



**Global Policy Forum on Development
Enabling Environment (EE) session**

20 March 2018 (14:15-16:30)

Title of session: How to confront new challenges: employing the multi-stakeholder approach to enhance the enabling environment for inclusive development cooperation.

Objective:

Encourage further work by multiple stakeholders to address the conditions maximising their contribution to development.

Expected results:

- Better understand the EE by sharing of perspectives and experiences on challenges and opportunities faced by stakeholders as regards democratic space within each region; and advance concrete proposals to increase this space, including via channels for citizen participation.
- Identify key challenges and opportunities for EU external action to contribute to improving the enabling environment by empowered civil society and local governments.

Background:

An EE (EE) refers to the conditions needed to allow for civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) to engage in development cooperation and fulfil their roles as active, effective and essential development actors. The 2030 Agenda and the new European Consensus on Development recognise civil society and local authorities as key partners in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The fulfilment of this role requires that basic legal, regulatory and policy frameworks as well as supporting political, socio-cultural and economic factors are in place.

In the context of the PFD, assessing the EE for sustainable development is a recurrent and important theme especially as the democratic space for dialogue and action appears to be shrinking in many places. As a multi-stakeholder forum, the framework for discussion has evolved to assess the context for citizens' participation in sustainable development, recognising local democracy as one of the key levers.

The debate will focus on the challenges faced by each constituency and on the contribution that EU external action can make to contribute to an EE in which development actors can fulfil their role in a free, effective, democratic and accountable manner.



The PFD debating on EE signals a shared commitment and responsibility of all constituents and partners to advance on the political, governance and economic context. The session will assess how PFD constituencies can contribute to such a positive evolution; how CSOs can boost the democratic nature of public governance; how local governments can improve civil society's engagement and how private sector actors can contribute to both. It will also explore how EU external action can support effective and inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships in its partner countries, assisting PFD constituencies to strengthen their role in development.

Methodology:

- A panel of 4 speakers where some of the common recommendations of the regional PFDs on EE will be briefly discussed;
- The floor will open to the participants for further interventions and
- Wrap up of the session

Potential questions:

- How efficient and enabling is the governance context for the development of democratic participation: the level of the rule of law, state effectiveness, full transparency and accountability for development priorities, strategies, plans and actions?
- What lessons can be drawn from the experience of the different stakeholders on the enabling environment context? How can CSOs' advocacy positions and actions influence development cooperation policies?
- How do EU Delegations ensure an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach to development cooperation at partner country level?
- How can the EU influence and possibly revert the trend towards a narrowing of operating space for CSOs in third countries?
- What else needs to be done in terms of an EE to foster partnerships contributing to sustainable development?