

**World Bank Civil Society Global Policy Forum
April 20-22 2005, Washington DC
Civil Society Communiqué**

PREAMBLE

The Civil Society participants in the World Bank Civil Society Global Policy Forum wishes to make the following points to the Bank's President, Board, Management and Staff. The communiqué consists of critical observations and recommendations by individual members in attendance at the Forum. Due to time constraints this is not a ratified or joint statement of all participants.

We are here on behalf of our organizations and the constituencies with whom we work, to advance the interests of poor and marginalized people who cannot be here themselves. We do not seek to endorse the policy and practices of the Bank, nor do we support the processes by which the new president of the World Bank was selected.

We understand and respect the decision made by some of our colleagues not to participate in the Forum, because previous engagements with the Bank have not had the impact nor led to the changes expected. We demand meaningful and effective participation. Positive progress towards eradicating poverty and the space for meaningful and accountable participation by civil society will be critically necessary for ongoing involvement on the part of civil society organizations.

Over the past ten years, the Bank has made some progress in involving members of civil society in its activities. Some Bank-supported initiatives, including Poverty Reduction Strategies, have created space for the participation of primary stakeholders. However, in other cases, local actors and other vulnerable groups have not been engaged, negatively affecting the effectiveness and sustainability of poverty reduction efforts.

In order to address these concerns, we urge the Bank to take the following steps:

1. Promote the Millennium Development Goals through, among other things:
 - debt cancellation for low-income developing countries
 - innovative mechanisms to increase development aid
 - free and fair trading system, including the elimination of subsidies on agricultural products and commodities in developed countries
 - universal free, quality basic education and health care
 - sound governance systems and frameworks of accountability
2. Promote civil society engagement in all phases of the policy and project cycles, including PRS formulation, monitoring and evaluation.

3. Develop and introduce indicators to measure and assess participation and its impact on poverty.
4. Make widely available all information including internal documents and encourage independent research by civil society or academia to inform a timely debate on alternative policies.
5. Invest in discovering, building and mobilizing the capacities of civil society.
6. Support civil society in its efforts to curb corruption and ensure transparency, including monitoring of poverty reduction funds, external audits of loans, etc.
7. Promote the documentation, use and exchange of best practices and lessons learned in relation to stakeholder engagement.
8. Engage all affected stakeholders in an open dialogue on macroeconomic framework and structural reform proposals in order to achieve national ownership and coherence between the PRS and the PRGF.
9. Resources for primary stakeholder participation should come from the Bank's core budget rather than donor trust funds.
10. Develop a mechanism to better address regional and transnational issues, such as environmental degradation, human trafficking and trade.
11. Emphasize job creation as an indicator of quality economic growth and promote equity
12. Incorporate the eight core conventions of the ILO into Bank work.
13. Address the democratic deficit in Bank governance, to ensure a fair representation of debtor and developing countries.
14. Establish a policy for civil society participation in all Bank policy and project work which provides a legal framework for partnership (not just a strategy or a set of guidelines.)
15. As a first step, we ask that both the Bank Management and its Board respond to the specific points in the communiqué in written form and in direct communication with Civil Society, at the latest by the Annual Meetings of 2005.