



**Regional Consultation on
"Trade Union Principles on Development Effectiveness"
Asuncion, 12-14 September 2010**

REPORT

Background: Introduction on the "Principles" and the Open Forum

Opening and introduction of participants: Introduction on the work of the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (*TUDCN*) and the policy discussion on trade union development effectiveness.

Participants list (ANNEX 1)

International civil society networks - *Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness and Better Aid: background to the creation of the two networks*

- From the Paris Declaration to the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)
- Better Aid: policy process, reviewing and monitoring the Paris Declaration and the implementation of the AAA with governments
- Open Forum: internal CSO process
- Presentation of document on Principles

Objectives

The *principles* refer to and articulate the values and vision of trade union development partnerships, as well as the cooperation and coordination parameters. Their focus is therefore on the INTERNAL DIMENSION of trade union development cooperation effectiveness.

The consultation process in the three regions are primarily aimed at raising awareness among trade union organisations in the South regarding the content of the principles and eliciting their perceptions and opinions with a view to gathering additional inputs to finalise their formulation. Indeed, the principles will eventually need to be accompanied by set of *operational guidelines*, designed to identify possible tools and mechanisms facilitating the application of their full content.

These regional consultations can also, therefore, serve as a means of expanding the information.

The consultations are aimed at:

- 1) discussing and analysing the content of the Principles from the perspective of Southern organisations;
- 2) strengthening common approaches/visions regarding development cooperation criteria among trade union organisations (partnership/coordination...);
- 3) supporting effectiveness at national, regional and global level;
- 4) gathering contributions for the drawing up of operational guidelines (putting the principles into practice and monitoring our working methods);
- 5) contributing to the overall consultation process of the Open Forum, based on the experience of the trade union movement.

See document on the Principles (ANNEX 2)

Methodology and Activities

The consultation took place in Asunción, Paraguay. The 26 participants came from 23 national trade union organisations from 16 Latin America countries. The consultation was organised by the ITUC's regional organisation TUCA (Trade Union Confederation for the Americas) in cooperation with the ITUC. The participants play specific roles within their organisation: heads of international relations, cooperation project managers, deputy general secretaries, finance secretaries, education secretaries.

The consultation was held on two subjects:

- 1) Consultation on the Principles and Operational Guidelines: the participants were divided into small working groups aimed at examining the content of the principles and formulating operational guidelines for the implementation of each principle; the outcomes were discussed in plenary.
- 2) Consultation on the Enabling Environment: in this case the participants were also split into four separate working groups and then reported back to the plenary.

Results

Consultation on the Principles and Operational Guidelines

The following are a summary of the outcomes of the four working groups

One general point on which all the participants agreed was the need to include the issue of dialogue and consultation in the discussion, as well as the issue of decent work, decent life, bearing in mind the need to promote and strengthen unity of action.

Democratic Ownership

A number of participants made the following remarks on the definition of the Principle and also proposed changes to the text:

- The experience and expertise of the recipient countries are not taken on board; the focus is only on the experience of the donor countries;
- The document does not make reference to South-South cooperation;
- The concept of self-reliance ("confianza") should be removed, as it does not take into consideration the real problems faced in the South;
- Trade union autonomy should be strengthened and NGOs should not be allowed to occupy the trade union space.

Alternative wording of the text:

Democratic ownership refers to *respect for and responsiveness to the organisational objectives of trade union partners, in accordance with their history, and the action aimed at securing decent work, reflecting the plans, choices and orientations of their affiliated members*, within the context of the mission of the international trade union movement.

This means that partner organisations, based on the challenges they face in their operating environment at country level *and at the level of regional integration*, define and determine their own needs within their democratic structures and elected leadership.

Donor organisations support the priorities of the ***trade unions***, *and accompany them in the design and effective implementation of development cooperation initiatives*, recognising and respecting the trade union partner's primary responsibility in these tasks. Democratic ownership in the trade union movement is a dynamic concept that takes account of local and global challenges facing trade unions as international actors. *The volatile socio-political and economic context requires trade union partners to be flexible, adaptable and responsive.*

> ***Operational Guidelines:***

- Comply with the Constitution and Standing Orders.
- Promote discussion on the organisation's priorities, based on the programmes approved.
- The donors must respect the needs the organisations' present and should not impose priorities.
- A large portion of the cooperation should be allocated to direct trade union action and organising involving the workers, union representatives and members.
- Encourage collaboration between national trade union centres and the regional organisation TUCA.

Partnership

> ***Operational Guidelines:***

- Cooperation should be based on a relationship of equals, which should not involve any form of annexation and subjugation;
- The principle of ethics regarding where the money comes from should be incorporated, as well as the ability to accept or refuse it;
- Coherence is needed between the structures, based on the general objectives;
- Establishment of permanent dialogues, to favour international support;

- The link between projects-financing must be linked to the institutional objectives at the different levels;
- Set up a global forum of donors and beneficiaries to discuss cooperation policy.

Autonomy

Remarks on the text:

Relations can be North-North and South-South. We would therefore suggest that the third paragraph on Autonomy should say: "*within the framework of international trade union relations*".

Recommendation to incorporate freedom of association within the concept of autonomy.

> ***Operational Guidelines:***

- Criteria regarding national realities and the application of the financing must be respected.
- Demarcate the scope of action in the cooperation of the trade union movement.
- The donors must pay heed to the trade union organisations' thematic and action priorities and not impose them.
- Strengthen projects linked to promoting freedom of association.

Transparency

Proposed changes to the text:

Trade unions define transparency as a commitment to high standards of openness and access to information, *helping to build the trust necessary between trade union partners*.

> ***Operational Guidelines:***

- A code of ethics needs to be drawn up for trade union organisations;
- Implementing actions to meet the objective is linked to autonomy;
- Implement good practices on the submission of accounts;
- Establish a specific methodology for the implementation, development, evaluation and execution of the project;
- Themes excluded by the trade union movement;
- Create a system of indicators to measure the impact of the projects specific to the trade union movement;
- Transparency should cover the following areas: financial, design, project execution, definition of the objectives and the selection of the beneficiaries;
- Transparency implies a systematic effort to publish the results;
- The nature of the cooperation projects should also give pre-eminence to the policy content and outcomes.

Accountability

Remarks on the text:

Also make reference to corruption.

Accountability has been given a monetary character and given that these contents are covered in the Principle of Transparency, we would suggest a new vision of the Principle of Accountability:

Accountability among trade union partners is based on the principle of solidarity and fraternity that has always guided the international trade union movement. Accountability must be observed on the basis of the objectives of the cooperation, its targets, the application and execution of the projects, the overall impact and the fundamental responsibility of reaffirming the exercise of human and labour rights.

> ***Operational Guidelines:***

- Set up permanent multidisciplinary teams (including sectoral coordination) for the project design, implementation, development, and to give strategic and political visibility to their content.
- Strengthen the Regional Coordinating Bodies: set up trade union networks at continental level.
- Generate the changes and impacts in accordance with the objectives set: build trade union centres' capacities to develop, implement and monitor projects.
- The ONAS (national partner organisations) should reach the objectives and meet the legal parameters set by the donors with regard to financial aspects and impact.

Coherence

Proposed changes to the text:

In the area of international cooperation, trade union organisations aim to achieve a maximum level of global coherence in the face of the variety and fragmentation of development cooperation initiatives.

There are several elements of coherence: policy coherence, meaning *policies approved at national, regional and global level*; strategic coherence, as contributing to the achievement of overall processes *that are supported by trade union partners at country level*; coordination coherence, *that avoids duplication and overlaps to make optimum use of resources.*

> ***Operational Guidelines:***

- Coherence is needed, first and foremost, with regard to the exchanges and the development of the national organisation's constitutional bodies (congress, committees, plenaries) from which the programmes to be developed should emerge.
- Ensure institutional and policy coherence with regard to the various donors, in the hierarchisation of the objectives and contents: promotion of dialogue and permanent consultations between all the actors - ITUC, TUCA, sub-regional coordinators, GUFs and national affiliates.
- Democratisation of information and creation of a projects database (to avoid overlap, fragmentation, with a plurality of projects on the same target groups).
- *Coherence inside the trade union organisations of Latin America with regard to the scope of their organisations, their resources, affiliates; tangible or non-tangible assets should not be concealed in order to receive funding.*

Inclusiveness and Equality

Proposed changes to the text:

Trade unions and solidarity support organisations commit to target, as part of their development cooperation programs, the most marginal ***and precarious*** working people. (We suggest removing the term "less represented")

Rephrase the term 'disabled workers' (trabajadores discapacitados), and clarify the term 'less represented' (peor representados).

'Workers **IN** the informal economy' (rather than OF the informal economy).

Include the following groups under this Principle:

- a) People with disabilities;
- b) People suffering from persecution of any kind;
- c) Domestic workers or those in any form of work where labour exploitation is invisible;
- d) Cooperation projects involving public sector workers are pushed into the background;
- e) With regard to the elderly, pensioned and retired people should be identified;

This principle should envisage including those groups that are under-represented in decision-making spaces, and projects should not be segmented in accordance with the characterisation of their deficit, as this leads to a segregation and weakening of these groups.

> ***Operational Guidelines:***

- The trade unions should promote projects that are comprehensive and do not lead to further segmentation by focusing on vulnerable groups.
- Prioritise and expand on trade union self-reform with a view to unionising unrepresented sectors (sex workers, migrant domestic workers, young and elderly workers, child labour, workers with HIV, workers with disabilities, workers facing racial discrimination and self-employed workers).
- The projects should ensure the involvement of vulnerable people in the decision-making structures of the trade union organisations themselves, as well as in forums for exchange and debate. Projects that create specific atomised spaces should not be managed.
- Waging of organising campaigns targeting sub-contracted workers in order to protect their labour rights.
- Press for the implementation of the eight ILO Core Conventions.

Sustainability

Proposed changes to the text:

Trade unions understand sustainability as the long-term viability of project outcomes, as well as the strengthening of cooperating *and beneficiary* trade union organisations.

Sustainability comprises self-reliance, *internalisation* of democratic values, *trade union autonomy and* autonomy in political and economic terms...

Democratic sustainability: "Equally important is the organisation's ability to *incorporate* the views of minorities..."

Political sustainability is manifested through the organisations' ability to develop its own political strategies, which can serve to *exert greater influence on public policies, socio-productive actors and society as a whole*.

Financial sustainability: replace the term recipient with *target*.

> ***Operational Guidelines:***

- It is essential that the target organisations should not focus all their results exclusively on areas where there is cooperation. They should, rather, articulate the dimensions where they target the organisation's strengths prior to the cooperation initiatives underway.
- The target organisations' administrative resources should match the infrastructure needed to implement the project. This factor should therefore be taken into consideration by the donor.
- Self-reform.
- Building trade union unity.
- Impact generation.
- Self-financing ability.

Consultation on the Enabling Environment for CSOs

The AAA recognises that CSOs play a specific role in development cooperation and also recognise their autonomy. How can this be translated into practice?

An enabling environment is a set of interrelated conditions — such as legal, bureaucratic, fiscal, informational, political, and cultural — that impact on the capacity of development actors to engage in development processes in a sustained and effective manner.

The participants were split into working groups to examine three issues:

- 1) Recognition of CSOs/trade unions: legal and political factors for trade unions
- 2) Promoting the voice of CSOs: access and space to participate in decision making/consultation processes at national and regional level
- 3) Building CSO/trade union capacity: financing mechanisms

Group 1

EXAMINE HOW TO ACHIEVE FULL RECOGNITION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS FROM A POLITICAL AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

The most important thing is to achieve the workers' recognition and this will then open the door to having a seat at the same table as governmental and non-governmental organisations, where we can put forward our proposals. RECOGNITION IS A PRODUCT OF OUR REPRESENTATIVENESS.

NGOs that receive funding from international cooperation must adhere to the plans and programmes of the trade union movement when developing tasks related to them.

Trade union organisations will prioritise relations with those organisations with closer links to their work, such as: agrarian organisations, cooperatives (that abide by the true principles of cooperatives), indigenous groups and others that work towards improvements for the majority of people in society.

HOW TO PROMOTE THE VOICE OF TRADE UNIONS IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, WITH A VIEW TO INFLUENCING POLICY

In legal terms, there are no major problems at national and regional level, as most of the States have ratified and developed ILO Conventions 87 and 98. The problem lies at informal level (informal economy, self-employed workers, etc.), with workers without a contract with rights, i.e. subcontracted workers, which makes it difficult to organise them.

Trade unions need to broaden their scope of action and work with the mass media to speak openly to citizens, emphasising the importance of social dialogue for achieving social peace. More trade union coordination spaces are needed to unite the movement's voice, to take it to other, broader spaces. These processes should be developed at regional and global level.

HOW TO STRENGTHEN TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION CAPACITIES (e.g. FUNDING MECHANISMS)

Secure resources from national budgets for the organisations' work, as part of society, whilst continuing to insist that organisations should finance themselves with their own resources derived from their affiliates.

Group 2

EXAMINE HOW TO ACHIEVE RECOGNITION FOR TRADE UNIONS

Legal factors:

1. Secure the full fundamental rights of the ILO, secure the ratification of these Conventions at national level.
2. Promote and strengthen social dialogue at national level, to increase the participation of trade union organisations in the area of cooperation.
3. Press for the establishment of social and economic councils with a view to accessing and taking part in decision making and the design of development plans at the various levels, to secure the recognition of international donors.
4. Strengthen the legal mechanisms for collective bargaining at sectoral and territorial level.
5. Create bilateral commissions providing access to both national and international funding.

Political factors:

1. Organisations must have the capacities:
to convene, mobilise, negotiate, provide representative leadership and gain societal recognition.
2. Establish partnership policies with strategic sectors and programmatic approaches.
3. Develop methods of promoting equal conditions for trade union organisations when it comes to taking part in cooperation, and develop a plus that the donors should respect when taking decisions on the allocation of funding.
4. Press for full rights to discussion in the design of projects with international donors.

HOW TO PROMOTE THE VOICE OF TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS

1. Improve and strengthen the mechanisms for trade union participation in the International Labour Organisation, to give them a greater presence in the United Nations system.
2. Develop mechanisms for democratic spaces.
3. Formulate joint strategies to gain access to cooperation spaces.
4. Consolidate the ITUC-TUCA cooperation network.

HOW TO BUILD THE CAPACITY OF TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS

1. Trade union organisations must create spaces for the formation of strategic alliances and programme partnerships with a view to developing joint objectives within the framework of the trade union agenda. To achieve this, the following is required:
 - Self-reform.
 - Training.
 - Coherence in terms of contents.

- Accountability.
- Visibility and
- Transparency

Group 3

RECOGNITION OF TRADE UNIONS' ROLE BY GOVERNMENTS AT REGIONAL LEVEL AND BY MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS

Political and legal factors:

- The national realities are diverse.
- In many instances, the legal framework does not correlate with political recognition. There are blatant violations of national and international law.
- We analysed the role of the national councils of tripartite bodies. Their consultative character circumvents the role the trade union movement should play in political decision making processes.
- We examined the role of the regional consultative forums, and the same problem was identified.
- Strengthen the role of COSATE (Trade Union Technical Advisory Council) in the OAS.

HOW TO PROMOTE THE VOICE OF UNIONS IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

- The trade union movement needs to develop joint and united actions for the participation of trade unions in the United Nations system.
- Capacity to develop the requirements and the promotion of labour rights on the trade union agenda.
- Create strategic alliances with the international trade union movement, to strengthen the role and prominence of workers in international arenas.
- Strengthen the global actions organised by the ITUC, such as World Day for Decent Work, to give greater visibility to the strength of global trade unionism.

TRADE UNIONISM AND DEVELOPMENT

- Promote training and education among trade union leaders, representatives and members.

Group 4

RECOGNITION OF THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

Political and legal factors:

- Public policies
- All cooperation involving public resources is part of public policy, and is therefore of interest to trade unions.
- As a result, trade unions need to position themselves with regard to public, national, multilateral and regional cooperation in general.

RECOGNITION OF TRADE UNIONS' VOICE IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES REGARDING DEVELOPMENT AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

- Take advantage of the spaces already available to make the voice of workers heard regarding global cooperation, to broaden its reach and effectiveness, such as the ILO, OAS (Cosate), UN, meetings with multilateral institutions, European Union, Mercosur, APEC, SICA (Central American Integration System), and in other bodies where there is no space.

HOW TO IMPROVE TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION CAPACITY

- Training
- Management
- Dissemination
- Information
- General development plans

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