acknowledged that they shared a common identity in social solidarity. Nonetheless, the growing influence of Northern CSOs prompted questions of accountability and institutional practices. Some of these issues are described in more detail below.

13. Engaging civil society voice on aid effectiveness: CSOs have experienced limited interest or depth of engagement from donors and governments in policy dialogue on aid effectiveness. It follows from recognition of CSOs as distinct development actors that meaningful commitments to regular and formal opportunities for engagement, whether in policy dialogue or program partnerships, are needed.

Applying and Enriching the Implementation of the Paris Declaration

14. Are CSOs essential to achieving the goals of the Paris Declaration? Donors and governments have acknowledged that CSOs are essential to the Paris Declaration targets. CSOs, strongly implicated in the architecture of aid, wish to engage donors and governments to enrich and deepen aid reform efforts, including those arising from the Paris Declaration. Consultation participants also asked whether donors, governments and CSOs are ready to include CSOs *in their distinct roles*, in the implementation of the Paris Declaration.

15. Achieving country ownership requires CSO support through democratic ownership: Many CSOs expressed reservations about the Paris Declaration's reliance on national development strategies alone as the foundation for country ownership. For them, the Paris Declaration should be premised on strengthening governance and democratic culture in which governments meet their responsibilities to their citizens. A democratic culture in which the voices of the poor, the excluded and the discriminated are strong, is essential to overcome the inherent political obstacles in efforts to counter poverty and inequality, including their real inclusion in the development of national development strategies. Many CSOs in the consultations reached the conclusion that *democratic ownership* is the central concept that underlies all five principles of the Declaration, for which CSOs with strong legitimacy and accountability are essential.

16. CSOs can contribute to donors' alignment by representing people's needs and claims to their rights: CSOs can facilitate an alignment to truly community-owned development options through joint commitment with government and donors to effective and socially engaging consultation. Women's organizations suggest that this engagement should include national budgetary processes, monitoring

disbursements and implementing gender budgeting. CSO service organizations can not only push for closer alignment of government and donors with community needs, but also strengthen government / donor accountability to their stated commitments.

17. CSOs can facilitate harmonization through coalition-building and innovative complementarity with donor/government program-based aid mechanisms. Donors questioned the perceived “fragmentation” of CSO responses to development challenges and encouraged program-based approaches by and with CSOs at various levels. CSOs can bring innovation, pilots, and community engagement to government-led Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs). However, CSOs warned that such donor harmonization of their CSO support might negatively affect CSO diversity, for example by marginalizing smaller informal organizations at the grassroots level as well as women’s rights organizations that face multiple levels of marginalization. CSOs also discussed the importance of CSO-initiated coalitions to establish priorities, carry out joint programs, promote knowledge-building, and organize advocacy to ensure accountability to constituencies in the South.

18. CSOs can contribute to management for development results through their unique access to diverse communities. CSOs are uniquely situated within communities and in webs of societal networks through which they can increase the capacity of citizens to be aware of and monitor progress toward the stated objectives of development program priorities, including those of donors, governments and CSOs themselves. In many of the consultations, however, CSOs pointed to major obstacles in access to information and knowledge about donor and government policies and programs, including project information. CSOs are also well situated to respond to the concern that the Paris Declaration focuses too narrowly on short-term easily measurable indicators of aid results, by drawing attention to longer-term results of social and political change.

19. CSOs can enrich mutual accountability through research, monitoring and mobilizing their constituencies to assess development results. The challenge, according to some participants, will be both to ensure donor / government transparency and to fully engage intended beneficiaries in independent nationally-based monitoring mechanisms for mutual accountability.

CSO Aid Effectiveness: CSOs as Aid Donors, Recipients and Partners

20. The AG’s *Issues Paper* suggests that CSO aid effectiveness depends on a wide range of variables, but that much depends in particular on the quality of relationships involving CSOs, donors and governments. This section on CSO Aid Effectiveness is limited to a discussion of CSO principles of aid effectiveness, which were said in the consultations to be essential to situate CSO relationships for aid effectiveness, including North / South civil society relationships. While CSO-government relationships received only limited attention in several of the consultations (mainly regulatory frameworks), some discussion of CSO-donor relationships are addressed in sections of this Synthesis related to applying and enriching the Paris Declaration and CSO accountability.

21. Relevance of the Paris Declaration principles: CSOs in the consultations argued that civil society’s place in aid architecture comes not so much from their role as donors, but from a mix of roles based on their defining attribute of social solidarity. Given the importance of these roles, as well as the significant aid resources for which CSOs are responsible, all of the consultations recognized that CSOs have a responsibility to ensure their own effectiveness in achieving development results. CSOs in the

consultations argued, however, that Paris Declaration principles, negotiated exclusively within donor/government aid relationships, may be relevant, but should not be applied directly to the distinct roles of CSOs as development actors.

22. Ownership was seen as an important principle guiding North/South civil society relationships, but its application has to take account of the full scope of Northern and Southern CSO roles, not just those inherent in the funding relationship. Participants questioned the validity “aligning” and “harmonizing” CSOs, which could undermine their diversity and civil society’s importance for democratic ownership. Most CSOs rejected the proposition that their effectiveness would be enhanced by uncritical alignment with government development strategies. Harmonization with donor conditions for aid delivery in a given country was seen to undermine CSOs’ potential contributions as innovators and agents of change.

23. CSO principles for effectiveness: While welcoming current multi-stakeholder dialogue on CSO aid effectiveness, several consultations concluded that CSOs alone have the ultimate responsibility to determine the principles to guide their work as development actors, with governments and donors supporting civil society in this effort. CSOs tended to assess CSO aid effectiveness with principles they consider essential for their development effectiveness. These include, but are not limited to, human rights obligations and standards, accountability to people and mutual accountability in partnerships, equality, trust and shared vision in partnerships, gender equality, transparency, social justice and solidarity, empowerment, diversity and autonomy, stewardship, and learning and knowledge-sharing.

24. CSO principles and equitable North/South CSO relationships: While many Northern CSOs are donors, their primary mandate is citizen engagement in international cooperation, based on values and goals which include democracy, justice and human rights. As voluntary organizations committed to international social solidarity, they differ from official donors in that they actively engage with specific and diverse Southern peoples’ organizations, based on shared mandates and values. Consultations examined the value-added that Northern CSOs can bring to development cooperation: promoting value-driven visions for social change; supporting Southern CSO pluralism and democratic participation; offering specialized knowledge; sensitizing citizens in the North and creating opportunities for them to contribute and influence development policies affecting people living in poverty; and facilitating global social movements. The consultations also raised critical issues for Northern CSOs to address in their relationships with Southern counterparts: imposing priorities on Southern CSOs and ignoring Southern alternatives; transmitting inappropriate donor priorities onto Southern civil society; extending Northern CSO “families” into Southern countries as “national” and “local” CSOs; and “brain drain” to Northern CSOs. There were also very positive examples of Northern CSO capacity development initiatives sensitive to local needs, mutually productive divisions of labour, and the development of codes of conduct to address ethical conduct, partnerships and power, and accountability in North/South relationships.

I. Introduction

1. An Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG) was established in January 2007 by the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness³ to coordinate a multi-stakeholder process (involving donors, governments and civil society organizations) in the lead-up to the September 2008 Accra High Level Forum (HLF) on the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.
2. The Advisory Group (AG) has a mandate to advise the Working Party on the subject of civil society and aid effectiveness that aim to clarify: the roles of civil society in relation to the Paris Declaration; civil society organizations' (CSOs') aspirations to deepen the wider national and international aid effectiveness agendas; and key considerations and principles with respect to civil society and aid effectiveness that will be internationally recognized by all the relevant parties. The AG is chaired by Canada (the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and has twelve members distributed equally among four stakeholder groups – Southern CSOs, Northern CSOs, donors and developing country governments.⁴ The AG has developed its work in these areas through various multi-stakeholder consultations during the period August 2007 to November 2007. Discussion of the issues raised by the AG mandate continues in independent CSO-led processes, multi-stakeholder national consultations, and other donor initiatives.
3. This *Synthesis Paper* briefly summarizes key issues and proposals arising from the six AG regional consultations, as well as from related independent processes that have contributed to a better understanding of the AG's mandate. (See Appendix Two for a list of presentations, reports and papers from which this *Synthesis Paper* has drawn.) While the AG regional consultative process largely reflects civil society perspectives⁵, the *Synthesis Paper* also relies on a number of independent processes that include significant perspectives from donors [SIDA 2007; SCANTEAM 2007].
4. The AG's work is organized around three outcomes needed to fulfill its mandate:
 - Better understanding and recognition of the roles of CSOs as development actors and as part of the international aid architecture, and engagement of CSOs in general discussions of aid effectiveness
 - Improved understanding of the applicability and limitations of the Paris Declaration for addressing issues of aid effectiveness of importance to CSOs, including how CSOs can better contribute to aid effectiveness
 - Improved understanding of good practice relating to civil society and aid effectiveness by CSOs themselves, by donors and by developing country governments.

³ The Working Party is a body, hosted at the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with equal donor and developing country representation, charged with monitoring the implementation of the Paris Declaration.

⁴ The Advisory Group comprises three Southern CSOs (Afrodad, TWN/Africa, and IBON/Reality of Aid); three Northern CSOs (CCIC, CARE International, and Actionaid International); three donors (Canada, France, and Norway); and three developing country governments (Zambia, Rwanda, and Nicaragua).

⁵ This is in part the product of the relatively high level of CSO engagement in the AG's consultative process. Civil society organizations were mandated with the lead in organizing the regional consultations, and made up the highest proportion of participants.

5. To better reflect stakeholder views on civil society and aid effectiveness, the AG organized six CSO and multi-stakeholder regional consultations from October to November 2007.⁶ These consultations have been complemented by ongoing national consultations in different countries, as well as a number of civil society and donor-initiated processes on themes directly related to the mandate of the Advisory Group (see Appendix One). The AG is also organizing a final multi-stakeholder International Forum on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness in February 2008. The Forum will consider analysis and advice from the regional consultations and other processes related to the AG mandate, such as the Association for Women in Development's (AWID) January 2008 consultation with women's rights organizations, and offer its advice on strategic issues.

6. The International Forum is organized around three thematic areas that emerge from the AG's intended outcomes⁷:

- Recognition and Voice: the roles of CSOs as development actors and as part of the international aid architecture.
- The relevance of the existing international aid effectiveness agenda (with emphasis on the Paris Declaration) for civil society, and how it might be applied and enriched.
- CSO Aid Effectiveness: CSOs as aid donors, recipients and partners.

7. The AG consultations and Forum have been informed by an AG *Concept Paper* and an *Issues Paper* [Advisory Group 2007b; Advisory Group 2007c].⁸ An extranet site (<http://web.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cs>) has been created where AG members and collaborators continue to share information, case studies and analysis. The Forum will take into account a body of case studies and lessons from good practice, and reflect upon CSO relationships and their importance for aid effectiveness, such as:

- CSO relationships with their primary constituents
- CSO relationships with each other in their different countries and regions and in international forums
- Relationships between Northern and Southern CSOs
- Relationships between CSOs and governments
- Relationships between CSOs and donors – models of donor support.

8. The AG will take the analysis and proposals from these various processes, along with the deliberations of the International Forum in February, to formulate its recommendations to the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness in early March 2008. In addition, a “good practice paper” on civil society and aid effectiveness will draw more substantial lessons from the Advisory Group processes and case studies for presentation at the September 2008 HLF in Accra.

⁶ Only one of these six – the Northern CSO consultation held in Brussels – was not multi-stakeholder.

⁷ See the Advisory Group's *Concept Paper* for an elaboration of these outcomes [Advisory Group 2007b].

⁸ Both papers are available at <http://ccic.ca/e/002/aid.shtml> and on the AG's extranet site which is accessible by registration.

II. Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness: Situating the Paris Declaration for CSOs

9. An important outcome of the consultative work of the Advisory Group over the past six months has been a significant increase in awareness of the Paris Declaration, particularly among hundreds of CSOs in the South who participated in the consultations, and an improved understanding of the roles of CSOs in the broader aid effectiveness agenda. Recent statements by all stakeholder groups have recognized the limitations of the Paris Declaration with respect to CSOs as development actors in their own right [Advisory Group 2007a and 2007b]. These derive from its focus on donor/government aid relationships and its narrow interpretation of the implications of its five defining principles.⁹

10. Participants in several of the consultations suggested that the Paris Declaration represents a positive commitment to a “new paradigm” for the aid regime; it “introduces an ambitious process of reforms to the system for ODA (Official Development Assistance] management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, from an integrated perspective based on ... five core principles between donor countries and receiving countries” [ALOP 2007, 7]. It potentially “strengthens the demands on governments to ensure transparency, increase civil society influence and combat corruption” [TUAC 2007, 3].

11. On the other hand, many CSOs pointed to the ambiguity between the principles of aid effectiveness and the practice they witness on the ground [See for example ACF 2007b/Oxfam Canada, 12]. Some described high profile cases involving large aid projects supported by the International Financial Institutions in Asia and elsewhere. In these projects, there continues to be a significant lack of accountability on the part of donors and governments for impacts on the human rights of affected populations, including attention to gender equality and the rights of indigenous peoples; for questionable results in poverty reduction; and for failures to address environmental sustainability [Kathmandu Consultation 2007a; Hanoi Consultation 2007a; ACF 2007a]. Women’s organizations pointed out that the Paris Declaration is “gender blind”, with the absence of any consideration of the national and international context for women’s rights and gender equality in its commitments to improve aid effectiveness [Hanoi Consultation 2007b; Alemany et. al. 2007]. Such documented experiences with the aid system explain the high degree of skepticism about aid reform expressed by many CSOs, particularly by social movements representing the poorest and most excluded populations.

12. In all of the consultations, CSOs raised a central concern about the measurement of aid effectiveness in the current aid effectiveness agenda [Brussels Consultation 2007 b, 4; Nairobi Dialogue 2007; Alemany et. al. 2007, 3-4]. In summary, CSOs said they broadly supported the principles of the Paris Declaration, but were critical of limitations in the commitments by donors and governments and the terms and processes for measuring their success. Commitments were seen to be too focused on implementing and measuring mechanisms for managing the delivery of aid. Most participating CSOs, while not ignoring the importance of improving aid delivery, thought that the effectiveness of these aid reforms should be measured primarily in terms of their explicit contributions to development effectiveness. Aid should be understood as a “global public good”, “to be held in trust for those living in poverty” [Nairobi

⁹ Country ownership, alignment to country strategies and systems, harmonization of donor practices, managing for results and mutual accountability.

Dialogue 2007, 11]. From this perspective aid delivery is only effective if it is truly an instrument for realizing justice and human rights, characterized by “conditions which permit free human development of persons and communities” [CIDSE 2007, 2]. AWID suggests, for example, that “a more complex and inclusive vision of poverty reduction has to connect the efforts of aid and development effectiveness” and that “the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality is inextricably linked to poverty reduction” [Alemany et al 2007, 17].¹⁰

13. As well as questioning the basis for measuring the effectiveness of aid, most consultations pointed to broader policy issues that influence conditions for the effective deployment of aid to reduce poverty and inequality. Policy issues CSOs identified in this regard included, among others, the impact on poverty of neo-liberal development models being promoted by donors and governments, the influence of donor foreign and international economic and policies on country priorities, unfair trade practices and the impact of the continued debt burden, perpetuated in part by the aid regime, on many of the poorest countries [Managua Consultation 2007a, 2; Hanoi Consultation 2007a, 2].

14. The synthesis report of the multi-stakeholder Hännösand International Arena Conference suggested that “the Paris Declaration, offers new opportunities for civil society” and “therefore it is essential to engage in efforts to enrich its scope and ensure its effective implementation” [SIDA 2007, 12]. Throughout the AG consultations, a key debate involved the degree to which there is actual opportunity and receptivity for CSOs to influence donor/government practices and enrich the Paris Declaration. Some CSOs considered that there was limited political will to implement deep-seated aid reform. Others, including donor and some government representatives, suggested that all development actors must proactively take advantage of new opportunities presented by the Paris Declaration commitments and processes. All actors need to reflect upon strategic approaches and renewed sets of objectives for the inclusion of civil society actors in development and in the reform of the aid system [SCANTEAM 2007, 53].

15. CSOs in the consultations emphasized the need for explicit recognition of CSOs’ roles, *as development actors in their own right* within the architecture of the aid system, if inclusion of civil society is to be achieved. They pointed to the centrality of these roles in deepening democratic practice and accountability, in delivering social services to empower marginalized and otherwise disadvantaged communities, and in effective policy dialogue at all levels from the local to the global. But some asked pointedly, [Tujan, 2007] are the donors ready for the implications of this recognition? Are country governments ready? And, importantly, are CSOs ready to assume a stronger role and voice in aid architecture, which would include scrutiny of their aid effectiveness and potential reform of their own practices?

¹⁰ A landmark multi-stakeholder event of the OECD DAC Networks on Environment and Development, on Governance, and on Gender Equality with the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness in April 2007 in Dublin, came to similar conclusions, connecting the aid effectiveness agenda and development results in gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability [OECD DAC, 2007].

III. International Human Rights as the Framework for Development Cooperation and Aid

16. According to the AG's *Concept Paper*, the notion of aid effectiveness refers to "the extent to which aid resources succeed in producing sustainable development results for poor people" [Advisory Group 2007b, 8]. Throughout the consultations, increasing numbers of CSOs referenced the centrality of international human rights for this purpose of aid [Managua Consultation 2007b, 1-2; Hanoi Consultation 2007a, 3; Kathmandu Consultation 2007a, 2; Nairobi Dialogue 2007, 15; Craviotto 2007; Tomlinson 2007b; Alemany et. al. 2007]. For many CSOs it is, therefore, crucial to link the initiatives of all development actors in the aid system (including reforms in aid delivery) to their contribution to the realization of international human rights [World Vision International 2008, 1; Brussels Consultation 2007a, 1]. For many participants at the multi-stakeholder Härnösand Conference, enriching the Paris Declaration implies that "the rights-based obligations expressed in the United Nations human rights instruments should be used to monitor progress in the aid system, e.g. indicators for monitoring gender equality, access to social and economic development, discrimination of minorities etc." [SIDA 2007, 7].

17. According to the concluding statement of the Managua Consultation, "democracy is the best institutional, political and cultural environment for the fulfillment of the rights of the majority", that is, the rights of those living in poverty. The statement goes on to suggest that "civil society organizations are essential for the strengthening and reinforcing of democracy...and play a fundamental role in the struggle to overcome inequalities and poverty, as defenders of the public interest, promoting the economic, social and political rights of all citizens" [Managua Consultation 2007b, 1]. In meeting international obligations to eradicate poverty and promote human rights, all development actors, including CSOs, have a responsibility to create an environment that enables people to exercise their rights in the development of their societies. Several consultations noted an increasing shift among civil society development actors, away from "charitable", externally imposed models of engagement with constituencies, towards practice that emphasizes empowering poor and marginalized communities to claim their rights [Wanjira 2007; ACF 2007b/Presbyterian World Service and Development, 1].

IV. Recognition and Voice: The Roles of CSOs as Development Actors and as Part of the International Aid Architecture

18. A first step toward recognition of CSOs as development actors and as part of the aid architecture is to define CSO identity and roles in a way that distinguishes them from other development actors. CSOs both North and South fulfill a number of roles, often filling multiple roles at one time. An essential aspect of CSO effectiveness and recognition of their place in filling these roles is their legitimacy in the eyes of their primary constituents, and of governments and donors, a legitimacy that derives in part from CSO practices that enforce their accountability. It follows from recognition of CSOs as development actors that they have significant experience and perceptions to contribute to the aid dialogue. For the stakeholder community to benefit from this contribution space is required for CSOs to voice their views in dialogue with the official aid community.

A. Defining the identity and roles of CSOs

19. CSOs in the consultations, whether Northern or Southern, repeatedly asserted their legitimacy in relation to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights – in the exercise of the freedom of peaceful assembly, association and speech. CSOs were widely seen to be the expression of the free association of people, facilitating their claim to political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights [Nairobi Dialogue 2007]. Among CSOs, there are different governance models and orientations – membership-based, cause-oriented, service-oriented – in the pursuit of values and objectives in development. But along with these values and objectives, CSO participants saw themselves as sharing a common defining identity - *social solidarity* with the people in society they serve or represent in the pursuit of development values and objectives [Tujan, 2007]. A presentation at the Kathmandu Consultation highlighted that CSOs “work alongside the poor and excluded groups, supporting them to claim their rights to life with dignity” [Michyari 2007].¹¹ The AG’s regional consultations focused on understanding the implications of this unique CSO identity for strengthening the recognition of CSO roles and voices as distinct development actors in their own right within current aid architecture.

20. Many of the consultations underlined the importance of recognizing civil society as a distinct development actor, different from donors and governments, whose significance for development extends beyond its role in aid architecture. Participants see the role of government in development as deriving from the obligations of formal democratic representation. They recognized government as having a leading role in providing equal opportunity and public benefits to the full population living under its jurisdiction. Official donors and CSOs recognize the governance responsibilities of government, and corresponding obligations to maximize progress in fulfilling the human rights of its population. Many see the strength of the Paris Declaration and its principles in its commitment to the ownership and leadership of government in aid relationships [Tujan 2007; ALOP 2007, 1].

21. In contrast, the development roles of CSOs derive not from any claim to represent society as a whole, but rather from their defining characteristic of social solidarity. It is from this characteristic that CSOs derive their responsibility for enabling people to express their different aspirations, and for improving the conditions for diverse groups in society. CSOs are an essential feature of democracy in that they express peoples’ organized action in the public sphere for public benefit and change, as distinct from the realm of commerce for private profit. CSOs act in social solidarity in many varied forms, from targeted programs to reduce smoking and improve the health of specific populations, to training in entrepreneurial skills to improve the livelihoods of others. But in the realm of development cooperation, through social solidarity, CSOs often act as “bridge builders” between the public interest in social justice and change, and the movements and initiatives of poor, excluded and discriminated communities and populations, wherever they may be located, to claim their rights [Tujan 2007]. In doing so, CSOs act as autonomous organizations that take many varied and inter-related forms and pursue specific purposes – they can be non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research institutions, associations of professions, women’s

¹¹ Consultation discussions recognized that CSOs are many and varied, and not all necessarily work for and with the poor or otherwise marginalized, but may still be characterized by relationships of solidarity with a constituency or the public good.

organizations promoting women's rights, community-based organizations, labour unions or social movements. But they all share this attribute of social solidarity.

22. It is this rich diversity that distinguishes the development contributions of CSOs and, particularly, their essential role in strengthening democratic governance. Participants in several consultations suggested that donors and governments should value their interaction with CSOs precisely because of their varied roles and capacities in sustaining social solidarity. CSOs are able to connect with and empower groups of people living in poverty, women claiming their rights, marginalized ethnic groups, and other marginalized groups that often lie beyond the interest and reach of developing country governments or external donors.

23. Advancing gender equality and women's rights is essential in addressing poverty and achieving development goals such as the MDGs. Women's organizations, networks and CSOs promoting women's rights, with their linkages to constituencies of poor and marginalized women, therefore, are critical to the commitment of the international community to these goals. Unfortunately, to date, CSO women's voices are often marginalized in mainstream aid discourse and their work undermined by patriarchal interests in the aid system [Kathmandu Consultation, 2007b; Alemany et al. 2007, 2-3; Williams 2007]

24. All the consultations called upon the outcome document of the Accra HLF, the Accra Agenda for Action, to recognize the importance of strengthening the roles and voice of CSOs as distinct development actors in their own right, if the goals and principles of the Paris Declaration are to be achieved.

25. While giving prominence to this broader notion of CSOs as development actors in their own right, the different consultations came to some shared conclusions about several roles of CSOs as development aid partners that enrich both the development impact of aid and its effectiveness.¹² As noted earlier, CSOs are highly diverse development actors, and consequently, individual CSOs assume a unique mix of the roles outlined below.

- a) Mobilizing grassroots communities, poor and marginalized peoples: CSOs as development actors often give priority to mobilizing excluded communities, and particularly poor and marginalized peoples, to claim the full range of their economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. Where governments and donors often face distrust in such communities, CSOs foster community design and ownership of development approaches, initiatives and process by affected populations. Case studies point to complex and changing CSO roles at different levels (local, national, international) in empowering people to develop their own assets and capacities [ACF 2007b/Oxfam Canada]. Many CSOs have developed capacities to be rooted in community, to be able to read their specific social, economic, and political environment, and to adopt appropriate strategies that strengthen peoples' organizations and mobilization to deal with the conditions that impinge on their reality [ACF 2007b/PWRDF, 10].
- b) Monitoring government and donor policies and practices: Holding national and multilateral development stakeholders to account through local knowledge, research, advocacy and developing alternative policies: CSOs play essential roles in democratic governance, creating and sustaining

¹² See section 5 for further elaboration of how CSOs' roles contribute to applying and enriching implementation of the Paris Declaration

public spaces for peoples' participation. Civil society is one of the key pillars of democratic practice, alongside the executive, legislature, judiciary and the media. The mix of social solidarity and values that characterize CSO actions give civil society a distinct role in the promotion of democratic governance and accountability in facilitating the engagement of people (citizens) seeking to promote the public interest. Several case studies have documented the capacity of CSOs to strengthen democratic accountability of governments and donors for policy and program decisions [for example, ACF 2007b/Presbyterian World Service and Development; G20 Mozambique 2007; Sossou 2007; Aid Watch 2007]. CSOs have also monitored linkages between private sector actors and the aid system in their focus on corporate social responsibility. In playing this role, CSOs draw upon their capacities in knowledge creation, innovation, policy analysis and formulation.

It is vital to protect and strengthen this CSO monitoring and advocacy role in many developing countries where democratic processes are often weak and fragile. CSOs can be an independent source of information and perspectives on the social needs and interests of marginalized or dispossessed peoples that must influence government/donor aid policies if the latter are to be effective in reducing poverty and inequality. But some participants also said that CSOs do not, and should not, create or displace voices of poor and marginalized peoples. Rather, they serve to identify, amplify and channel the voices of those excluded or seldom heard in society. An important dimension of CSO solidarity across borders is the strengthening of CSO advocacy roles for alternative policies in multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank or the WTO, whose current policies are said to limit the "realistic" scope for policy proposals suggested by CSOs at the country level [Action Aid 2007; ISG 2007].

- c) Delivering services and development programming: Most development actors recognize and value the role of CSOs in service delivery, although some participants in the discussion expressed concern that CSO service delivery can create "parallel" and competing structures for service delivery at the community level. While some suggest that CSO service delivery may be seen to address gaps in government service coverage, several examples during the consultations, and in related literature, point out that CSO service delivery is often distinct from that of government (which has a recognized obligation to ensure universal access to basic services). CSOs not only address needs in excluded communities, but they can also link this service experience in particular communities to their roles in mobilization, empowerment and democratic accountability [Tujan 2007]. As CSOs develop relationships of trust with communities through the delivery of particular programs (whether government-initiated or not), they can go further to empower communities to seek out a full range of services from their governments [World Vision International 2008, 6]. CSOs can play a complementary role to that of government also by virtue of their flexibility to experiment with new approaches. An example of this was evident in a case study in Mozambique, where a CSO had the space to experiment with innovation in school curriculum that were subsequently adopted by government [ACF 2007b/CODE, 9]. The Nordic + study points to CSO concerns that these distinctive CSO roles will be undermined if funding modalities of donors/government push CSOs into the role of mere sub-contractors for service delivery on behalf of government [SCANTEAM 2007, 2; ACF 2007b/Presbyterian World Service and Development, 1].
- d) Building coalitions and networks for greater civil society coordination and impact: CSOs that share values and goals increasingly work together within a sector or program, or in issue-specific coalitions

and networks, to coordinate and maximize their engagement with their constituencies, with governments and with bilateral and multilateral donors. Several case studies, including a cross-border West African network of women's organizations strengthening women's rights with government counterparts, point to the synergy created through informal CSO linkages and networking, drawing on the unique contributions and accompaniment of each partner to enrich and bring innovation to development processes at the local level [ACF 2007b/Oxfam Canada, 2; ACF 2007b/CECI, 1]

- e) Mobilizing and leveraging Northern resources in North/South CSO partnerships: Northern CSOs increasingly play an intermediation role between constituencies in Northern countries and CSOs and constituencies in developing countries. Northern CSO intermediation was said to involve a mix of ingredients:
- Very significant resource transfers (from both official donors and privately raised funds from both individuals and the private sector) when CSOs act as donors
 - Efforts to strengthen different capacities of Southern CSO counterparts (sometimes directly with communities)
 - Facilitation of North/South policy dialogue, advocacy and citizen mobilization on issues of global economic and social justice
 - Engaging Northern citizens in development education and actions.

26. As noted above, for the thousands of CSOs involved in international cooperation, many variations and combinations of these roles exist, sometimes within one CSO. These overarching roles raised a number of implications for the integration of CSOs into the aid effectiveness agenda in the context of the mandate of the AG. The need to strengthen the recognition of these roles and voice of CSOs as development actors in their own right in development cooperation suggested a number of aid effectiveness issues in the consultations for further reflection and debate – CSO legitimacy, CSO accountability, CSO institutional practices in North/South CSO relationships, and political spaces for engaging the voice of civil society.

B. Addressing CSO legitimacy

27. A significant focus of consultation discussions on strengthening the recognition of the voice of CSOs in development cooperation and policy dialogue was the issue of CSO “legitimacy”. The conclusions of the Härnösand Conference for example suggest that CSOs have to demonstrate their legitimacy. As it is put in the report emerging from the conference, “Southern CSOs must be able to clarify who they represent and what mandate they have to speak on behalf of the poor and marginalized groups when they engage in policy dialogue” [SIDA 2007, 18]. All of the AG consultations enquired into the basis of CSO legitimacy.

28. Donors and governments need to address two inter-related questions in their relations with CSOs:

- On what basis should they enter into dialogue and partnerships with CSOs?
- With whom should this partnership or dialogue be constructed?

One issue is the extent to which CSOs are “representative”. Given the demands of democratic governance and the value of CSO diversity, the question of representation in policy dialogue is an important one for all stakeholders. Governments and donors may argue that a particular grouping of

CSOs is unrepresentative and as a result may feel no obligation to listen to what they have to say. In response, CSOs point out that only government can achieve comprehensive representation based on the legitimacy of electoral processes, whereas the defining CSO identity of social solidarity implies that any given CSO will almost necessarily only represent certain segments of society. For CSOs in the consultations, the issue is whether those CSOs invited to the policy table are *sufficiently* representative of differing perspectives extant for the purposes of the dialogue [Tujan, 2007].

29. The critical question is not so much broad representation through CSOs, but rather defining which CSOs are appropriate to engage in a particular dialogue, and what resources are available to maximize this appropriate range of CSOs. The Consultation in Cotonou identified a number of conditions for selecting CSOs for policy dialogue, based on case experience: breadth of social base and geographic location of the CSOs; technical competence and knowledge of issues; ability to influence public opinion; and internal governance of the CSO, e.g. the involvement of members within membership-based CSOs [IMPACT Network 2007, 10]. Others have suggested the importance of sustained North/South partnerships for dialogue with donors [ACF 2007b/FSPG], while the Managua Consultation put much greater emphasis on demonstrated capacity to mobilize affected populations for social change [ALOP 2007, 17].

30. The experience of many CSOs at the consultations suggests that the criterion of representativeness is often used to undermine their credibility when government or donor officials disagree with CSO views being expressed. From this perspective, the judgment about what is “appropriate representativity” in a given dialogue is often a political act to avoid dialogue on contentious issues [IMPACT Network 2007, 14; Zambia National Consultation, 13]. Governments and donors are sometimes seen to “go through the motions” by selecting participants with little interest in a serious dialogue, or can use the question of legitimacy of CSOs as a convenient argument to avoid difficult policy engagements and more transparent accountability for their actions.

31. Many examples were presented where government and donors seemed to deliberately exclude CSOs who were perceived to be critical of government and donor strategies [ACF 2007a; various presentations at the Asian consultations.]. A debate ensued in the Kathmandu Consultation over the notion of CSO “fragmentation” as an argument also used by donors and governments for avoiding policy dialogue. A participant from the Women’s Human Rights Defenders Network of Nepal argued that women’s organizations face several levels of exclusion by both other CSOs and by governments and donors. “On the one hand, women’s groups are being told by donors and state officials that they are committed to women’s issues, but on the other hand, they are being blamed for bringing social disharmony” [Kathmandu Consultation 2007b, 2]. In other instances, governments or donors seek to create a “legitimate” but artificial CSO platform to speak on behalf of all CSOs, which can easily undermine the diversity of CSO voices particularly for those excluded from the platform. Fragmentation may be confused with the reality of diversity, whereas diversity should be valued in policy dialogue as contributing to democratic governance. On the basis of these experiences, CSOs concluded that any engagement that excludes critical CSO voices is itself illegitimate as a policy process [Nairobi Dialogue 2007].

32. What makes an individual CSO legitimate? Participants thought that legitimacy can take several forms. The Northern CSO Consultation suggested that CSOs legitimacy arises from the right of people to

organize in the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights and related Covenants. Other consultations articulated “internal democratic legitimacy”, based on an appropriate role of the membership and sound internal governance, as the source of a CSOs’ legitimacy. Other ways CSOs achieve legitimacy are: through the mobilization of particular constituencies, or through broad recognition by the public and media as credible sources of information, or as necessary actors in public debate on controversial issues. Some CSO platforms have chosen to develop a voluntary accreditation system as a means of establishing members’ legitimacy, often involving codes of conduct or practice to which members must adhere, though the process of accreditation itself can sometimes become the subject of debate in terms of its “legitimacy” [Cambodia NGO Platform 2007]. Several proposals emerged from the consultations for CSOs to further develop such self-regulating accountability mechanisms that ensures transparency and participation and reinforce their legitimacy [Kathmandu Consultation 2007a, 7]

33. A final means of demonstrating legitimacy is compliance with the official legal regime and regulatory framework, a position increasingly argued by governments and donors. There is ongoing controversy among many Southern CSOs about regulatory mechanisms, such as CSO registration, as a means of “control” by government over the recognition of CSO voices as legitimate or not. Regulatory frameworks can be used to marginalize critical CSOs, who have legitimacy under other criteria, but who governments sideline for political purposes [Cambodia NGO Platform 2007; Singh 2007]. The AG processes drew attention to a number of good practice proposals for both external and CSO-derived mechanisms to enhance CSO legitimacy [See Eklof 2007 and Advisory Group 2007c, 9-11].

C. Issues of CSO Accountability

34. Questions about legitimacy in the recognition of the roles and voice of CSOs are closely related to issues of accountability. CSOs are more likely recognized as legitimate development actors when they can demonstrate that they are accountable for their voice and actions. While CSOs are not government, clearly they operate in the public realm, claim to be representative of membership and constituencies, and are channels for significant development resources. As such, they have a responsibility to be accountable, but to whom, by what standards and through what mechanisms?

35. The consultations focused considerable attention on CSO accountability as a multi-dimensional concept. Many commentators identified a complex web of accountability involving, often simultaneously, immediate members and internal CSO governance, constituencies (poor communities, or marginalized women, etc.), the public (through the media, or individual donors), and official donors and governments. One proposal at Härnösand, called for a rights-based approach to accountability, where the CSO would be held primarily “accountable to the people affected by the violations, marginalization or discrimination being addressed by the particular CSO” [SIDA, 20].

36. Yet it is difficult for many CSOs to realize such accountability to a rights-based regime in practice. In the Kathmandu Consultation, among others, it was noted that communities often have high expectations of CSOs that come to them, including an expectation that CSOs pursue downward accountability and promote democratic control. Yet for many of these CSOs, upward accountability to donors, including to Northern CSOs, is governed by strict contractual obligations, which often trump CSOs’ moral and ethical obligations of accountability to the community [Timsina 2007; Small Group on Accountability Report in the Brussels Consultation]. The Nordic + study recognizes this tension and

suggests that CSO accountability is undermined when “the [donor] requirements for funds application and reporting become too demanding...and represent a prohibitive cost” [SCANTEAM 2007, 9].

33. At a broader level, participants regarded transparency by all development actors as a precondition for implementation of the principle of “prior informed consent” of populations affected by aid projects. Access to information is crucial to empowering communities, to enabling them to negotiate on an equal footing, and to holding all development actors accountable, giving greater ownership to women, indigenous people, vulnerable and poor people [Kathmandu Consultation 2007a]. Many also recognized that transparency is crucial to CSO accountability where best practice requires open discussion of budgets, democratized planning and program design, and after-the-fact reporting back to constituencies. Sometimes CSO accountability can be politicized in the South when governments use legal requirements for disclosure, declarations of funding sources, and taxation to restrain the more critical voices in civil society [Khan 2007; Mutasa 2007; and the Small Group on Accountability Report in the Brussels Consultation].

D. CSO Institutional Practices in North / South Civil Society Relationships

The diverse and complex relationships between Northern and Southern civil society organizations, and the effectiveness of these relationships, were the subject of in-depth discussion throughout the consultation processes. Northern and Southern CSOs agree that they share the basic characteristic of social solidarity and have in common, in greater or lesser degrees, similar roles within aid architecture as outlined above. However, the growing influence of NCSOs within the aid system raises a number of aid effectiveness issues in relation to accountability, institutional practices, division of roles, and funding modalities, for further reflection and debate. These issues are explored in more depth below in section 6.

E. Engaging civil society voice on aid effectiveness

37. CSO participants in all the consultations welcomed the AG process and its mandate to facilitate opportunities for systematic dialogue between CSOs, on the one hand, and donors and government, on the other. They were encouraged that civil society will apparently be invited to participate in all sessions at the Accra HLF, including the final Ministerial. A more common experience for CSOs seeking to engage in policy dialogue, however, has been *ad hoc* and informal meetings in which few donor delegates appear interested in a sustained and formal dialogue with CSOs at international levels including the DAC; limited time or often contrived “consultations” with decisions having been taken by developing country governments and/or donors on development priorities, accompanied by little information of limited accessibility because it is based on technical documents, in English, often circulated with minimal time for review. Such experience undermines the potential for an informed and respectful dialogue on issues that take into account the voices of affected populations. A common theme emerging from the consultations is that recognition of roles and voices for civil society within aid architecture must be accompanied by regular, formally structured, and substantial opportunities for engagement between all development actors.

V. Applying and Enriching Implementation of the Paris Declaration

38. The goal for the September 2008 Accra High Level Forum is to review progress and obstacles in the implementation of the Paris Declaration, and the commitments made by donors and developing country

governments. As noted above, CSOs in the AG consultations discussed their aspirations for deepening these commitments, based on CSO assessments of their adequacy in achieving development effectiveness. The AG's mandate includes advice and facilitation for the inclusion of CSO voices, and dialogue on these broader aspirations with the Working Party and in the Accra HLF.¹³ CSOs, as recognized actors within aid architecture, wish to engage donors and governments who have challenged CSOs to suggest ways they might contribute to and enrich implementation of the five Paris Declaration principles.¹⁴

39. Regional consultations and other related processes have addressed several important questions:

- Is the inclusion of civil society development actors essential for the achievement of the Paris Declaration stated goals and principles?
- In what ways may CSOs contribute to donor – country aid relationships to enrich and realize the Paris Declaration targets?
- How ready are donors, governments and CSOs to respond to the implications of including CSOs in the implementation of the Declaration's commitments over the next several years?

CSOs largely approach these questions assuming they are distinct, though not necessarily independent, development actors. Their contributions to implementing the principles of the Paris Declaration with donors and governments, then, are based on their distinct roles and objectives. The implications of these distinct roles and objectives as discussed throughout the AG's consultation process are summarized under each of the five principles below.

A. Country Ownership

40. Many CSOs and other stakeholders have argued that “national development strategies”, negotiated largely between donors and the executive branches or ministries of government, are insufficient to achieve the Paris Declaration's goal of “country ownership” [Papers presented in the OECD Global Forum on Development 2007]. For example CSOs point out that such strategies are often undermined by continued donor practices of conditionality accompanying their aid flows. CSOs in several consultations lauded the Paris Declaration's acknowledgement of leadership of governments as essential for country ownership. Yet government leadership alone (often unduly influenced by powerful external actors and local elites), is an insufficient condition for country ownership, which requires a shared national vision, not just a government vision [ALOP 2007, 5]. Repeated examples were given of donor reliance on national development strategies (PRSPs) as the foundation for establishing country ownership, while ignoring the complex political realities of developing countries, and the absence of significant participation by citizens, including women and the CSOs that represent them, in setting these

¹³ These considerations will be taken up by an independent international CSO process to coordinate key CSO messages and perspectives for deepening the reforms initiated in the Paris Declaration. This independent process will culminate in a parallel CSO Forum in Accra just prior to the HLF. Documentation related to CSO assessments of aid effectiveness and independent CSO processes to contribute to the HLF can be found at the internet portal established for that purpose: www.betteraid.org.

¹⁴ The related challenge about the applicability of the principles of the Declaration to CSOs' own aid effectiveness is discussed in the next section. Readers of the AG's *Concept Paper* and *Issues Paper* [Advisory Group 2007b and 2007c] should note that the use of the terms “deepening” and “enriching” the Paris Declaration have evolved as a consequence of the CSO-coordinated AG consultations.

development priorities [Zambia National Consultation, 10; Urban LandMark 2007, 10; TUAC 2007, 3; Nepal, 1; Khan 2007; Michyari 2007, Alemany et. al. 2007, 6-7]

41. Yet the Paris Declaration seems to be premised on strengthening governance and the responsibilities of governments to their citizens [Chissano 2007, 6]. If this premise is to be realized, CSOs pointed out that there is a fundamental need for mechanisms and processes for “*democratic ownership*” [Nairobi Dialogue 2007; Alemany et al 2007, 7]. For many CSOs, democratic ownership is *the* central concept that underscores the efficacy of all five principles in the Declaration. CSOs often refer to the fact that most actions to counter poverty and inequality are inherently political. Efforts to reduce poverty imply societal tension over the political space to promote human rights and to encourage a plurality of views, particularly those outside the circles of power. They also imply for many CSOs tension over actions to achieve gender equality, and over the legitimacy of policy and development alternatives. A democratic culture that gives real expression to the voices of the poor, excluded and discriminated sectors of the population, is thus essential to achieve development goals.

42. But several participants in the consultations also pointed out that democratic culture is relatively weak in many developing countries. Political and economic elites often resist agents of change, or capture development resources for their own ends. Strengthening democratic culture and country ownership in such contexts requires active CSOs with strong legitimacy and accountability. Such ownership begins with citizens in their communities, where CSOs are key to local empowerment – “ownership involves ... strengthening local capacities to promote participatory processes towards the development of a culture of citizenship that is sustainable over time, from a grassroots perspective” [ALOP 2007, 13]. Overall, the AG’s consultations highlighted that the success of “country-owned” development strategies as called for in the Paris Declaration requires that the communities affected play a determining role, facilitated by donors and governments recognizing and promoting the role of CSOs in mobilizing grassroots communities and strengthening the diversity of voices (minorities, women, indigenous peoples, etc.).

B. Alignment

43. Under alignment, the Paris Declaration commits donors to structure aid allocations to conform with countries’ national development strategies, institutions and procedures, in order to strengthen the role of government in implementing its own development priorities.

44. This notion of alignment has several implications for civil society development actors. If alignment is interpreted mechanistically and solely in relation to national development strategies, CSOs argued that this will conflict with the goal of strengthening the diversity of CSOs required to strengthen democratic culture to ensure inclusion of poor and excluded populations. CSOs may find that the poor and excluded populations they work with may have different development priorities and strategies. Moreover, no national development plan, however participatory in its development, can be expected to be sufficiently comprehensive to address everyone’s priorities. Yet Southern CSO partners report that Northern CSOs are increasingly passing on donors’ perception of priorities, as donors make alignment a condition of their support to CSO aid channels. At the country level, one case study demonstrated how a centrally-determined, rigid code of conduct for all actors in a health SWAp, including local CSOs, undermined the capacities of local CSOs to use their local understanding effectively to address HIV/AIDS [ACF 2007b/PWRDF, 1].

45. While all stakeholders recognize the importance of improved coordination in delivering basic services to the poor, donors and governments must not undermine innovation and accountability by ignoring the “checks and balances” arising from CSO experience and evidence-based analysis that may challenge rather than align with governments’ and donors’ experience and priorities [IMPACTS Network 2007, 17-18]. CSOs argue that it is the specificity of what they deliver when they align with the priorities of the people they work with that characterizes their aid effectiveness [SIDA 2007, 46, 17].

46. In strengthening democratic ownership, CSOs argue that they can contribute to alignment with a broader notion of citizens’ needs and rights. CSOs have argued that donor/government development policies must be aligned to their international human rights obligations, including obligations with regard to women’s rights, which are often missing from national priorities. These policies must consequently take account of critical voices for development alternatives, be responsive to people and organizations at local and regional levels, and include marginalized sections of the population (e.g. youth, indigenous peoples, women) [ALOP 2007]. CSOs can facilitate the provision of information and can partner with government in implementing effective consultation processes to reach out and align with the needs of these communities. Women’s organizations suggest that this role should include engagement with national budgetary processes, monitoring disbursements and implementing gender budgeting [Alemany et. al. 2007, 8]. In addition, the Lusaka Consultation pointed to roles for CSOs in working with government to strengthen the latter’s capacities [Kenya Joint Assistance Strategy 2007] for better alignment with community needs.

C. Harmonization

47. The Paris Declaration commits donors to harmonize the requirements for their aid, assure transparency and predictability in the delivery of aid, and work towards coordination and an effective division of labour based on comparative advantage and complementarity. Harmonization has implied greater reliance of donors on program-based approaches, including sector-wide approaches (SWAs), and support of national development strategies through direct budget support. CSOs can play a particularly important role in SWAs where they bring unique human rights approaches to service delivery, innovation and flexibility to pilot new initiatives [ACF 2007b/CODE]. SWAs will require deliberate strategies by gender advocates to include targeted gender equality interventions as well as measures to deepen the involvement of poor and marginalized women [Williams 2007, 14].

48. There is increasing interest on the part of donors to harmonize their support to CSOs as well, for example by pooling their efforts and creating joint funding mechanisms [SCANTEAM 2007, 16-17]. Such mechanisms could help to strengthen ownership by local CSOs called upon to manage such funds, and can address what donors perceive to be high degrees of “fragmentation” among CSOs. However, there are a number of implications of increased harmonization of donor relationships with CSOs. Given donor requirements for accountability and the management of results, joint donor programs with CSOs will tend to favour well-known Northern and Southern CSOs based in Southern capitals, with sophisticated capacities for financial accountability. This could marginalize many CSOs, particularly smaller informal organizations, who work in grassroots development initiatives, and as such significantly alter the civil society sector in a country. The latter can be targeted better through project funding and through CSO intermediaries of various forms. Large-scale joint donor funding programs tend to have stringent donor-imposed criteria and for that reason can be less responsive in nature. As such, they can

interfere with the ability of local CSOs to develop and implement their own priorities, weakening their accountability to local constituencies [SCANTEAM 2007, 3, 14].

49. The Härnösand Conference concluded that “donors need to carefully analyze and document the consequences of the funding modalities they choose” with participants stressing “the need to safeguard the plurality of civil society by using a plurality of funding modalities” [SIDA 2007, 18]. Consultations repeatedly stressed the importance of strengthening CSO diversity as a foundation for democratic culture. As one case study concluded, it is important to avoid “harmonization so streamlined that those who do not fit into certain pre-determined priorities [are]...excluded from the process” [ACF 2007b/Presbyterian World Service and Development]. Donor funding modalities also need to retain the flexibility to provide direct support to grassroots and independent CSOs whose activities may fall outside national strategies, “but which are consistent with the realization of human rights” [Philips 2007, 13] and are locally owned by CSOs’ primary constituencies.

50. CSOs recognize the importance of working through coalitions and informal networks in both programming and policy dialogue that relate to donor and government program initiatives, and pointed to their increasing capacity to do so [Kapijimpanga 2007; ACF 2007b/Oxfam Canada; Kathmandu Consultation 2007a]. Various consultations discussed approaches for coalition mandates to establish priorities and carry out joint activities that ensure accountability to constituencies, particularly those in developing countries. One case study described important coordinating roles for CSOs in sustaining and increasing the capacities of CSO networks in the South. In this case, the Northern CSO accompanied coalition-building and innovation in the evolution of a multi-country network in West Africa, whose members became effective in advocating women’s rights and citizenship issues in these countries. Coordination and learning through the wider network was based on national CSO networks that had legitimacy and public trust. This required long-term commitments and the flexibility to respond to situations where women’s rights might be flouted by a state actor, something the intermediation of the Northern CSO made possible [ACF 2007b/CECI, 2].

51. While recognizing the opportunities of new donor funding modalities, participants at the Härnösand Conference noted that “what characterizes [effective CSO coalitions and networking] is that they are all driven by the dynamics of ... CSO relationships, not notions imposed on CSOs from the outside” that serve the purposes of these modalities [Tomlinson 2007c, 7].

D. Managing for Development Results

52. All stakeholders agree on the Paris Declaration commitment to manage aid in a way that focuses on development results, and on strengthening information systems for results-oriented decision-making. CSOs can contribute to the implementation of this principle as they improve their capacity to assess results performance and hold governments, donors, and themselves accountable for development results. CSOs are uniquely situated within communities and in webs of societal networks, through which they help citizens to be aware and to monitor progress toward the stated objectives of development program priorities and resources. For instance, the DAC’s Gendernet has proposed that existing country-level gender equality indicators and processes be the basis for monitoring progress towards gender equality, to which women’s rights organizations can contribute [Alemany et. a.. 2007, 9]. At the global level, the Social Watch network is an example where national monitoring is linked to a global accountability

process, assessing compliance with international commitments on social policies [Ciganda and Alemany 2007]. Case studies pointed out ways that CSOs can leverage a two-way dynamic relationship between governments and marginalized communities to hold governments accountable for development results [World Vision 2008, 10; Lambert 2007; Centre for Development Programs in the Cordillera 2007].

53. In many of the consultations, however, CSOs pointed to major issues in access to information and knowledge about donor and government policies and programs, including project information, as one of the key constraints in their ability to contribute to donor and government systems for managing aid for results. Accompanying and related to this lack of timely information, is the lack of due process and platforms for dialogue on intended results and assessments of performance [Urban LandMark 2007, 10; Zambia National Consultation 2007, 14].

54. CSOs also raised questions about the appropriate framework for putting into practice the Paris Declaration commitment to manage for results [ACF 2007a; Brussels Consultation 2007b]. Current practices have been criticized for focusing too narrowly on short-term measurable results, sometimes confusing effectiveness with efficiency, and often driven by donors' need to profile 'their achievements' through aid for public relations purposes with Northern publics [CIDSE 2007, 4; SIDA 2007, 18]. Participants at the Härnösand Conference pointed to the need for new indicators to monitor and value important long-term social and political change results, many of which are rooted in improvements in governance. [SIDA 2007, 27]. Some suggested that CSOs will be effective in contributing to results management through greater democratic ownership, and by encouraging and involving a range of stakeholders to adopt rights-oriented indicators against which to measure progress [World Vision 2008, 14; Alemany et al 2007, 8].

E. Mutual Accountability

55. The Paris Declaration establishes a shared donor /government responsibility for development results. In the view of many CSOs and other development actors, mutual accountability in practice will require institutional commitments to transparency and process that addresses the inherently unequal power imbalance in the donor/government relationship. In the words of the Managua Consultation Briefing Note, mutual accountability requires a shared responsibility for transparency in the actual commitments made, as well as nationally-based monitoring mechanisms independent of donors [ALOP 2007, 8-9]. In the context of democratic ownership and accountability, it is equally important to situate mutual donor/government accountability within the framework of national government accountability for aid policies and practices to people under governments' jurisdiction, in both the North and the South. Participants in several consultations observed that in practice meaningful auditing of donors and governments almost never happens, particularly in countries with high levels of aid dependency [SCANTEAM 2007, 48].

56. CSOs can play, and are playing significant roles (e.g. in research and in monitoring the implementation the Paris Declaration at the country level) to enrich processes of mutual accountability at national and global levels [Ciganda and Alemany 2007; Meja 2007]. The challenge will be to fully engage those who are the intended beneficiaries of aid in the assessment of results and the realization of commitments made by both governments and donors.

VI. CSO Aid Effectiveness: CSOs as Aid Donors, Recipients and Partners.

57. The work of the AG over the past several months has highlighted the significant resource contributions of CSOs to the overall international aid effort including both official and CSO flows. The AG's *Concept Paper* notes that there is no comprehensive accounting of Northern CSO contributions to overall aid flows, but estimates these at \$40 billion or more, compared to official flows of about \$100 billion [Advisory Group 2007b, 6]. CSOs are thus significant players as unofficial aid donors. Northern CSOs and Southern CSOs are also important recipients of aid, both for implementing their own programs and projects, and as partners in channeling aid to others for specific purposes. Making sure that these resources are well used – what we are calling CSO aid effectiveness – is thus an important challenge in its own right.

58. CSOs in the consultations argued that civil society's place in aid architecture comes not so much from their role as donors, but rather from a mix of roles in the aid system that derive from their defining attribute of social solidarity, as outlined in section 4 above. Given the significance of these roles as well as the significant aid resources for which CSOs are responsible, all of the consultations recognized that CSOs have a responsibility to ensure their own effectiveness in achieving development results.

59. The AG's *Issues Paper* suggests that CSO aid effectiveness depends on a wide range of variables, but that much depends in particular on the quality of relationships involving CSOs and donors and governments. As the *Issues Paper* emphasizes, CSO aid effectiveness does not depend only on the efforts of CSOs, but also on models of donor support and on the enabling environment for CSO activity in developing countries, and the character of the dialogue involving CSOs, governments and donors. This section on CSO aid effectiveness is limited to a discussion of CSO principles for aid effectiveness, which were said in the consultations to be essential to situate CSO relationships for aid effectiveness, including North / South civil society relationships. While CSO-government relationships received only limited attention in several of the consultations (mainly regulatory frameworks), some discussion of CSO-donor relationships have already been addressed in sections above related to applying and enriching the Paris Declaration and CSO accountability.

A. CSO Principles for Effectiveness

60. Donors and governments have sometimes assumed that the five principles of the Paris Declaration can simply be applied directly to CSOs to guide improvements in their aid effectiveness. CSOs at the consultations [Brussels Consultation 2007b; Nairobi Dialogue 2007; Tomlinson 2007c] argued that principles negotiated exclusively in the context of the donor/government aid relationships may be relevant, but cannot be transferred directly to the distinct roles of CSOs as development actors.

61. In-depth discussion of Paris Declaration principles and their applicability to CSO aid effectiveness took place in several consultations [Brussels Consultation 2007c; Nairobi Dialogue 2007; Hanoi Consultation 2007a]. The interpretation of the Paris Declaration principles for CSO aid effectiveness focused on the purposes of CSO relationships with each other, and with their constituencies (i.e. social solidarity). "Ownership" was seen as an important principle guiding North/South civil society relationships, but its application has to take into account the full scope of Northern and Southern CSO roles, not just those inherent in the funding relationship (see below). Questions were raised about the

notion of “alignment” and “harmonization” as applied to CSOs, given CSO diversity and its importance for democratic ownership as suggested above. Most CSOs rejected the proposition that CSO aid effectiveness would be enhanced by uncritical CSO alignment with country / government development strategies. Harmonization with donor conditions for aid delivery in a given country was seen to undermine CSOs’ potential contributions as innovators and agents of change.

62. On the other hand, Northern CSOs recognized the need to explore more closely their working relationships for development effectiveness and the Paris Declaration principles may usefully inform these CSO discussions. For instance, these CSOs recognized the need to improve their alignment and mutual accountability with Southern CSO counterpart priorities. Such concerns address issues of local ownership sometimes raised by government officials who question the sustainability of CSOs linkages with local communities [Chissano 2007, 4]. They also respond to challenges from within the CSO community about the lack of transparency and accountability in “power-oriented patriarchal CSOs” [Kathmandu Consultation 2007b]. Some Northern CSOs have been developing accountability mechanisms with counterparts that address both development results for poverty reduction and strengthening of the capacity of poor and marginalized communities to claim rights [ActionAid International 2007]. The principle of harmonization, interpreted in a meaningful way for CSOs could include more coordination between like-minded CSOs working locally or greater use of core funding in support of Southern CSO development programs.

63. However, while the Paris Declaration is premised on important principles, the starting point for most CSOs participating in the AG consultations has been CSO-initiated processes, so as to clarify for themselves the principles that guide their development effectiveness [Nairobi Dialogue 2007]. If CSOs perceive themselves as development actors in their own right, it follows that the determination of principles guiding CSOs must first be undertaken by CSOs, considering their own distinct roles, independent of considerations of the Paris Declaration and the AG itself. In these discussions, CSOs tended to relate to CSO aid effectiveness through principles that they consider essential for their own development effectiveness.

64. In several consultations, CSOs identified appropriate principles that clarified their roles and place in development [see Appendix Three from the Brussels Consultation]. At the Brussels Consultation, CSOs agreed that international human rights conventions, in their recognition of basic rights, underpin CSO diversity as democratic development actors and their principles for aid effectiveness [Brussels Consultation 2007f, 1]. In an exercise in the Nairobi Dialogue, both Northern and Southern CSOs, working separately, named similar principles while giving them somewhat different priorities:

Northern CSOs

Partnership based on equality
 Human Rights Framework
 Mutual Accountability
 Trust; Shared Vision
 Social Justice; Transparency
 Dialogue

Southern CSOs

Social justice; Pro-Poor / Most Marginalized
 Human Rights; Gender Equality
 Accountability to People; Democracy
 Transparency; Mutual Accountability

Commitment; Diversity
Solidarity; Empowerment;
Autonomy
Common Values

Social Solidarity
Partnership; Inclusion

Mutual Respect; Accountability; Trust;
Empowerment
Independence; Stewardship; Learning and Sharing

65. While these discussions reflect progress in clarifying principles, more work needs to be done by CSOs to agree upon a few core principles and to understand better their implications for CSO practice at all levels, including improving their own aid effectiveness. In the Nairobi Dialogue, participants concluded that responsibility for a process to advance CSO guiding principles should lie exclusively with CSOs. The support of the AG process in this regard was welcomed, but CSOs' expectation is that they will continue to elaborate this agenda themselves [Nairobi Dialogue 2007]. Of particular importance to the AG process is to build understanding of the issues and, to the extent possible, identify common ground among CSOs, donors and governments on principles of relevance to their relationships that can enhance their contribution to development effectiveness.

B. CSO Principles and Equitable North/South CSO Relationships

66. As noted above, consultation participants understood the question of the applicability of the Paris Declaration principles to CSO aid effectiveness as more than those governing CSOs as donors. While many Northern CSOs are major donors in their right, the primary mandate of Northern CSOs is citizen engagement in international cooperation, based on specific values and goals that include democracy, justice and human rights. As voluntary organizations committed to international social solidarity, they differ from official donors in that they seek to achieve operational participation with specific and diverse Southern peoples' organizations, based on shared mandates and values [ALOP 2007, 16].

67. Many consultation participants argued that areas of mutual advantage in North/South CSO efforts to strengthen civil society capacities and voices must be taken into account in determining the most "effective" modalities for donor support for CSOs. Some of those modalities by-pass Northern CSOs and engage directly with Southern CSOs. It was suggested in several consultations [SIDA 2007; Nairobi Dialogue 2007; Brussels Consultation 2007a] that all stakeholders need to reflect upon the unique "value-added" that Northern CSOs as development actors can bring to development cooperation. They identified the following contributions:¹⁵

- a) Establish strong and long-term relationships with Southern CSO counterparts, based, not on short-term donor-driven goals and changing preoccupations, but on value-driven visions for social change rooted in human rights, gender equality, indigenous peoples' rights, direct participation of poor and marginalized populations, and environmental sustainability.
- b) Support Southern CSO pluralism, democratic participation of grassroots community organizations, and the representation of marginalized populations in local and national development processes.

¹⁵ These areas of Northern CSO "value-added" have been drawn primarily from a North/South multi-stakeholder workshop at the Härnösand Conference, but several were also mentioned in various Southern AG consultations.

Grassroots organizations are often marginalized by the high technical and knowledge requirements of donors/ governments with which Northern CSOs are more familiar. Northern CSOs can intermediate between Southern CSOs and the vagaries of donor funding dictated by shifting donor priorities, disbursement pressures, preferences for quick results, and the avoidance of politically sensitive engagements (e.g. indigenous land issues).

- c) Bring specialized knowledge, development expertise (sectoral, methodological, etc.) and opportunities for capacity development, learning and exchange. Donors have limited capacity for in-depth knowledge of the complex dynamics of civil society and CSOs' evolving needs, whereas this knowledge resides in Southern CSOs and in North/South CSO partnerships and networks.
- d) Sensitize citizens in the North and give them direct opportunities to participate in development actions that recognize the Northern responsibility for development and social change. Such programs raise significant funds for development purposes from citizens, and create broad public support for official aid that can be sustained even as governments in the North change as a result of the democratic process.
- e) Facilitate global social movements, as found in trade unions, the women's movement or faith-based movements, and strengthen international social solidarity for development, based on shared values, common concerns and national / global agendas for development action.
- f) Create opportunities to engage on aid and non-aid policy issues whose origins and solutions are rooted in changing the policies and practices of Northern governments – donor conditions attached to their aid, impacts of Northern foreign, trade and investment policies, or particular aid policies and practices of individual donors. The Managua consultation pointed out that many community-based Southern CSOs have difficulty relating their experience to issues of globalization, whereas their inclusion in broader CSO networks enables them to move beyond their community to see broader linkages with their local preoccupations. North/South CSO networks for campaigning create spaces for the exchange of information, knowledge and strategies. Northern CSOs can offer access to in-depth information about donors and access to decision-makers, while Southern CSOs bring knowledge and priorities based on the actual impact of the policies and practices of Northern and Southern governments.

68. While recognizing these benefits, all the consultations highlighted areas where Northern CSOs (and official donors in their support for Northern CSOs) need to examine more closely their current practices, approaches and capacities. The significant impact of Northern CSO financial and human resources in sustaining a profound imbalance of power in North/South CSO relationships was seen almost universally in the consultations to be a critical (and some argued growing) factor in limiting capacities and effectiveness of Southern CSO counterparts. While many of the areas of comparative advantage above are acknowledged by all development actors, it was suggested that many Northern CSOs lack the capacity and resources to deepen their relationships beyond a more basic North/South transfer of resources [SIDA 2007, 29].

69. Some Southern CSOs argued during the consultations that Northern CSO political orientations and preferences in their choice of partners determine the orientation of Southern civil society [Sayeed, 2007]. Biases in these choices are significantly compounded by the influence of official donors on the (country

or sector) priorities of their Northern CSOs [Brussels Consultation 2007c]. The impact of these Northern CSO-determined priorities is that “any counter strategies or alternatives [in the South] that don’t subscribe to the [Northern] models...will be ignored, marginalized and unsupported” [Kodituwakku 2007]. Northern CSOs are seen to use the power of their money to implement their mission on the ground, often ignoring access to local knowledge and specific community expertise, available only to those with long term relationships with these communities. (See also the Oxfam Canada case study on the changes required for external CSO actors in moving towards asset-based community development in Ethiopia [ACF 2007b/Oxfam Canada].) It was observed that NCSO “plan interventions with experts and selected SNGOs that often disempower local communities to seek their own solutions and then ‘re-empower’ the target community in accordance with their own models for solving a problem” [Kodituwakku 2007].

70. Several consultations commented on the increasing trend by Northern CSOs to not only internationalize their collaboration with each other in “NGO families”, but to “nationalize” these international NGOs within developing countries. As one Southern participant put it in Härnösand, “The Northern CSOs masquerading as national CSOs is the most disempowering feature today [in North/South CSO relationships]” [SIDA 2007, 22]. Issues arising from these changing CSO dynamics were recognized in the Northern CSO consultation as well as in Southern consultations. Southern CSOs pointed to internal “brain drains”, away from national CSOs, creating a “professionalization of activism”, and a reinforcement of donor dialogue with ‘their’ Northern CSOs at the country level [Sayeed 2007]. On the other hand, CSOs in the Northern CSO consultation, at Härnösand, and in Southern consultations, referred to many examples of capacity development and enhanced mutually productive collaboration between Northern CSOs and Southern CSOs on the ground. In the East and Southern Africa consultation some observed that “North/South CSO relations is largely a practitioners’ issue”. The nationality of a CSO is not a concern to communities “as long as [communities] are identifying and implementing their own development agenda” [Wanjira 2007].

71. It was observed that Northern CSOs tend to set CSO policy agendas, based on their better access to information and resources as well as decision-makers at all levels, including within developing countries. Global priorities and strategies for advocacy and campaigns are often established through Northern CSO processes to be taken up by Southern CSOs somewhat irrespective of their experience on the ground [ALOP 2007, 17; ACF 2007b/PWRDF, 1; Brussels Consultation 2007e]. At the same time, more critical CSOs are further marginalized in policy dialogue as donors and government seek out the more “friendly” CSOs.

72. Northern CSOs heard a call for their “voluntary disempowerment”, calls for them to work more directly with Southern CSOs that understand local realities, to seek out and prioritize the knowledge of target communities, and to recognize that results do not happen in a project life-cycle [Kodituwakku 2007]. Participants in the Nairobi Dialogue proposed a rights-based alternative to the Northern charity paradigm as the model towards which to work [Nairobi Dialogue 2007]. This suggested the need for institutional changes in Northern CSO culture and practice in relations with Southern counterparts, including a greater focus on core funding and alternative structures for accountability that are less rigid and more rooted in the beneficiary populations [North-South CSO Dialogue 2007]. The Brussels consultation had a case presentation on Actionaid’s innovative “Accountability, Learning and Planning” (ALPS) tool that addresses power relations and ways to improve flexibility so as to improve accountability to local beneficiaries [ActionAid International 2007]. Working groups at that consultation

called upon Northern CSOs to support institutional capacity building in line with needs identified by Southern CSOs, with the latter having greater control over the strategies and resources for capacity building.

73. Finally, CSOs in several consultations proposed and presented several examples of codes of conduct or guidelines to address issues of ethical conduct, partnerships, power in North/South relationships, and accountability [Cambodia NGO Platform 2007; Rajani 2007a; SIDA 2007]. The example of the Accountability Charter, signed by major international Northern-based NGOs, might be explored with a wider CSO audience and expanded to deal more directly with the increasing presence of these large Northern NGOs in developing countries.

VII. Conclusions and Questions for the Advisory Group's International Forum

74. The International Forum, planned for February 2008, will provide an important opportunity for multi-stakeholder dialogue on three thematic areas that are central to the Advisory Group's mandate: 1) strengthening the recognition of roles and voice of civil society as development actors in their own right and within the international aid architecture; 2) applying and enriching the implementation of the principles and commitments of Paris Declaration; and 3) CSO aid effectiveness: CSOs as donors, recipients and partners. In a series of Forum Roundtables the participants will be addressing several key issues and questions that can be grouped under each of these three themes. The results of the International Forum, along with contributions from its previous consultations and other relevant processes and consultations, will guide the AG's recommendations and contributions to the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and the HLF.

A. Recognition of Roles and Voice of CSOs as Development Actors

- What characteristics of civil society – identity, values and roles – define CSO as development actors in the aid system, distinct from donors and Southern governments?
- How do Northern CSOs, Southern CSOs, donors and governments view CSO legitimacy? How do these stakeholders view CSO diversity in the aid system?
- What are appropriate forms of CSO accountability for Northern CSOs, Southern CSOs, donors and governments? How do donors and governments shape CSO accountability?
- What proposals might the AG make, for all stakeholders (together and separately), to the HLF to strengthen the recognition of the roles and voice of CSOs as development actors in their own right within the aid system?

B. Applying and Enriching the Implementation of the Paris Declaration

- How can all stakeholders enrich the implementation of the Paris Declaration commitment to “country ownership” by promoting CSO roles and voice that strengthen “democratic ownership”?
- How can all stakeholders enrich the Paris Declaration principle of alignment in ways that recognize distinct CSO roles as development actors in their own right? How can all stakeholders similarly enrich the Paris Declaration principles of coordination and harmonization to take into account distinct CSO roles and voice as development actors in their own right?

- How can all stakeholders enrich the Paris Declaration principles of managing for development results and mutual accountability in ways that recognize distinct CSO roles and contributions as development actors in their own right?
- What proposals might the AG make, for all stakeholders (together and separately), to the HLF to build on CSO roles and voice to enrich the implementation of the Paris Declaration?

C. CSO Aid Effectiveness as Donors, Recipients and Partners

- How do CSOs, donors and Southern governments distinguish the various principles, including CSO-determined principles, which might guide improvements in CSO aid effectiveness?
- How might donor practices (e.g. modalities of donor support to CSOs) and Southern government policies (e.g. regulations and taxation) affect CSO development roles and their aid effectiveness?
- How might donors, Southern governments and CSOs create enabling conditions for more equitable North/South CSO relationships that strengthen CSOs as development actors?
- What proposals might the AG make, to all stakeholders (together and separately), to the HLF to strengthen, in ways that take into account CSO roles and voice as distinct development actors:
 - Donor practices
 - Southern government policies
 - Equitable North/South relationships.

Appendix One: Advisory Group Consultations and Related Processes

Advisory Group Regional Consultations

The Advisory Group organized six regional consultations between October and early November 2007 that involved some 450 to 500 participants from at least 80 countries (including about 60 developing countries). With the exception of the Northern consultation in Brussels, these regional consultations were multi-stakeholder events, but had within them several days that were exclusively for (mainly) Southern CSOs.

In many cases, participation from developing countries followed on national and sub-national processes that involved from 50 to several hundred participants in each case. National CSO seminars and/or multi-stakeholder consultation processes have been held or are being planned for Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, DRC, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Mongolia, Mozambique, Mali, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Senegal and Vietnam. While the national and sub-national processes form an important backdrop, this Synthesis mainly draws from the regional consultations:

- East, North and Central Asia and the Pacific (Hanoi), October 9 – 12, 2007
- South and West Asia (Kathmandu), October 29 – November 1, 2007
- Eastern and Southern Africa, Lusaka, October 16 – 19, 2007
- West and Central Africa and the Maghreb (Cotonou), October 22- 25, 2007
- Latin America and the Caribbean (Managua), October 29 – 31, 2007
- Northern CSO Consultation (Brussels), October 15 – 16, 2007

A delegated North/South CSO Dialogue, drawing representatives from each of the six regional consultations, concluded the consultative process in Nairobi, November 15-16, 2007.

Other Relevant Processes

This *Synthesis Paper*, and the AG's process overall, draws from a number of other relevant but independent initiatives, some of which are ongoing.

1. Härnösand Civil Society Area Conference on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, August 28 – 30, 2007 The 2007 annual SIDA Härnösand Conference, in Härnösand, Sweden, drew together more than one hundred Northern and Southern CSOs, along with donors and partner governments, for a three day conference and dialogue on issues related to the mandate of the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness. The workshops and plenary presentations were a first opportunity for the Advisory Group to test its mandate within a broad multi-stakeholder context.
2. World Vision: Aid Effectiveness – The role of CSOs in making aid work for citizens, An Analysis Based on World Vision's Experience, January 2008 World Vision International has developed a policy discussion paper based on reflections and conclusions drawn from an examination of a number of World Vision case studies of CSO development experience.
3. Support Models for CSOs at Country Level, Scanteam, Oslo, on behalf of a Nordic + Donor consortium, September 2007 A group of Nordic donors, along with DFID and CIDA, coordinated a multi-country study of current practices in country-level donor support models for civil society organizations and civil society strengthening. The case studies and synthesis report from this study provided an important overview of donor support models as well as a consultant's analysis of the strengths and weakness of these models drawing on the experience of the donors involved.

4. Africa Canada Forum Symposium, Lac Macdonald, Quebec, October 1 – 3, 2007 A Working Group of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, the Africa Canada Forum, brought together 40 of its members, along with about 10 African counterparts, to explore in a three days symposium a series of case studies in CSO aid practices, prepared for the Symposium. The Symposium was designed to address the key issues of the Advisory Group on role and voice for CSOs in Canadian/African CSO development cooperation and the implication of this experience for CSOs and the commitments of the Paris Declaration.

5. Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Civil Society and the Paris Declaration and Aid Effectiveness, May 2006 to January 2008. CCIC has undertaken a number of processes with its membership and in dialogue with CIDA on issues of aid effectiveness and their implications for civil society. Reports on these processes can be found at <http://ccic.ca/e/002/aid.shtml>. In January 2008 CCIC has organized a Leadership Forum / Canadian CSO Consultation on CSOs and Aid Effectiveness as a contribution to the Advisory Group's mandate and multi-stakeholder International Forum.

6. CSOs, Aid Effectiveness Principles and the Paris Declaration, CIDSE, September 2007 to January 2008 Coopération internationale pour le développement et la solidarité (CIDSE) is a coalition of 15 major Catholic development organizations in Europe and North America. In September these organizations came together in a workshop to explore case experiences from their work and in the principles that guild their practice as development actors. The resulting draft policy paper draws from this case experience and collective understanding of the key principles that shape their understanding of the role of aid and CSOs in development.

7. The Paris Declaration: Implications for the Promotion of Women's Rights and Gender Equality, January 2008. The Canadian Council for International Cooperation commissioned a background paper, developed by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and WIDE, based on a review of CSO literature and interviews with CSOs advocating gender equality and women's rights. AWID, WIDE and UNIFEM is organizing a consultation with women's rights organizations and network on aid effectiveness and the Accra High Level Forum and Agenda for Action in Ottawa, January 31 and February 1, 2008.

8. Trade Union Perspectives on the Paris Declaration, November 2007 The Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) at the OECD organized a two day consultation on the Paris Declaration, trade unions and aid effectiveness. This Synthesis drew from that discussion and a policy paper prepared by the LO-TOC Secretariat of the International Trade Union Development Cooperation, which participated also in the Brussels Northern CSO consultation and the North/South CSO Dialogue in Nairobi.

9. OECD/DAC Workshop on Development Effectiveness in Practice - Applying the Paris Declaration to Advancing Gender Equality, Environmental Sustainability and Human Rights, April 2007 A workshop brought together donors, governments and CSOs to consider the integration of "cross-cutting" issues of gender equality, environmental sustainability and human rights into the Paris Declaration aid effectiveness agenda. This workshop was developed jointly by the DAC's Networks on Gender Equality, on Governance, and on Environmental Sustainability, with the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness. Its report and key documents can be found at:

http://www.oecd.org/document/57/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_38282425_1_1_1_1,00.html.

Appendix Two: Bibliography: Reports, Presentations and Other Documentation

While this Synthesis Paper draws primarily on material presented during the Advisory Group's Regional Consultations, it also takes account of recent reports, presentations and papers closely related to the mandate of the Advisory Group.

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Appendix Three: North/South CSO Dialogue: Principles that Affect Our Role as CSOs

Empowerment:

In almost all roles, CSOs have a responsibility to have empowerment as a central goal. It is a cross-cutting issue, involving many stakeholders. An indicator for a failure of empowerment might be if after 10 years in a community, it is still the external CSOs that do mobilization. Further cross cutting principles for CSOs should be the *centrality of women* and a focus on *learning and improving processes from our work*.

Key principles that affect our role and how:

| <i>ROLES</i> | <i>PRINCIPLES</i> | <i>COMMENTS</i> |
|--------------|---|---|
| Advocacy | Dialogue Democracy Social justice Amplifying the voice of the poor and marginalized. Principle of participation Results Based Approach | |
| Monitoring | Accountability Participation Traceability for finances Transparency | Participation of affected groups important. Feedback |
| Mobilisation | Social Justice Accountability Facilitation Participation of minorities Democracy Empowerment Stakeholder participation | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Service delivery/ Increasing access to social service</p> | <p>Affirmative action to marginalised areas, communities</p> <p>Sustainability of services</p> <p>Social responsibility</p> <p>Transparency</p> <p>Resource mobilization</p> <p>Gender equality</p> <p>Efficiency</p> | <p>(Through the empowerment of communities)</p> <p>Social services are social goods; when delivering access to social services, it is a social good provided by society.</p> <p>Criticism on privatization of social services.</p> |
|--|---|--|

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Capacity building | Empowerment Subsidiarity Mutual respect Trust Bias for the poorest | Otherwise dependency Need humility |
| Facilitation | Transparency Participation Dialogue Advocacy Equality and equity Mutual respect and accountability Inclusion | <p>Critical in moments of empowerment, mobilization, capacity building, through providing support.</p> <p>Can be realised through instruments like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mobilization - lobby, advocacy. <p>Is facilitation a principle, a role or an approach?</p> <p>Facilitation must work along capacity building, resource mobilization</p> <p>Maybe is a cross-cutting issue?</p> <p>It defines our role – do development with the people, not for the people.</p> |
| Resource mobilization | Transparency Accountability Justice Social justice Bias for the poor | Multi-dimensional accountability |

Chart developed in the Northern CSO Consultation, October 15-16, 2007