

DRAFT MEETING NOTES
CSO GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
4 October 2010 at EFC Offices

Present: Fairtrade (Sergi Corbalan)
Independent Foundations (Sevdalina Rukanova EFC)
Development (Olivier Consolo, Meagan Baldwin, Concord, Simon Stocker, Eurostep)
International Organisations (Red Cross, Martin Krottmayer)
Trade Unions (Jan Dereymaeker, ITUC)
Environment (Sally Nicholson, WWF)
For Concord Institutional Dialogue task force – Natalia Alonso, Plan International

1. Procedural issues and logistics

It was agreed that the host and chair should be rotated. On this occasion, the host and chair is EFC. The next host and chair to be agreed at the end of each meeting. Chair to agree draft agenda in advance with Concord secretariat.

It was also suggested that the whole group does not have to work on every issue jointly but that sub-groups can be established just of those members interested in taking forward a common topic such as institutional dialogue. (Term “members” used here in its most informal sense as meaning interested participants in the CSO Group on International Development).

2. Institutional dialogue

Sergi and Meagan are finalising the questionnaire on institutional dialogue as discussed at the last meeting on 26 August. It will be sent as a final draft to the whole mailing list for last minute comments before completion. The questionnaire will then be sent to all group members with a 6 week deadline for response. The results will be brought together by Sergi and Meagan and will form the basis of a workshop to be held at the end of November or early December, probably the week of 29/11 to 04/12 (both Plan and Red Cross offered to host).

It was suggested that an experienced consultant be hired to help prepare and facilitate, including an overview of previous studies, principles, critiques, etc of CSO dialogue with EU (and other) institutions. Potential offers to help fund the facilitation and workshop came from Red Cross, WWF, FairTrade and Eurostep.

The group recognised that the overarching and common objective is dialogue development cooperation but that the appropriate interlocutors go beyond DG DEV and EuropeAid, in particular to the EEAS, but also other Commissioners, the Parliament and the Council. (For EEAS, Baroness Ashton has recently stated that she does not envisage a formalised dialogue with civil society.)

The topic of development cooperation can only be addressed if other areas of EU policy are also viewed through a development lens – eg climate, trade and investment, foreign policy, agriculture, employment and humanitarian aid. For instance, the topic of food would bring together many different DGs and MEPs as well as covering many aspects of the work of the CSO groups and sectors. The Foundations have done something similar on the topic of health.

MDGs post 2015 might provide another umbrella to discuss a new and different sort of development. Increasingly it appears that the Commission's view of development post 2015 gives greater role to the private sector finance and investment. Other suggestions include the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (November 2011) and Rio+20 (in 2012).

3. Report back from Open Forum CSO Development Effectiveness, Istanbul

The Open Forum revised and endorsed a set of eight principles for development effectiveness.

Multistakeholder day on day 3 of the Forum with OECD donors and governments from the south looking in particular at the enabling environment for CSOs (Art. 20 Accra Agenda for Action). The declaration gives full recognition to role of CSOs but does not provide a legal basis for CSO participation. Perception that for the donors aid effectiveness has become a technical issue and has lost the strategic approach and political will. How to ensure that CSOs can and will be given support without use of conditionalities by donors?

Donor presence in Istanbul included US, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Germany, UK, Austria, France, Finland, Netherlands and the EC.

4. Financial Perspectives

At the last meeting, people agreed that the financial perspectives should be a regular information-sharing feature but is there a willingness or need to do more than share information? The Spring Alliance (4 different sectors) working together on a joint manifesto and Concord also has a Budget taskforce. Danger of overlap however the group working on institutional dialogue could also define some common broad principles on development to feed into the other processes and alliances.

A paper expected from the Commission in early November – probably the mid-term review conclusions – to be followed by a paper on new FPs next year. In November there will also be a communication on the external elements of the EU budget.

Is there still a space to debate the overall size of the budget? What will happen to climate finance? Will EC push for a more flexible definition of ODA? Budgetisation of European Development Fund? Renationalisation of aid?

How to achieve a systematic sharing of information? Can members send round their position papers and studies to whole group? Meagan will check with Spring Alliance whether we can make use of their shared information space.

5. Next meeting

Will be the workshop at the end of the year around the issues of institutional dialogue