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Structured Dialogue on the involvement of Civil Society and Local Authorities in EC cooperation

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This document is a revised version of the discussion note sent to stakeholders in December 2009. It has been elaborated in response of stakeholders feedbacks received during the last two months[1]. Major changes have been introduced since then, especially in relation to the timeframe and proposed activities.

The first two parts recall the objectives of the structured dialogue as well as the stakeholders involved in this process. The following sections give more specific information on the set-up of the process, themes of working groups and methodology for the involvement of Southern stakeholders.

1. RECALL OF THE OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE RENEWED STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

Objectives

In line with the new context, the structured dialogue -involving representatives from Civil Society Organisations (CSO)[2] and Local and Regional authorities (LRA), the European commission (EC), Members states (MS) and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)- **aims at increasing the effectiveness of stakeholders involved in development cooperation, taking into account the principle of the Accra Agenda for Action, by**:

1. **Building consensus** on the main issues to be addressed concerning the role of CSOs & LRAs in development cooperation and,

2. **Finding ways** to improve the effectiveness of CSO & LRA involvement in EC cooperation, to advance and strengthen partnerships and **adapt EC strategies and modalities accordingly**.

More specifically, the dialogue process shall seek to:

(i) Reach a **mutual understanding** of the main challenges related to CSO & LRA involvement in EC cooperation.

(ii) Better **define the roles and added-value of various categories of CSO & LRA in cooperation**: whether from EU or partner's countries, and also by sector: NGOs,

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[1] This new version aims especially at incorporating some inputs CSO/LA platforms have expressed during the 15th of January meeting

[2] In this document, the term Civil Society Organisation is synonym for Non-State Actor (using the definition as used in the Development Cooperation Instrument regulation which (unlike the Cotonou Agreement) excludes profit making organisations.

trade unions, political foundations, cooperatives, Human Rights and Peace-building organizations, environmental organizations etc.

(iii) Better characterize the division of labour between stakeholders (State & Non-States actors) and **complementarity in approaches and programmes** to reach more sustainable CSO & LA actions.

(iv) Identify the role of European stakeholders (EC, MS but also European CSO) to promote an **enabling environment for CSOs and LRAs** at the country level.

(v) Identify possible ways to **adapt EC aid delivery mechanisms** towards a more strategic use of the CSO & LA channel (support to and through CSOs and LRAs)
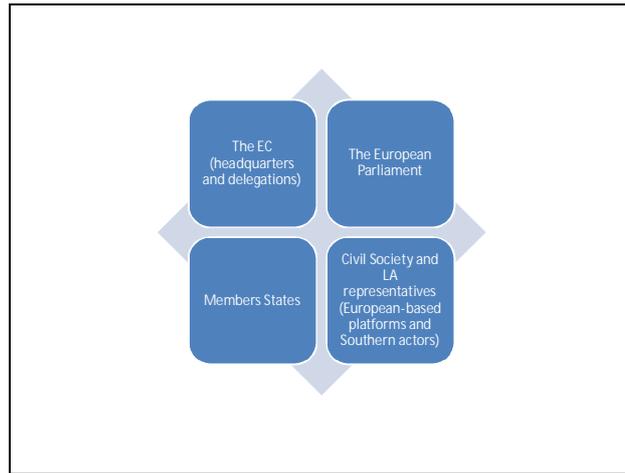

Expected results

In terms of expected results, the dialogue process – **which is not conceived as a negotiation process but rather as a confidence and consensus-building mechanism**-shall help to:

(i) Identify and reach consensus on the **main challenges** with regards to CSO & LRA involvement in EC cooperation.

(ii) Elaborate a **shared definition** of the specific role, responsibilities, added value of various categories of CSO & LRA in EC cooperation from programming to evaluation.

(iii) At the country level, explore **the respective role of the various stakeholders** (State & CSOs & LRA) involved in development efforts.

(iv) Explore the potential for **partnership** between EU CSOs and local CSO.

(v) At the country level, enhance the **complementarity** between the EC programmes supporting CSO & LRA (both geographic & thematic).

(vi) Concretize **recommendations** on maximising the potential and effectiveness of the call for proposals system and improving the sustainability of projects.

(vii) Identify **alternative aid mechanism(s)** to allow a more strategic involvement of CSOs and LAs through longer-term partnerships

(viii) Explore options to improve future EC initiatives in areas like **Development Education & Awareness Raising, support to local & regional authorities and Democracy & Human Rights.**

2. ACTORS INVOLVED – THE "QUADRILOGUE"

Four categories of actors are involved in the process, as shown in the illustration below, forming what is going to be called, as from here, the Quadrilogue:

2.1. European Commission:

- <u>European Commission Headquarters:</u> The structured dialogue is a genuine EC process (DEV/RELEX/EuropeAid). It will be coordinated by the Commission services with EuropeAid acting as secretariat at the level of the Directorate F (Unit F1).

- <u>EU Delegations (EUD):</u> Involvement of EU Delegations is strongly needed as they are the main actor responsible for engaging with local stakeholders at the country level. At this stage, it has been envisaged to focus consultations on Africa, Latin America & Asia for the structured dialogue. Others regions, such as Southern Neighbourhood, are considered for specific activities, such as the supporting initiative dealing with Democracy and Human Rights. In total, **around 30 / 35 Delegations** will be involved in the dialogue process, and additional **17** Delegations targeted in the supporting initiative on Democracy and Human Rights.

2.2. European Parliament:

- The DEVE Committee (in particular the Working Group D chaired by MEP Charles Goerens) will lead the European Parliament participation in the process. All MEP from others Committees will be encouraged to attend.

2.3. Member States:

- It is expected that representatives of Ministries and national development agencies will participate in their capacity of members of the DCI and EIDHR Committees or as designed focal point to follow the entire process.

2.4. CSOs & LRAs:

- European-based civil society & LA networks: in total 8 CSO&LRA platforms have already been identified and involved in the preparations of the Quadrilogue.[3]

- Southern CSOs & LRAs: With the support of EU Delegations & technical assistance, together with European-based and Southern CSO and LRA platforms (including their constituencies), local CSO & LRAs will be selected according to certain selection criteria that will be commonly refined and agreed upon (please refer to point 8).

- Other actors: It can be envisaged to invite other (traditional and emerging) actors.

2.5 Technical Assistance (TA):

A team of 4 independent experts has been contracted to facilitate the entire process.

3. SET-UP OF THE PROCESS: HOW IS THE QUADRILOGUE ORGANISED?

3.1. Timeframe:

The structured dialogue **will officially start end March 2010** (though the preparatory phase is underway since July 2009).

Based on the outputs and outcomes of the 2010 exercise & the evolution of the EU institutional context (following the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty), **the process shall continue in 2011 with a Final Conference and related events** (to be discussed during the process) which will wrap-up the out-comes of the whole process (likely to happen in Spring 2011, under Hungarian Presidency).

3.2. Process in practice:

It will be a global, **multi-level process,** articulated around **live events and on-line discussions**.

The process is composed of:

      i. Online tools

     ii. 4 Meetings in Brussels: 1 preparatory plus 3 substantive sessions.

    iii. 3 Regional seminars (1 per region: Africa - Mali; Latin America and Asia).

    iv. 3 supporting initiatives

     v. 3 thematic working groups in every meeting (in Brussels & regional seminars)

In detail:

(i) **Continuous on-line discussions**: continuous exchange of information will be possible through the use of an online tool, the *Civil Society Helpdesk (CISOCH)* currently developed by EuropeAid. It includes a **blog**, which will be an important tool to exchange ideas, experiences and best practices as well as to inform stakeholders, e.g. on intermediary outcomes of the discussions. Generally speaking, it is set up to foster communication amongst the actors involved.

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[3] In alphabetical order: CONCORD, CoopsEurope, ENoP, Green10, HRDN, ITUC, Platforma, Red Cross.

(ii) **Working group sessions in Brussels**. They will be the opportunity to discuss the **contents** of the WGs from the European perspective of the stakeholders involved, as well as the way the **process** evolves in order to keep it as inclusive, open and transparent as possible.

à Please note that, compared to the previous version of the discussion note (December 2009) an extra meeting in Brussels has been foreseen, in order to allow for a discussion of the process in itself. In fact, the preparatory session of March will be the occasion to formally launch the process, to present background documents that will be the basis for discussion, but also to consolidate consensus on the process itself.

They will last 1 day each.

(iii) **Three Regional Seminars**. Deemed as the core of the process, they will provide an opportunity to integrate Southern perspectives in the debate, thus allowing for a participatory bottom-up process in which Southern actors are constructively involved during the whole process. In addition, they will also be an opportunity to foster North-South NSA/LRAs partnership, by bringing European and Southern actors together.

à Please note that, compared to the previously submitted version of the discussion note (December 2009) an extra seminar has been foreseen in Asia.

They will last 4 days each: 1st day of EC training for EU delegations; **2nd & 3rd day for the structured dialogue**; 4th day for the Local authorities supporting initiative (see below (iv)).

(iv) **Three supporting initiatives:** to target specific issues, namely (i) Development Education activities in Europe, (ii) Local authorities and (iii) Human Rights & Democratisation. In terms of activities, these initiatives are complementary to the working groups. Even though they are part of the overall process, they are less focussed on dialogue in itself but rather based on **learning experiences activities** such as the launching of a capitalization study, the organization of training sessions, etc. **Proper links will be built to ensure that outputs of these supporting initiatives will illustrate discussions during working groups.**

(i) The **Development Education** sector will be tackled through a study of the main actors, strategies and initiatives in the field of DEAR in the 27 EU Member States. Based on the findings of this research and following consultations with the internal and external stakeholders, the study will define possible options for improving the future EC approach and initiatives in the area of DEAR. **Users of the outputs** of this study will be the different European actors active in the field of DEAR (EU Member States, civil society organisations, other major actors such as the Council of Europe, European Commission services involved in the management of objective II of the NSA/LA programme…). The results of the study will be made public and discussed with the representatives of the MS and with all concerned stakeholders (Timeframe: March/September 2010).

(ii) The supporting initiative "**local authorities as actors for development**" will take the form of a specific day (following the two days of Structured Dialogue) during the 3 planned regional seminars. This activity, while linked to the Dialogue and aiming to feed this process, has a different nature and scope, since it aims at experience-sharing and analysis of real issues at stake under the competences of local authorities, from decision-making to implementation. Taking in consideration the specificities of those actors in the development scope, this initiative will be adapted to their characteristics, offering a concrete content-based discussion mostly focused on the technical aspects of

the development procedures. The specificity of Local Authorities as development actors will be highlighted, while providing with a space of exchange of concrete experiences and best practices.

(iii) **Democratization & Human Rights initiative** will seek to:

1. Map the roles, added-value and means of mutually supporting involvement of various categories of CSOs in democratization and human rights promotion

2. Achieve better complementarity in EU approaches and programmes related to D & HR

3. Identify the role of European stakeholders (EC, Member-States but also European CSOs to promote an enabling environment for civil society at the country level, and

4. Exchange experiences on best practices in the implementation of democracy and human rights programmes.

The initiative is envisaged to take place in <u>Amman, Jordan, on 28. June – 2. July, 2010</u>, with around 120 participants from EU Delegations and Headquarters, European and local CSOs, Member States, the European Parliament and other donors.

(v) The three themes to be addressed throughout the process are: (1) Role of CSO & LRA in external cooperation from programming to evaluation; (2) Complementarity and coherence within the AAA; (3) EC aid delivery mechanisms. **Please see part 4.**

3.3. The Role of Technical Assistance:

To support all stakeholders involved in the structured dialogue, the EC has contracted a team of independent experts. Their main duties will be to:

(i) <u>Feed the process</u>: Prepare the ground for the setting up of the structured dialogue through the **identification, analysis and compilation of relevant material** related to civil society and local authorities' involvement in EC cooperation. The team will elaborate a **background document** containing (i) compilation & synthesis of relevant material, (ii) 3 analysis papers for WG & (iii) a glossary. This document will be sent to all stakeholders well in advance to ensure their accurate preparation.

(ii) <u>Facilitate the process</u>: Ensure a **continuous and smooth multi-stakeholders dialogue process** through the reporting and facilitation of WG sessions in Brussels and abroad & management of the online tool. After each meeting: reports and feedback will be produced, will be put online (open for online discussion) & will constitute background reading for the following meeting.

(iii) <u>Ensure southern stakeholders' participation</u>: Experts will participate in the **identification of southern civil society & local authorities' representatives** to be involved in the process, ensure their accurate preparation (though the online tool) and participation in the 3 regional seminars and final conference.

(iv) <u>Finalize the process</u>: Based on the results of the working groups' sessions (Brussels & regional seminars), the team will prepare the ground for the setting up of the **final conference** (2011), ensure reporting and facilitation during the event & support the

formulation of recommendations to be integrated in the final report. Then, the entire process will be analysed and assessed by all involved stakeholders in order to ensure an accurate follow-up in the forthcoming years.

4. THEMES TO BE DISCUSSED DURING EVENTS

Within the global framework of the Aid Effectiveness agenda[4], it is envisaged that discussions are organised in 3 Working Groups both in Brussels and in Regional Seminars:

WORKING GROUP 1	WORKING GROUP 2	WORKING GROUP 3
Policy issues		**Operational issues**
Role of CSO&LA in external cooperation from programming to evaluation	**Complementarity and coherence within the AAA**	**EC aid delivery mechanisms**
It brings together previous WG 1&2 (Emerging actors)	Previous WG3	Previous WG4
On the roles of the actors: -The **added value** of the different families of actors (trade unions, political foundations, development NGOs, human rights organisations, cooperative sector, local authorities) in external cooperation. -The **value of a multi-stakeholder approach and** ways to foster cooperation among actors. - Emerging actors and related roles and expectations. - **Role of CSO as both implementation** (service providers v. actors in their own right) & **governance partners** (advocacy and watchdogs'	*On the* Right of initiative: -How to frame the participation of CSOs and LA in the aid/development effectiveness agenda **with their right of initiative?** *On complementarity between European and Southern actors:* - Specific role of European v. local stakeholders. How to avoid competition between Northern and Southern actors? - Changing role of European NGOs *Division of labour between EC and Member*	*On new aid modalities in support to & though CS&LA:* - Recent reforms of Member-States funding of CSOs and LAs in line with the Aid Effectiveness Agenda (i.e. core funding, pool funding mechanisms, etc) -What pilot actions are currently being implemented (any results so far)? - What long-term approach towards representative networks? How to switch from a project-based approach to an "actor-based" approach? *On EC procedures: call for proposals*

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[4] Especially the issues related to the work of the Cluster A of the Working party on Aid Effectiveness: http://www.oecd.org/document/35/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_43382307_1_1_1_1,00.html

role). Which actors to do what? - Role of local stakeholders in EC development strategies to promote **a local and regional approach to improve local and multilevel governance:** how to design a comprehensive approach for engagement? ***On the consultation & participation:*** - EU (EC + Member-States) to facilitate an **enabling environment** for local civil society organizations and local governments at the country level. What is the legal space and the mechanism for CSOs and local governments to engage in dialogue? Which role for European CSOs & LRA in supporting local actors? -At the country level, how to organise genuine consultations of local stakeholders? What consultation strategies & incentives for Delegations? - At the country level, how to elaborate accurate strategies for CSO&LRA involvement in different sectors of cooperation? On the knowledge of actors: Discussion on the methodology to launch a mapping of civil society.	***states*** -Analysis of current mechanisms and explore ways to foster coordination efforts ***On the complementarity among EC instruments & within EC development external cooperation*** - Complementarity between EC thematic & geographic programmes in support to CSO&LRA - Complementarity between EC instruments in support to CSO&LRA and other EC programmes and policies (e.g. governance, local development, democratisation & HR, etc) - Is there a need for a comprehensive EC strategy to engage with CSOs & LRA at country level? ***On new aid modalities*** - What role for CSOs & LRA in the implementation of new aid modalities (namely budget support, sectoral support, etc)	-How to adapt **call for proposal procedures**, especially local calls, to enable the EC to better reach local stakeholders and strengthen sustainability? -How to make the call for proposals system more effective? - How, where (and when appropriate) to shift from a focus on calls for proposals to a more strategic, **partnership-oriented & sustainable approach**? ***On EC procedures: a better targeting*** -How to simplify procedures to facilitate access to funds for small & local organisations? -How to **improve EC instruments & programmes to make a better use of the specificities and added value of this large set of actors**, and have them complement the local development strategies of such actors? (For instance: adaptation of calls for proposals to actors' segmentation, how to deal with small organisations, global/local calls for proposals etc)?

Common issues to be addressed in all 3 Working Groups
Identification of **pilot actions** and **good practices** and ways to scale them up.
Additional themes to be addressed in European working sessions
- In Europe, how to engage with CSO&LA platforms in a more structured way? - How to enhance and encourage the contribution of CSO and LRA actors from new EU member states in EC external cooperation? - How to ensure a better information-sharing between the EC and representative platforms? - How can Northern CSOs and LRAs support the participation, capacity-building and ownership of Southern actors?

5. SET-UP OF THE MEETINGS

March 2010	April 2010	June 2010	July 2010	September 2010	October 2010	November 2010	2011
European working session 1	**European Working Session 2**	**Regional seminar 1 – Africa**	**European working session 3**	**Regional seminar 2 – Latin America**	**European working session 4**	**Regional seminar 3 - Asia**	**Final Conference and related activities**
23 March	**27 April**	**1-4 June**	**13 July**	**TBC**	**Between 5 and 8 October (tbc)**	**TBC**	**Spring 2011**
Official launch of the Quadrilogue	**Discussions on the WG contents**	See proposed structure here-after	**Discussions on the WG contents**	See proposed structure here-after	**Discussions on the WG contents**	See proposed structure here-after	
Participants: • EC (headquarters) • MEP • MS • European CSO & LA Platforms	Participants (max 20 participants in each WG): • EC (headquarters) • MEP • MS • European CSO & LA Platforms	Participants (around 100): • Africa-based CSO&LA representatives • EU delegations • Representation of participants to the European working sessions (EC HQ, European CSO &LA Platforms, MEP, MS)	Participants (max 20 participants in each WG): • EC (headquarters) • MEP • MS • European CSO & LA Platforms	Participants(around 100): • Latin America-based CSO&LA representatives • EU delegations • Representation of participants to the European working sessions (EC HQ, European CSO &LA Platforms, MEP, MS)	Participants (max 20 participants in each WG): • EC (headquarters) • MEP • MS • European CSO & LA Platforms	Participants (around 100): • Asia-based CSO&LA representatives • EU delegations • Representation of participants to the European working sessions (EC HQ, European CSO &LA Platforms, MEP, MS)	
On-line tool							

6. ORGANISATIONS OF THE MEETING IN BRUSSELS

Four sessions:				
1 launching activity + 3 one-day events in which the 3 WGs discuss their topics in parallel				

	Official launch	**Sessions 1, 2 and 3 (with 3 parallel working groups)**		
9.30-13.00 h	Official launch of the Quadrilogue Presentation of the process	**Working group 1** Presentation of synthesis paper + on-line discussions + feedback from regional seminars (if available) Debate	**Working Group 2** Presentation of synthesis paper + on-line discussions + feedback from regional seminars (if available) Debate	**Working Group 3** Presentation of synthesis paper + on-line discussions + feedback from regional seminars (if available) Debate
15.00 h – 17.00h	Presentation of the background document	Conclusions of WG 1, 2 3	Conclusions of WG 1, 2,3	Conclusions of WG1,2,3
17.00 – 18.00 h	Presentation of the on-line tool Open debate	Conclusions and follow-up of the process and preparations for the Regional seminars		

7. ORGANISATIONS OF THE REGIONAL SEMINARS

Day 1	**Day 2**				**Day 3**				**Day 4**	
Preparatory day: EC internal training **and arrival of participants**	**Structured dialogue**				**Structured dialogue**				**Supporting Initiative: Local authorities extra day (LA and representation of CS)**	
EC internal training sessions (headquarters & delegations)	Opening session: presentation of Working papers				**WG 3.A**	**WG 3.B**	**WG 3.C**	**WG 3.D**	Welcome and plenary session	
	WG 1.A	**WG 1.B**	**WG 2.A**	**WG 2.B**					WG1	WG2
					Conclusions of the 3 WGs					
	Free Space: **Informal Dialogue for Stakeholders**				Closing session and next steps				Conclusions and working session	
					Closing dinner					

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8. METHODOLOGY TO IDENTIFY AND INVOLVE SOUTHERN CSO & LRA

The proposed methodology relies on a strategy of **active participation of the stakeholders**.

At the level of organizations that are to be invited to participate, a CSO & LRA profile should be defined with **clear selection criteria** that will be commonly agreed.

It is crucial to find the right balance between the following criteria:

- **Experience in managing or participating in EC projects** (i.e. knowledge of EC procedures, participating in a capacity building programme, etc)

- **Representativeness / involvement in a national or regional platform** which can facilitate information-sharing and, above all, capitalisation of experiences.

- A specific component of participants will have a **partnership relation with a European CSO, LRA,** etc.

Additionally, will be considerate as a valuable asset:

- **Belonging to an emerging category of actors**

- **Active role in governance processes at a local, national or regional level**

- CSOs prior experience in **local EC consultation processes**

- **Knowledge of the aid effectiveness agenda**, including involvement in the CSO-led multi-stakeholder processes such as the *Open Forum on CSO development effectiveness and Better Aid*.

N.B.: The previously referred criteria will also be combined with an attention to keeping a balance between the different sectors related to the fields of cooperation: governance, Human rights, gender, environment, democratisation and decentralisation processes, etc. **The final selection will have to ensure a diversity of actors present.**

The preparation phase of the seminar is of crucial importance for its success. This is a **shared responsibility** between EC, TA, EUDs and European based platforms.

Prior to each regional seminar, participants will receive a **background document** in order to get well prepared and to efficiently discuss its content with their constituencies and prepare case studies of good practices to share with the other participants.

They will follow the outcomes of each session via the online tool.