

Key messages Regional PFD Europe
Ghent, 15-16 January 2018

1. Participants agreed on the need to ensure that policies act as a catalyst to promote the SDGs. While Policy Coherence for Development remains a central part of the development debate, there was consensus on the need for more work.
2. Further improvements could be made in terms of: how coordination mechanisms are established and work in practice (both between ministries and different levels of government); the use of assessment tools and the areas that they cover (both remain limited); and the willingness to involve and learn from the input of multiple actors, from social partners to LAs, which have first-hand expertise on many SDG-related issues.
3. It is not possible to talk about the Enabling Environment (EE) without referring to the increasing restrictions to civic space around the world. Lack of workers' rights and collective bargaining; negative interference of the authorities and human rights abuses are some examples.
4. That context is conditioning the way and capacity to work of many development actors, as well as diminishing citizens' faith in government. This reinforces the need to strengthen local governments, and increase both their capacity and role in policy making, as well as their cooperation with CSOs in order to reverse this trend and ensure a human rights-based approach.
5. There is a need for comprehensive strategies that can tackle economic, social, demographic and environmental challenges, including further efforts in the localisation of the SDGs and decentralised cooperation. CSOs and LAs have a role to play in unleashing the potential of the urban poor and migrant populations to allow them to be participative and active in development. In addition to leaving no one behind, we must leave no place behind.
6. Several obstacles prevent growth in cities, such as: poor internal financial governance; lack of provision of services in general and access to land in particular; weak capacity of local government; and a lack of a systemic approach to improve gender relations. At local and municipal level, there is a need for continuous dialogue between the LAs and citizen's organisations to ensure support and buy-in from the local population to sustainable development policies.
7. Lack of peace and security or a lack of macroeconomic stability were some of the obstacles presented as preventing investment from flowing into countries emerging from crises. Current efforts to facilitate investments and engage with the private sector in a structured way could improve regulatory frameworks and the general business environment, at the same time ensuring compliance with international human rights, social and environmental conventions.

8. The private sector is not homogenous. Its contribution goes beyond growth and jobs, and can leverage additional resources for achieving development goals. To do this in a way that corresponds with development effectiveness principles, and encourages a people-centred approach, it requires the application of principles of due diligence: prevent, protect, provide, redress.
9. The rise of challenges such as fragility, inequality, climate change and forced/irregular migration have put pressure on development actors to develop solutions that can contribute to a gradual transformation of fragile settings. Building resilience is a long-term intervention; while the international community can support this process, it needs to be locally owned, bring together civil society, local leaders, and religious communities.