

Civil society voices for **Better Aid**

Better Aid Coordinating Group Terms of Reference (March 2009)

A. Mandate

1. In October 2008 and February 2009, current members of the CSO International Steering Group (ISG) for the Accra High Level Forum met and agreed that the following mandate would define their joint work on development effectiveness and provide for establishing a post-Accra international coordinating mechanism for CSOs:

The group, on behalf of the global CSO Better Aid Platform, will coordinate and facilitate, at the international level, CSO engagement to promote reforms in international cooperation for development and aid effectiveness.

B. The Better Aid Platform

2. The Better Aid Platform brings together civil society organizations (CSOs) that engage in development cooperation and express an interest in dialogue and policy influencing opportunities on the wide range of issues to deepen aid and achieve development effectiveness. Members of the Platform acknowledge the principles and approaches in the overarching policy statement of the Better Aid Platform¹. While members can opt not to sign on to the Platform's policy statement, they agree that in their discourse on aid and development effectiveness, their actions and words will serve to support it.

3. This CSO platform aims to maximize its inclusiveness of CSOs (North/South, sectoral, and types of organizations), to provide space for capturing the widest diversity of CSO experience and perspectives who engage in development cooperation, and to enable their voluntary pro-active participation in dialogue and policy influencing opportunities on aid and development effectiveness.

4. More than 700 CSOs had identified with the Better Aid Platform, including many sectoral, country, regional and global coalitions of CSOs representing different constituencies (women, religious, labour, etc.) and thousands of members. Many CSOs participated in the Parallel Forum organized in September 2008 ahead of the Accra High Level Forum and endorsed the CSO statement which was presented to governments and multilateral organizations during the formal meetings.

5. Following Accra, the Better Aid Platform is continuing to expand its work among growing numbers of CSOs interested in organizing and engaging with reforming international cooperation for development effectiveness. A work plan was agreed in

¹¹ The current expression of this policy state is "Better Aid: A Civil Society Position Paper for the 2008 Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness" (www.betteraid.org, August 2008). A revised policy position paper expressing a post-Accra High Level Forum CSO policy agenda will be finalized in July 2009.

February 2009 which will serve to improve the accountability of and communications between the Platform and its post-Accra coordinating body, as well as mobilize funding to support the Platform's work.

C. The Better Aid Coordinating Group

6. The Better Aid Platform will gather CSOs internationally who share the basic principles and focus for reforming aid architecture in order to realize the rights of people affected by poverty and injustice as set out in the Platform's policy statement. In recognition of its post-Accra mandate, the group previously known as the ISG will be renamed the "Better Aid Coordinating Group" (Better Aid CG) for the Better Aid Platform.

D. Focus for the Better Aid Coordinating Group

7. Focus on multilateral and international engagement: The agreed focus for the Better Aid CG is to increase *multilateral and international* CSO opportunities to deepen reforms for development and aid effectiveness. The Better Aid CG will give priority to engagement with donor members of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP EFF), the partner country contact group at the Working Party, sub-groups and work streams associated with the WP EFF, the organization of the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011, relevant donor discussions at the OECD Development Assistance Committee, and links with CSOs and others working more directly in the UN system and with the UN Development Cooperation Forum. This focus emphasizes international norm setting for development effectiveness (derived from international human rights standards), monitoring of existing AAA/Paris Declaration commitments, and the presentation of proposals to deepen aid architecture reform efforts.

8. Draw on analysis and proposals from independently organized sectoral, regional and country level engagements by CSOs: The international focus of the Better Aid Coordinating Group precludes direct organization or coordination of independent CSO or multi-stakeholder processes for monitoring implementation of the AAA and the Paris Declaration at the country or sector levels. The Better Aid CG will draw on this work to follow progress in implementing the AAA and the Paris Declaration. The legitimacy of the Better Aid CG's international work comes from diverse CSO connections with development cooperation on the ground, mostly represented within the Better Aid Platform. The Better Aid CG will have direct representation of sectoral, national, and regional coordinating CSOs.

9. Organize outreach and consultations to the Better Aid Platform members and multi-stakeholder fora: The Better Aid CG will ensure, through its communication policy and through broad consultation initiatives, contributions and feedback on its main positions and policies. The Group will disseminate existing research by members and others through its communication and knowledge management tools (using the www.betteraid.org web site, listserves, social networks, progress reports, and newsletters). When needed, the Better Aid CG may also organize at the regional level workshops to develop and disseminate the Better Aid policy position paper to be presented in 2009 to ensure that it is representative of and informed by the actual practice and experience of development and aid effectiveness.

10. Coordinate systematically with the Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness: The Open Forum is an initiative launched and led by CSOs arising from pre-Accra consultations with CSOs, donors and governments, which raised issues of CSO effectiveness. The Open Forum has a distinct mandate, focus and process from the Better Aid CG. The Open Forum will address principles for CSO development effectiveness, guidance in implementing these principles in the diversity of CSO development roles and relationships, and accountability mechanisms to enable monitoring of the principles and guidelines. It is facilitated by a 25 person CSO representative Global Facilitating Group (GFG) that is distinct and independent of the Better Aid CG.

11. Both the GFG and the Better Aid CG recognize the need for close cooperation, not only in practical issues of country, regional and global CSO consultations over the next three years, but also in the responsibility of the Better Aid CG to monitor and report on the implementation of paragraph 20 of the AAA, which acknowledges the Open Forum process. Also the two agendas may converge during the three-year GFG work plan as it tackles issues of donor and government enabling environments for CSO development effectiveness. CSO cross-membership and deliberate communication will permit systematic coordination between the Better Aid CG and the GFG work-streams, including the periodic reporting by the Better Aid CG on progress being made on paragraph 20 to the Working Party and other interested multilateral stakeholder bodies.

E. Better Aid Coordinating Group Roles

12. The newly constituted Better Aid CG will be responsible for:

- a) Monitoring and facilitating CSO recommendations on key issues arising from the implementation of donor/government commitments in the AAA and the Paris Declaration as well as CSO proposals to deepen aid reform at the 4th HLF in 2011.
- b) Drawing analysis and proposals from sectoral, country and regional CSO / multi-stakeholder consultations on the implementation of the AAA and the Paris Declaration, including monitoring existing case study-based CSO research on donor aid and development effectiveness and identifying gaps.
- c) Develop and promote CSO policy proposals for the promotion of development effectiveness in aid in the implementation of the PD and AAA and towards a new agreement focusing on development effectiveness and a new aid architecture at the HLF IV.
- d. Coordinating the relationship between the CSO Better Aid Platform and multilateral forums (such as the UN Development Cooperation Forum) for donor/government commitments to aid and development effectiveness, and in particular enabling CSO membership and participation in the newly constituted Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.
- e) Organizing contributions and feedback from members of the Better Aid Platform, the wider CSO community and other stakeholders in order to ensure the largest possible inclusiveness for its policy and advocacy work.

13. The Better Aid CG will give practical expression to these roles in the strategic objectives and activities outline in its agreed workplan. Funds will be sought to

support the overall workplan of the Better Aid CG, including a Secretariat for administrative coordination and a communication strategy for the Better Aid Platform. Funds will be managed through an agreed member who will assume the role of “fiscal agent” for the Better Aid CG.

F. Structuring the work of the Better Aid Coordinating Group

14. Five working groups have been agreed. Members of the Better Aid CG will provide support to at least one of the following

- a) Policy Development;
- b) Communications, Media, Information and Translation;
- c) Research Mapping and Synthesis of outcomes of country/sectoral consultations;
- d) Fundraising and Budget Oversight; and
- e) Outreach engagement among CSOs on the post-Accra agenda.

15. While individual members of these working groups will undertake initiatives in their respective areas based on recommendations from and leadership by the Better Aid CG, the Better Aid CG will remain the only decision making body to resolve arising issues and define policy messaging for the overall group.

G. Criteria for Better Aid Coordinating Group Membership

16. The Better Aid Coordinating Group will be a facilitator of an open, flexible and inclusive Platform. It will be representative of CSOs interested in aid and development effectiveness issues, as drawn from the Better Aid Platform. Membership in the Better Aid CG implies an explicit commitment to contribute an equitable share to carrying out the work plan of the Better Aid CG. To ensure these tasks are achieved, maximum total membership of the Better Aid CG should not exceed 35, and will depend on access to funding to enable its meetings. Membership of Better Aid CG will be evaluated on an annual basis in terms of active participation and balance allowing for new qualified members who wish to come in.

17. In determining its membership, the Better Aid CG will take into account the following desirable criteria:

- a) Identification with the principles and approaches of the global Better Aid Platform for reform of aid and development effectiveness.
- c) Agreement to actively support at least one Better Aid CG working group and give priority to attending the meetings of the Better Aid CG (approximately 2 per year). Members must also consider requests to join relevant work streams of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.
- d) Reflect geographic and regional balance, ensuring strong organizational representation of Southern voices that will make up at least 60% of the Better Aid CG members. These southern voices will be expressed through different types of CSO members, national platforms and networks, international NGOs and global CSOs.
- e) Provide for balance in terms of gender (minimum 50/50), the types of CSOs affected by or concerned with aid and development effectiveness issues (programming NGOs, policy & research NGOs, platforms, constituency CSOs, social

movement etc.), the different sectors where worked is pursued (rural, environment, etc), the different constituencies represented (religious, labour, women etc.), and the particular experience or skills that are required to fulfill the work of the Better Aid CG. Organizations that have an *explicit* primary mandate for gender equality and women's rights will be no less than 5 members. At least 5 members will be membership-based grassroots organizations.

18. The Better Aid CG will have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of these criteria in responding to requests for membership. Prospective members will be asked to submit a written expression of their interest including a presentation of their organization and the contributions that they can bring to the mandate of the Better Aid CG (as per the areas set out in the Terms of Reference).

H. Co-Chairs of the Better Aid Coordinating Group

19. On an annual basis, the Better Aid CG will nominate and agree upon two co-chairpersons, taking account a balanced and positive gender and south-north approach, who may serve more than one term if endorsed by the other members. Co-chairs will be responsible for:

- a) Internal and external day-to-day liaison on behalf of the Better Aid CG,
- b) Act as spokespersons for the Better Aid CG (which can also be delegated),
- c) Preparation of the meetings of the Better Aid CG (with members assuming roles in facilitation and chairing the meetings), and
- d) Coordination of resource mobilization and management, with the assistance of a Better Aid CG Secretariat.