

Concept Note
Multistakeholder meeting of the PFD
In the Middle East and Neighbourhood South
Jordan, 3-4 October 2017

I. Background:

The European Union has, over the last decade, promoted the comprehensive and progressive participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Local Authorities (LAs) in countries' development processes and in broader political, social and economic dialogues at all levels. Enhancing regular dialogue and consultations with CSOs is one of the principles stated in the Lisbon Treaty, with a view to ensuring consistency and transparency of EU policies. Documents such as the "European Neighbourhood Policy"; the EU Communication on "The Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations" and the EU Communication on "Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes" have been critical in EU efforts to improve its cooperation with CSOs and LAs.

The Policy Forum on Development (PFD) is a multistakeholder platform which can be seen as both a catalyst and an outcome of these commitments. The PFD aims to achieve the following objectives: (i) Facilitating dialogue on cross-cutting issues directly related to the role of CSOs and LAs as relevant development actors; (ii) Promoting policy debate, consultation and exchange of information and experiences on EU main policies and initiatives in the development field and (iii) Providing a space for regular update and peer review by all actors.

As part of its ways of working, the PFD regularly holds global (in Brussels), regional and multistakeholder meetings. These regional and multistakeholder meetings are held on a rotational basis and have already taken place in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The region that includes countries of the European "neighbourhood" (both southern and eastern) as well as the Middle East, has not held a PFD meeting. After an initial three-year period of activity, the PFD was reviewed in 2015-16 and recommendations made to strengthen its ways of working. The need to strengthen membership, especially in these countries, was one outcome of the exercise.

Finally, the current global situation means that challenges and policies in these countries add an urgency to including the voices of local development actors to review, amongst others, the collective response in crisis and fragile environments. The opportunity to discuss EU development policy as well as international agendas with countries in this area is timely and important more so following the signature of the new European Consensus on Development and the renewed commitment towards the 2030 Agenda. The meeting will serve to both raise awareness of the PFD among constituencies in the region and give the opportunity for participants to raise their views.

Close coordination will be in place to ensure synergies with DG NEAR planned events with CSOs from the NEAR South region. In this regards, themes of the NEAR South region structural dialogue with Civil Society could be included in the PFD multi stakeholder agenda, such as: inequality and sustainability, mobility and migration, Human Rights and governance and stability and security.

II. Context and Objectives

This meeting takes place in a climate where issues around resilience, conflict, human rights and forced migration are at the forefront of policy making. The role and importance of non state actors and local authorities is even more vital in ensuring the needs of citizens are met and that progress toward sustainable peace and poverty alleviation continues. This meeting can capitalize on the multi stakeholder nature of the PFD to bring the most relevant actors together to mobilize their contributions to enhance the policies of the EU.

The 2-day dialogue will bring together different stakeholder groups from countries that have not yet participated in previous PFD meetings. Recognizing this complexity is part of the challenge and the need for this specific dialogue. The meeting will have several overall objectives:

1. Expose regional participants to the PFD and explain its ways of working with the aim of increasing engagement
2. Establish mechanisms for networking and consultation within and across networks of CSOs and LAs of the region for input into the PFD
3. Discuss issues of key concern for participants as relate to the global PFD agenda and look at ways to integrate them into the global debates

III. Participants

As an indication, 60 regional participants will be invited from the following constituencies:

NGO	22
Women groups	6
Trade unions	8
Cooperatives	5
Associations of Local Authorities	14
Associations of private sector	5
TOTAL	60

Participants will be chosen to reflect a good geographic spread and will include organizations which work nationally and regionally. Attention will also be paid to gender balance of presenters and participants.

IV. Methodology/strategies:

The agenda is currently being drafted by the PFD representatives from the region with the assistance of the EC and the PFD technical support team. Background papers will be produced on topics as needed. The conference will use various methodologies to enhance participation. Interactive dialogue sessions will be encouraged.

V. Expected outcomes:

- Regional concerns, information and experiences exchanged on key EU policies and initiatives in the development field;
- EU policies to promote rights-based development and multi-stakeholder approach in development shared and understood;
- PFD widely understood by participants and entry points for further participation are clarified;
- Common conclusions and recommendations from the CSOs and LAs are put forward and agreement reached on ways to promote them.
- Enhanced networking at regional level.

VI. Timeframe

The proposed date is 3-4 October in Jordan. The organising PFD members will update the Task Team in the 09 June meeting. A preliminary agenda and the participants list will be finalised around late June and invitations will be sent shortly after.