

**2017 Global Meeting of the Policy Forum on Development  
Brussels, 21-22-23 March 2017**

This is a summary of the fifth global meeting of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD) which took place in Brussels from 21 to 23 March 2017. The meeting mobilised more than 160 representatives from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and associations of Local Authorities (LAs), the private sector, Member States and representatives from EU Institutions.

**PFD update:** During this session members of the task team (TT) and the Commission (Antonio Fernandez de Velasco, Civil Society and Local Authorities Unit, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), European Commission presented an update on the activities of the PFD, including the main recommendations of the PFD review. The Terms of Reference (ToR) and TT membership were also presented to the audience along with the 2016 and 2017 milestones and thoughts on future communications. Additionally, the outputs and potential use of PFD research on national strategies for SDG implementation in Ghana, Indonesia, the Netherlands and Peru were shared.



**EU Development Policy and Programming update: The Commission** (Rosario Bento Pais, Head



of Unit, Civil Society and Local Authorities, DEVCO), presented recent developments in EU Development Policy and Programming, focusing on the new Consensus for Development and the Mid-Term Review of the EU external financial instruments. Based on the presentation, PFD members shared several comments and concerns, notably on how to support an **enabling environment** for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at local, national, regional, and global levels. Regarding **policy coherence**, especially concerning trade and investment policies, PFD members shared their concerns on how current practices could widen inequalities, and on the role of the **private sector** in the development sphere. While there is a need for a regulatory framework to ensure accountability, the private sector needs to be on board, given their role in employment creation, as well as global challenges ahead and the lack of public funding to solve them. The audience also asked how to enhance cooperation among LAs as well as their input to EC policy making, to which the EC reaffirmed its commitment to dialogue with governments, with networks of CSOs, and with LAs, recognizing that more collaboration between CSOs and LAs is needed to ensure efficiency on the ground.

**Opening of full PFD plenary:** Klaus Rudischhauser, Deputy Director-General, DEVCO (speaking for PFD Chair and Director General of DEVCO, Stefano Manservisi), Maria Theresa Lauron, Chair, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness and CSO Co-Chair, and Njong Donatus, Mayor of Kumbo, and PFD LA Co-Chair, gave opening remarks to welcome all participants to the Policy Forum. All commented on the challenges of the current global situation and reiterated the need for strong multi-stakeholder fora such as the PFD to review the state of our partnership, discuss the challenges ahead and raise issues that require additional attention from the EU policy standpoint.

**Consensus session:** During this session moderated by Shada Islam (Friends of Europe), the panel exchanged views on the Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development. Panellists included Stefano Manservisi, Director General, DEVCO; Honourable Linda McAvan, MEP, Chair of the European Parliament Development Committee; Marc Giacomini, Deputy Managing Director and Director for Human Rights and Global Affairs, European External Action Service; Paola Simonetti, Development Policy Coordinator, ITUC; and Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General, CEMR.



As Stefano Maservisi stated, *“The new European Consensus for Development aims at operating a **structural change**. Too often, development aid was a sort of a substitute, acting on behalf of systems that were not delivering. The Consensus provides a new structure in federating policies, with the development policy in the driving seat.”* The United Nations 2030 Agenda and SDGs approach is a **new approach** for development policy. The Consensus provides new policy orientations that adapt to the way the development world is changing. The Consensus is now under negotiation and expected to be agreed by Member States in June. Following his initial remarks, there were some comments from the audience about blending and bringing in the **private sector and**

**investors.** The Director General assured participants that transparency and accountability standards will be promoted. He added, however, that having a partnership with the private sector is required, given that Official Development Assistance (ODA) alone will not be sufficient to implement the SDGs. A representative of the private sector called for a **distinction amongst the actors of the private sector** in the Consensus in order to ensure that the full range of business models including cooperatives, is considered. The fact that **people** remain at the core of the EU development policy was well received by the audience. As Manservisi stated: *“Being closer to citizens, attempting to reconnect people with the political action is the foundation of the new Consensus. Bringing the people in is the spirit of the new Consensus.”* He also stated that **poverty eradication** remains the first priority, even though attention must be paid to security issues, given the specific problems of territories which are fragile or where conflicts are taking place. In terms of **empowerment of the local level**, the Commission proposal for the Consensus reiterates the importance of CSOs and LAs as key actors to build trust between communities and ensure SDG implementation at the local level. The challenge of **leaving no one behind** is crucial. Capacity building for LAs and CSOs, encouraging partnerships, transfer of knowledge, technologies and tools to mobilise local constituencies are important. **Resilience** is also central to ensure sustainable development and long-lasting solutions on the ground, and

therefore requires the empowerment of local government structures and CSOs. In the same way, the fight against **corruption** is also key to tackling fragile institutional settings. As stated by a PFD member: *“Where governments are weak, CSOs are key.”* Regarding **youth**, the Commission proposal for the Consensus not only focuses on jobs for young people but more largely on opportunities and their quality of life, as well as their participation in political life and in decision-making. **Decent work** and **social dialogue** are enshrined in the 2030 Agenda and are therefore important to consider for the Consensus as well. A PFD member called for a greater involvement of social workers, recalling that social dialogue can help fight inequalities and ensure good governance. One member pointed out that **growth** that does not take into account decent work, is not sustainable or inclusive must be avoided. It will be important for the Consensus to support the redistribution of wealth and tackling inequalities. As Linda McAvan stated: *“Dignity is a priority concept in the Consensus.”* All panellists focused on the importance of agreeing on a new Consensus that is forward-looking and people-centred, that takes us into the future while retaining the values that are at the heart of European integration. In some places, globalisation seems to be outpacing governance, hence the need to adapt quickly. Participants stressed that in this transition and new policy, the different dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental and economic) and the governance arrangements must be mutually reinforcing and coherent.

**ACP-EU session:** During this session, moderated by Katrina Sichel, the panel was composed of Ambassador Jagne, Chief of Cabinet, ACP Secretariat; Domenico Rosa, Head of Unit, ACP Co-ordination, DEVCO; Kristin de Peyron, Head of Division, Pan-African Affairs, European External Action Service; and Robert Mabala, Director, Central African NGO Network (REPONGAC). This session focused on the proposal for a renewed partnership between the EU and the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific,



outlined in the EC/EEAS Joint Communication to the EU Parliament and Council of November 2016. Among the points raised by the audience were: the need for systematic consultations, the priorities of the partnership as they are listed in the Communication, the relevance of the Agreement, the importance of forming partnerships across actors and sectors, and the need to institutionalise civil society involvement. On relevance, while attendees believed that the post-Cotonou Agreement was still relevant today, participants also mentioned the importance of China and the Asian Tigers on the trade scene. A participant suggested that the **relevance** of the Agreement would be enhanced if **fighting tax evasion** was included. On partnership, **equality was stressed as** a key element of a post-Cotonou Agreement, moving away from the donor-beneficiaries approach. In this regard, a strong call was made for the African Union and the EU to discuss these issues during the pre-negotiation phase. Several participants, noting that the current partnership is mainly a state-to-state agreement, called for **institutionalising** the involvement of **CSOs and LAs**, to ensure that voices of civil society are heard in a more structured way. Regarding priorities, De Peyron highlighted that the identified six form a basis for debating with partners, and not yet a decision; they are envisaged as the terrain of **multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation**. The current proposal is structured around political priorities and main interests, not around actors, who will be identified at the implementation phase. Lack of adequate consultation with CSOs and LAs was an issue raised. Rosa recalled that,

early in 2016, the results of a broad open consultation became available. Equally, feedback from interested stakeholders continues to be welcomed.

**Impact on the PFD:** The closing plenary session focused on the impact of the new European Consensus for Development and the ACP-EU partnership on the PFD. Key discussion topics emerged, including: the key role of SMEs and cooperatives in enhancing sustainable development and in offering decent work at local level; the need to abolish tax havens, the nexus of security and development and the need to ensure a rights-based approach, notably with regard to migration.

**Multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP):** This session, moderated by Maria Theresa Lauron, focused on how inclusive MSPs foster the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The panellist included: Izabella Toth, Senior Policy & Advocacy Strategist, CORDAID; Jose Ernesto Abud Castillo, Mayor of Villa Tapia, Dominican Republic; Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi, Head of Division, Development Cooperation Coordination, EEAS; Anetha Awuku, International Organisation of Employers; Cornelius Hacking, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands; and Patrice Lenormand, Deputy Head of Unit, Civil Society and Local Authorities, DEVCO.



Across all panellists and participants of this session, both in plenary and working groups, everyone agreed that the implementation of the SDGs requires different actors and sectors to work together in an integrated manner. By definition, MSPs pool financial resources, knowledge and expertise from governments, CSOs, and LAs, from the private sector and other stakeholders, who all now need to work hand in hand. The panel gave several examples of best practices, for instance of municipalities working directly with CSOs in South America on participatory budget planning, with the support of the EU. This partnership led to the co-management of cities by local and national governments and CSOs. National goals were therefore implemented through decentralisation and enhanced local development. This type of initiative highlights the shift from an all-government approach to an all-of-society approach, for which the involvement of the EU providing plans and strategies was a key factor of change. Regarding the partnership component, the formulation of goals and policies is now made together with civil society and dialogue occurs throughout the implementation phase, allowing for mutual responsibility and accountability. Building the capacity of CSOs, LAs and other local actors in fragile states is another key element to building a sustainable future. In fragile states, where the central state is often absent or non-functional, space for direct support to local stakeholders and CSOs is created. It is therefore necessary to continue building the capacity of civil society in conflict or post-conflict areas, as they build the resilience of these countries, have the capacity to anticipate and avoid the recurrence of crises. Since recently, the private sector is increasingly using MSPs as well: for instance in Africa, where businesses, trade unions and governments, were involved and came up with 10 key recommendations for African employers to avoid brain-drain and the loss of lives of young people in the Mediterranean. The fact that in MSPs, some partners are more equal than others was recognised several times by the attendees. A PFD member called for a focus on leveraging each partner's strengths. The importance of working with an enabling environment for CSOs and LAs was mentioned several times as a key to ensure a functioning MSPs. In this regard, the EU delegations are seen as key actors to create opportunities for civil society to enhance dialogue with local government. The level of transparency in the management and reporting of

budget support use has also increased. However, a participant reminded the audience that 30 trillion Euros are hidden in tax heavens, and called for governments to seriously tackle the fact that European Member States still have to raise their development assistance in order to attain the 0,7% GDP spending target.

**Mid-term review:** This session was led by Bernard San Emeterio, General Coordination and Inter-Institutional Relations, DEVCO and evaluators who presented the main evaluation findings of the EU external financing instruments and their future. The participants had the opportunity to provide their feedback and concerns on the evaluation. Among the topics which emerged from the discussion was the concern that **local governments are not included in some of the funding schemes**, despite the fact that **CSOs' and LAs' space is shrinking** across the world. The fact that **focusing less on gender issues** was a recommendation of the evaluation was of serious concern to several participants, stating that women's organisations suffer from the lack of financial support and capacity. The EC explained that the hard and soft issues were indeed a debate in the review panel and that the goal is to have more of a country by country and case-by-case approach. Regarding the **calendar** for the review process, many participants strongly urged the EC to finalise it this year so that partners on the ground can receive their funding from early 2018 onwards. There were also many questions on the use of **trust funds**. The EC explained that trust funds are a modality of implementation, not an instrument, and have added-value in terms of funding leverage and flexibility.

**Conclusions, recommendations and closure:** This session was led by Rosario Bento Pais, Head of Unit, Civil Society and Local Authorities, DG DEVCO, together with Georgia Papoutsis representing the CSOs and Bernadia Tjandradewi representing LAs. The main conclusions and recommendations of the 2017 Global PFD meeting were shared with the audience, who provided comments and suggestions on how to better reflect the results of the discussions of the past three days. The full set of conclusions and recommendations can be found [here](#).

The meeting was closed by Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission and the CSO and LA co-chairs, Marie Theresa Lauron and Mayor Njong Donatus. Ms. Lauron called on the EU to "truly be a leader to achieve the type of change it seeks." EU instruments must be responsive to ensure continuity of initiatives of CSOs and LAs. To do this, she reminded us that the means of implementation to achieve our collective aspirations cannot be missing in action in 2018. Mayor Donatus stressed that the root causes of terrorism, intolerance and unemployment were inequalities within and between countries - the main challenge to overcome in order to leave no one behind. The need for structural reforms, women and children's empowerment and the adoption of sustainable patterns of consumption was highlighted. In his speech, Commissioner Mimica stressed that support to CSOs and LAs had massively increased, strengthening strategic ties. "You are now in a new partnership, addressing the new challenges and gender, the root causes of migration, climate change. For all this you have our full support." He confirmed to have taken good note of the need to improve policy coherence within the EU, particularly with regard to trade and investment. He ended by expressing his gratitude for all of the suggestions that came out of the 5th Global Policy Forum.

