

“Civil Society Seminar on Just and Democratic Governance: a People’s Perspective”

13-14 November 2006, Brussels

Final Report

Introduction

The month of November 2006 was marked by the **European Commission’s Development Days**. This event, organised by the European Commission in Brussels on 15-17 November, brought together some 1,500 experts from EU Member States, African States, EU Institutions, UN, World Bank, and Parliaments to discuss various aspects of **EU-Africa cooperation and “Good Governance”**.

Civil society was also invited to participate in the European Commission’s event. However, there was not a great deal of space to integrate our thinking on governance, rights and poverty into this. This is the reason why EU-based NGOs¹ decided to organize an **alternative event** that took place in Brussels for a day and a half **on the 13 and 14 November** prior to the EC’s event. The aim of the seminar was **to create a space for dialogue, debate and networking amongst civil society actors** on the issues of governance in development and **to consolidate the position of civil society actors** in the official EC’s event.

The seminar gave NGO practitioners and other civil society actors the opportunity to stimulate debate, to reclaim and re-focus the governance agenda on **“participation, accountability, rights and justice”** at local, national and international level **towards poor people**.

It also created some space to promote the development of alliances and joint actions amongst civil society actors in order to challenge the emerging institutional “good” governance agenda of EC, EU, and other such actors. An immediate objective has been already achieved, as a set of **key messages** have been drafted following the outcomes of the working groups and been conveyed into the EC event.²

¹ The seminar has been organised by ActionAid International, APRODEV, BOND, CBM International, CNCD-11.11.11., CONCORD, Coordination Sud., EUROSTEP, IFCTU, WIDE, World Confederation of Labour, Zimbabwe Watch

² See “Next steps and key messages”

Day 1 : Setting the Scene: A People's Perspective on just and democratic governance

Gerard Karlshausen (CNCD – Member of the board of CONCORD) introduced the seminar presenting its two main objectives:

- 1) To go beyond criticizing the vision of institutional actors on governance, showing the vision, place and role of civil society on the issue;
- 2) To bring the debate into the EC event conveying some key messages.

This introduction was followed by an intervention by *Brian Kagoro (ActionAid-Africa Regional Office, Regional Policy and Advisory Manager)*, who stressed that governance can only be understood in the context of human welfare. Governance is about benefits, opportunities and resources equally distributed, sustainability of development and economic growth, and accountability towards poor people to fulfil their rights. If EU wants to meet its promises to Africa, it needs to translate into action a broad concept of governance, respecting developing countries' priorities and sovereignty

The EU must be coherent in all its policies affecting developing countries and having a both-side vision on corruption, as rich countries (including the EU countries) broadly contribute to it. Therefore, also governance within the EU is an issue.

Kagoro's intervention was followed by a presentation on Equality and Governance made by *Zofia Lapniewska (NEWW-Polska³, WIDE)*. This presentation focused on the concepts of equality, the stereotypes and prejudices affecting discriminated groups, and the tools to fight against discrimination and exclusion. Anti-discriminatory measures should not reduce to changes in the legal framework, but actively support discriminated groups giving them visibility and empowering tools to claim their rights and participate in public life.

With specific reference to women, the presentation focused on EU legislation and EU policies towards developing countries on gender equality. Zofia highlighted that political dialogue between the EU and the developing countries on gender equality is quite marginal, and this entails a limited impact of EU development policy on gender equality.

Alex Wilks (EURODAD Coordinator⁴) closed the session presenting the current crisis in governance at the international level, namely within International Financial Institutions (IFIs). The governance deficit within the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is implicit in their own mechanisms: the lynch-pin principle of these institutions is that money buys power. For example, OECD countries have more aggregated voting power than developing countries in the IMF, and the quota reform decided in October 2006 at the Singapore meeting by IMF members has shifted only 1.8% OECD voting share to non-OECD countries.

Another example of poor governance presented was the election of Paul Wolfowitz as President of the WB, as he was the only candidate put forward by the White House: just his election would not put him in the right position to talk about governance, even without considering his past role in the Bush Administration (e.g. false evidence on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq). With respect to other international institutions, the WTO does not give adequate room for manoeuvre to developing countries to negotiate with rich countries; the Paris Club plays an unfair role in the decisions on debt cancellation; the G8 has not fulfilled its promises at all; and the DAC is not a fair forum to discuss on governance, aid effectiveness and other relevant issues.

A new governance agenda needs to be established on the basis of instruments shared by most of the countries, like in the positive case of the UN Convention against Corruption.

³ Network of East-West Women, Poland

⁴ European Network on Debt and Development

Debates on Current Challenges in Governance

Seven Working Groups were held to debate the following topics:

- **WG I ; Promoting Domestic Accountability: Monitoring Governance**
- **WG II: What is the Role of Civil Society Organisations in promoting and securing a Just and Democratic Governance?**
- **WG III: What is the Role of Donors in promoting governance?**
- **WG IV: Governance in a Global Economy**
- **WG V: Decent Work, Democracy and Representation**
- **WG VI: Participation and Governance: how to promote equality and inclusion**
- **WG VII: Governance and fragile states**

1. Promoting Domestic Accountability: Monitoring Governance

Several case studies presented different techniques and methods for community mobilization in order to monitor rights and budgets:

- Post-tsunami aid delivery (Thailand, Maldives, Sri Lanka, India);
- Fighting corruption in the education sector (Indonesia);
- Economic literacy and budget accountability (ActionAid, several countries);
- EU gender watch.

Some main challenges have been identified:

- Governments' resistance and media's attack against grass-root monitoring and participation.
- The need to actively work on community feeling, ownership and solidarity (e.g. in IDP villages); and to avoid monopolization of agendas by elites (e.g. Ubudehe project in Rwanda⁵).
- Lack of transparency.
- Economics as last bastion of power: financial knowledge is held by a small group of professionals. Yet there are successful examples of citizens influencing the allocation of revenues and tracking expenditures and auditing.

Some experiences and opportunities have also been identified:

- Citizens' monitoring helped unveiling hidden agendas and promoting policies in line with community priorities (e.g. post-tsunami resettlement of coastal populations to clear the way for hotel investments).
- Social audits are being successfully institutionalised in some countries; communities' priorities became spending choices at local / national government level.
- Tackling petty corruption is a quick win, but it also linked with fighting bigger corruption.
- Citizens' monitoring is a key mechanism to assess the effectiveness of service delivery and the quality of services.

A missing link between domestic accountability and international development aid processes has been identified. In particular, concerning the EC / EU:

- The EU is using the governance profile as a score for granting more aid instead of building on findings of citizens' monitoring as a source of information on the needs and issues to be addressed.
- EC officials get little exposure to field realities; EC delegations have poor consultation mechanisms.

⁵ Ubudehe is defined as 'the traditional Rwandan practice and cultural value of working together to solve problems. The government of Rwanda has resurrected this traditional cooperative mechanism as the model for a program designed to alleviate poverty and provide for community rebuilding.

- There is an expectation that EC could and should turn into an advocate and a practical supporter of “bottom-up” approaches.
- Concerning corruption, it shall be clarified of which corruption we are talking about, thus considering the role played by rich countries in contributing to corruption.

The main question emerged is how to press the EU and other donors to tap into the potential represented by the knowledge gathered at local/community level, and what domestic social mechanisms can be used to bring the evidence generated locally to the EU institutions:

- Most donor interventions are project-focused and lack flexibility to incorporate new issues in delivering assistance.
- There needs to strengthen potential EU interlocutors at country level, namely to invest in EC Delegations’ staff.

Some other suggestions have been:

- To use more a parliamentary oversight on EU assistance in the country (i.e. an annual report on EU assistance to be presented in the European Parliament).
- A direct EU support to citizens’ monitoring and / or national parliaments.
- To work more on definition of donor accountability to citizens and communities (consultation levels, aid effectiveness, donor commitments to the transparency and coordination of aid agenda at country level).
- Reports should be user-friendly and accessible to communities in developing countries.

2. What is the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in promoting and securing a Just and Democratic Governance?

Three main issues emerged:

1. How to define spaces for dialogue and go out from a top-down concept of dialogue between donors and CSOs, in order to avoid the exploitation of civil society for donors’ purposes and to allow CSOs to meaningfully participate in the decision-making process. Time and resource constraints are clearly relevant in limiting CSOs participation (e.g. short deadlines to participate in EC on-line consultations). The existing spaces for dialogue between the civil society and governments pose the problem of representing the diversity of civil society (e.g. inadequacy of the European Economic and Social Committee).
2. Types of transparency and accountability. The EU shall be able to question its own governance before questioning that of its partner countries. The EU decision-making processes lack of transparency due to the role played “behind the scene” by several powerful lobbies, and the limited access for civil society to such processes.
3. How civil society has to evolve in order to engage more in meaningful participation. CSOs shall first be transparent and accountable themselves, and representative of the diversity of society, if they want to be legitimate in holding donors and their governments accountable. Concerning the relationship between CSOs in the North with CSOs from the South, this shall be on an equal footing and not duplicate the top-down attitude reproached to donors; broader information exchange and discussion shall take place, and solidarity shall be strengthened. Other needs identified relate to the coherence of positions and the development of expertise within CSOs to promptly tackle public authorities.

3. What is the Role of Donors in promoting governance?

- A crucial priority emerged is to focus the governance agenda in support of a more open and transparent dialogue between development actors. The implication for the EC is that it needs to begin by acknowledging its own limits on governance. The most urgent governance agenda for Europe therefore relates both to its internal mechanisms and to the existing global and regional mechanisms in which it plays a key role.
- Major governance challenges due to the emergence of new donors (e.g. China, India) will present to dominant institutions of international development. Therefore, at the international level, this WG acknowledged a pressing requirement for a new institutional framework to promote dialogue between North and South on a more equitable basis.
- Donors have a narrow view on governance, focusing it only within the confines of recipient countries. As highlighted by the EC Communication on Governance in August⁶, a common tendency appears to involve the emergence of donor driven instruments, exemplified by the “governance profile” which takes on central significance in the context of the latest EC Communication. Such instruments use externally determined governance criteria against which decisions regarding appropriate levels and modes of assistance can be taken. This distorts understanding of the ways in which global power structures impact on national politics.

The major concerns expressed by this WG are the following:

- Different donor agencies are developing their own stand-alone governance criteria and assessment mechanisms on the basis of demand for greater public accountability to their public, rather than to the primary stakeholders of aid in recipient countries, who should rightfully be at the centre of the agenda.
- In practice such tendencies are leading to increased donor fragmentation, and to the imposition of externally driven criteria, risking undermining the capacities of recipient countries. This marks a step back from concerted efforts over the past decade to shift towards a single and more comprehensive development framework.
- Such assessment instruments involve political processes driven by donor governments’ interests. They lack transparency and fail to explicitly acknowledge the value of local models of good governance. In this regard they mark a regressive shift away from the more explicit focus and policy-level commitment to quality assurance of process, not product, which has characterised aspects of coordination around Poverty Reduction Strategies.
- The use of governance assessments, either to justify or hold back development assistance is inherently “anti-developmental” and undermines good governance. Moreover, the underlying premise that OECD states have any right to interfere / engage in political processes of recipient states, while they resist any effort to reverse these processes, is unacceptable.

The WG proposed the following recommendations at a general level:

- Greater attention needs to be given by donors to the requirements for space and support to the ongoing political processes of consultation that need to take place as part of the emergence of home grown and inclusive models of governance. This means focussing less on governance assessment products and more on the quality of the processes in their own right. Such a shift involves renewed emphasis on the application of a set of progressive principles grounded in understandings of democratic political processes, human rights, freedom of speech, right to information, promotion of social justice, access to rule of law etc. This shift is ultimately about attending to the “demand side of governance”, thus building the capacity of civil society to demand changes in accountability.

⁶ COM(2006) 421 final, “*Governance in the European Consensus on Development - Towards a harmonised approach within the European Union*”

- It follows that legitimate responsibility for setting standards not of governance outcomes, but processes intended to promote accountability to actors within recipient countries – and the oversight, monitoring and evaluating of these interactive processes – must rest with representative international mechanisms.
- This brought back to the shortcomings of the international system as it currently stands. The WG noted that the DAC is flawed as a forum of dialogue as does not represent recipient countries' interests. A priority is therefore to lobby to create a platform for genuine global accountability, and a watchdog mechanism to monitor the narrow national and political interests that drive existing governance agendas of OECD countries.

Concerning specifically the EC/EU:

- An emerging conclusion is that the EC's latest communication on governance is not helpful. In effect it has added another confusing and muddled layer to existing development policy statements.
- On the basis of the political dialogue already framed by the Cotonou Agreement, and in partnership with recipient countries, the EC should engage in an open and multi-actor dialogue on a country basis to support the development of home grown solutions to improve governance.
- Therefore, renewed attention should be given to the key features of the Cotonou Agreement. The element of good governance was included as a "fundamental element" of the Cotonou Agreement which gave a strong political foundation to ACP-EU development cooperation. In the agreement, political dialogue is central and acknowledged to include issues previously been outside the scope of development cooperation, such as peace and security, trade and migration. In particular, political dialogue is based upon four main principles: 1) equality of partners and ownership of development strategies; 2) participation and partnership that includes state and non state actors 3) dialogue and mutual obligations regarding human rights; 4) differentiation with cooperation agreements varying according to each partner's level of development, needs, performance and long-term development strategy.

4. Governance in a Global Economy

Starting point

- It is imperative for EU to lead by example and address double standards within the global economy, which currently lacks a governance framework thus creating a vacuum for accountability. Without addressing inequities in global economic governance it is inappropriate for EU to talk about developing country governance.

On the basis of the recommendations set by this WG, to play a meaningful role on governance the EU shall:

Policy Space

- Respect its policy coherence for development commitments by adopting mechanisms which ensure that the concern with terrorism, migration, energy security and market access do not overshadow the poverty eradication objective and developmental concerns of developing countries.
- Engage with, support and respect the autonomy and policy space of regional economic blocs.
- Protect policy space for developing countries within the context of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) negotiations by eliminating the adverse influence of EU forced liberalisation.
- Shift from 'Aid for Trade' to Aid for local & regional trade, which includes protecting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for as long as it takes to adjust to global market realities.

Finance and Investment

- Set up mechanisms to address the opaque and unaccountable framework of the EU's engagement with developing countries – independent external accountability structure for monitoring EU investments, lending, aid, and corporations through the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Development Fund (EDF).
- Strengthen and implement directives regulating banking secrecy and tax havens that facilitate capital flight and embezzlement.
- Promote the increase of developing countries' participation in international financial institutions (IFIs), including reducing EU seats while enhancing EU coordination within IFIs.
- Contribute to regulate global capital flows, addressing the biased regulation of global economy in favour of corporate/private sector. To achieve poverty reduction this is equally important as improving aid quantity and quality.

Impact of Global Economy

- Address the ecological impact of the global economy by giving additional grants to developing countries to respond to climate change adaptation needs.
- Address the imbalance between liberalisation of capital, goods and services vis-à-vis the undue restriction on the movement of labour.

5. Decent Work, Democracy and Representation

The WG started the discussion defining the concept of decent work as enshrined in ILO and UN Covenants and Declarations, being old as ILO itself.

Decent Work is about:

- **equal access to employment without** discrimination;
- a **living wage** for workers to allow them and their families **to live with dignity**;
- **social protection** in case of illness, pregnancy or the normal ups and downs which most of us face in life;
- **being free from exploitation.**

Decent Work means allowing people to organise themselves to represent their interests collectively through **trade unions** and engage in genuine **dialogue** as citizens and workers.

This WG highlighted the current global crisis in terms of deficit of decent work: deficit of jobs, jobless growth, 80% of the world population without any unemployment protection, growth in the informal economy, many violations of ILO Conventions, and so on.

- Therefore, a call for policy coherence at all levels (international, supranational and national) emerged to guarantee that genuine decent work policies are promoted and implemented. This entails the ratification and concrete implementation of ILO conventions worldwide. The EU in particular shall evidence a genuine commitment in terms of policy coherence, which implies a real commitment on decent work, full respect and promotion of ILO Conventions internally in EU countries and in development policies.
- Concerning the national level, the group took up the proposal of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation regarding the need to ask for national policy coherence document on a yearly basis, which would permit to point out the possible incoherencies among the different state institutions.
- It was stressed the need for the EC to properly consult CSOs, including trade unions, when it negotiates economic agreements with third countries, so that the EU really mainstream ILO principles and standards of decent work in them and translate its positions in action.
- There needs for stronger alliances between all actors of the civil society, namely between NGOs and trade unions, around issues like the informal economy to organise people, mobilise and defend them.

- A difference must be made between civil and social dialogue. The ILO has defined both concepts very precisely. Social dialogue is a contractual process that engages parties and commits them to respect the agreements. It is a pillar of truly democratic societies. Trade unions and other CSOs must keep on discussing in an open manner on this precise point.
- Development policies need to rest on active structures of participation of the civil society.
- Critics have been addressed towards the EC delegations. The decentralised structures of the EU Commission must know properly the different forms of organisation of the civil society and have a deep knowledge of social concerns and rights. They must act in full consultation and concertation with CSOs to include the concerns of the civil society actors in their activities. They must evidence more transparency and democracy in their decision-making processes.
- There needs to put more emphasis on the issue of migration and migrants workers' rights in development policies.

6. Participation and Governance: how to promote equality and inclusion

This WG made an overview of the practical challenges for women and marginalised groups to organise themselves to claim their rights and to effectively take part in decision-making and to influence public policy.

In this overview, the WG has agreed that discrimination affecting women is not to be confused with other kinds of discrimination; the issue of participation of women is in many respects different from the one concerning other groups. The consensus of the group was to discuss issues of participation for women, for older people, for persons with disabilities, children, etc together, as many of the barriers to participation, and the possible solutions are the same.

Results of the discussion:

- Women and marginalised groups are disempowered; therefore there is need of tools / measures to provide knowledge of their own rights and empower them.
- There is a lack of will / awareness by local governments to promote inclusiveness. There is a need to raise governments' awareness on this, so that they take responsibility for creating more inclusive governance, starting by introducing non-discrimination legislation.
- Barrier: Short term programming / engagement. Most of programmes / projects addressing to women and marginalised groups are carried out over too short a time period. If we are to truly engage with people at grass-roots level, particularly groups who have been excluded, there is a need for long term engagement. To build relationships and confidence with people, and to empower them to express their voice (e.g. presentation by Tigabu Gebremehdin on his work done for CBM⁷ as the chair of the community-based rehabilitation network in Ethiopia). Therefore there is the need for a long-term commitment by donors and NGOs in these programmes / projects if we really expect to build an empowered civil society movement which is inclusive.
- Barrier: Lack of availability and access to relevant information for local people. There is the need to collect and disseminate relevant data and information, which shall be available in local languages and accessible to all people in the affected communities- including people with limited education/ people who are illiterate as well as people with intellectual disabilities. It is also important that policy-makers produce more readable accessible policy documents, so that people can understand them, and hence participate. NGOs themselves should ensure that their research, data collection, etc, is fed back to the communities with which they work in order to empower them with this information/ knowledge.
- Lack of visibility for women and marginalised groups. We should fight against the fake perception of women and marginalised groups being a minority and the ignorance and prejudices affecting them. Every person must be seen as a citizen and a rights holder.
- There are practical barriers to participation which must be addressed. Participation involves costs that most poor people cannot afford: the costs of participation should be adequately

⁷ Christian Blind Mission

compensated to motivate people to participate. Meeting spaces for public consultations should be accessible to persons with disabilities located close to communities, carried out in a way that people can relate to.

- Participation will also be promoted if people fully understand what they are asked to participate in, and feel that it is truly meaningful.
- There is a need for solidarity across different sectors of society to build a strong civil society and protect / allow access to social services. A strong emphasis shall be placed on a broad concept of governance that includes the delivery of social services by governments.
- The current global donors' trend that emphasizes market-driven growth is diminishing development policies. There needs to put pressure on donors and international institutions to re-prioritise the focus on poverty reduction and people-centred development, not letting development policies be driven by trade.
- There is a need to increase the political space for poor countries to voice their concerns on neo-liberalism economics, which affect poor countries more than rich ones, and to truly choose their own path of development.
- There is a need to use more human rights instruments in advocacy and lobby activities promoting inclusiveness of women and marginalised groups both at national and international level to stress the inherent legal obligations for governments on human rights.
- The shift from civil society / NGO sector support to direct budget support needs to be balanced. Presently it is felt that in many respects civil society does not have the capacity / access to adequately demand their rights, monitor the governments performance, etc. Donors moving towards budget support must also provide more resources to build capacity and inclusiveness of CSOs / NGOs, and building more equitable relations between governments and formal / non formal civil society.
- The EU and the IFIs shall acknowledge their responsibilities for the negative impact of their policies on governance in poor countries and thus on inclusiveness of women and marginalised groups. Linked to this is the lack of indicators to evaluate the impact of policies on exclusion of women and marginalised groups both at national and international level.
- Governance must focus on the accountability of the states to deliver welfare, first.
- There is a need to fight corruption, which plays an important role in worsening the exclusion of women and marginalised groups.
- There need is a need to promote accountability and transparency both from local authorities and NGOs.

7. Governance and fragile states

The aim of this workshop was to provide initial responses and recommendations to the challenge of "how to build democratisation" and what the EC/EU's form of democracy assistance should be. Using Burundi and Zimbabwe as case studies, participants explored from a practical point of view how good governance and democratisation interrelate in so-called fragile states, thus in a situation where the state fails to fulfil its basic role of looking after its citizens, providing a fair and levelled playing field.

The case study of the role of the EU in the Great Lakes region and in Zimbabwe provided a starting point to discuss what the international community as well as regional and pan-African bodies can and should actually do in such circumstances. The case studies were also used to discuss the role of the various actors including CSOs, the national governments, regional and pan-African bodies and the broader international community in sustaining good governance in a "fragile state" environment. There was a common agreement that the EU and the International Community – particularly the regional and pan-African bodies – had a role to play. It was also acknowledged that this role needed to have "teeth" but that in choosing actions one had to be careful in assessing the situation, the role the EU and others are playing in this context and that actions should be based on local "demands". Particularly the EU should base its interventions on the core principles and elements of the Cotonou agreement.

- First of all solutions will not be created in the outside and it is the responsibility of Civil Society to engage in dialogue as well as pressure and campaigning activities with their government. As in these difficult environments creating space for engaging in civil, political as well as economic and social rights activities is of paramount importance.
- The international community, and the EU as part of it, has a role to play. This role needs to be defined in interaction with and in support of strategic interventions by local actors. Actions taken should then be clear, strong and consistent.
- The EU must therefore clearly engage in so-called fragile states. This should be done in strategic interactions with and responding to demands by local Civil Society. And the EU must base its engagements on the key principles and elements (such as partnership and ownership, participation, dialogue and mutual obligations as well as respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law)_enshrined in the Cotonou agreement.
- The international community, and the EU as part of it, should support and strengthen local actors – particularly in response to the closure of space to engage and interact with the local government.
- Cooperating with civil society actors is particularly relevant in dealing with the victims of violence and intimidations. This cooperation is also crucial in dealing with cultures of impunity.
- Aim of any intervention should be to find sustainable solutions (particularly also in the redistribution of resources) to improve governance issues in such countries based on and in cooperation with local initiatives.
- The EU must apply what it preaches avoiding double standards, improving its own accountability and transparency, promoting dialogue between local governments and civil society actors and including in it the marginalised groups.
- There is a lack of introspection by the EU: its intervention in promoting democracy and good governance can be legitimate only if the EU acknowledges its own past and present responsibilities in contributing to the fragility of so-called fragile states.
- One needs to be careful in labelling a country as fragile, as the countries put into this category differ a lot amongst themselves. It is therefore important to conduct a careful power analysis (both at national and international level) to understand the context in which a country is placed.
- Outside Civil Society actors also need to work closely together with local partners in their interventions.

Next steps – Key messages Feedback and plenary debate

Chaired by *Rob van Drimmelen* (APRODEV), this session presented the outputs of the different working groups. The following debate clarified their content and was reflected in the summary of the outcomes provided in the “Next Steps” plenary session (see below).

A synthesis of the outcomes of the working groups was provided by *Maxime Montagner* (*Institute for a New Reflection on Governance, Paris*) in order to prepare the ground to develop the key messages to be conveyed into the EC’s event and some concrete proposal on ways to capitalise the outcomes of the seminar for future plans. Three main conclusions emerged:

1. The EU must first become a good governance model, if the European Commission wants to be legitimate to tackle this issue in its relations with developing countries. Furthermore, the EU must avoid double standards, thus address governance issues not only to the “weak” countries (the ACP), but also to “strong” countries like China, India or USA.
2. Instead of proposing a governance initiative which is totally “euro-centred”, the European Commission shall improve the process and tools provided by the Cotonou Agreement;
3. The CSOs are responsible for playing a strong role in the decision-making processes and promoting a vision “from the field” to the institutional actors, which are often not aware of the realities of developing countries. In doing so, the CSOs must always bear in mind the duty of being themselves accountable and transparent, if they want to be legitimate in playing such role.

Then, three parallel working groups have been organised: one to work on the key messages, the other two to develop some concrete proposal on the way to go forward.

Ways to go forward the event

On global economy and development three main areas of intervention were identified:

- i. Research
- ii. Advocacy and Monitoring
- iii. Mobilisation

1. Research

- Civil society and poor people must take the initiative in setting up new indicators and criteria to influence the international institutions on governance issues;
- CSOs must provide more research and data on the local people’s views on their governments (ex. “State of the Nation’s State” reports, currently developed by ActionAid International);
- Create a database on good practice of transparency and accountability from NGOs and donors;
- Need to collect and share data and information within CSOs in Europe (the Paris Institute for a New Reflection on Governance could play a coordinating role);
- Add more material / evidence of EU incoherence from the field on the EU coherence website (<http://www.eucoherence.org/>)
- Mapping exercises on the several concepts of poverty.

2. Advocacy and Monitoring

- CSOs must increase their lobby and advocacy activities to ask the EU to give its own responses to questions on governance, not simply to advance WB and IMF criteria and approaches;
- CSOs must advocate for appropriate support to civil society actors in developing countries in the perspective of a gradual shift from programme funding to direct budget support;

- CSOs must ask to the EC to invest more on its staff in the EC delegations to build their capacity-building and skills, in order for them to meaningfully engage in a dialogue with civil society actors in developing countries.
- CSOs must advocate for more aid and governance monitoring by citizens and NGOs on the basis of the “Social Watch” model, e.g. a citizens’ watch tracking the commitments of EU Member States on the basis of their voting within EU institutions.
- There needs for more cooperation between NGOs monitoring governance and NGOs monitoring IFIs.
- There needs to build alliances between trade unions and NGOs;
- Keep always in mind the role and influence of trade and transnational corporations on governance agendas.

3. Mobilisation

- Participants in the seminar must stay connected (create a participants’ mailing list);
- Increase information sharing and communication between North and South NGOs;
- Increase the space for the voice of civil society in several fora (World Social Forum, Regional Social Fora, MDGs mid-term review, ACP-EU Platform, Joint Parliamentary Assembly and Ministerial Meetings);
- Increase civil society actors’ accountability and transparency also to enhance their mobilising impact.

On governance and civil society’s monitoring – legitimacy and accountability, two main areas of intervention were identified :

- iv. Monitoring
- v. Legitimacy and accountability

1. Monitoring

- Create more economic literacy programmes for people in Southern countries;
- NGOs shall organise an annual conference to discuss monitoring governance with partners from the South;
- CONCORD intranet and EUFORIC⁸ to host discussion on governance among European CSOs;
- A civil society’s monitoring report to be produced each year;
- Create a monitoring body for CSOs accountability (link with CSOs legitimacy);
- Mapping of current available models of good / bad practices on governance.

2. Legitimacy and accountability

- CSOs must advocate for a transparent and accountable relationship between donors and partner countries;
- NGOs to ensure “double accountability”, both to donors and partners / people in the field;
- CSOs must strongly commit to human rights – promote a Rights Based Approach.

Key messages

A set of key messages sorted out from the relevant WG, and were integrated by the plenary debate following their presentation. Please read in the annexes the final version (in English and French), which has been conveyed into the EC’s event.

⁸ Europe’s Forum on International Cooperation

Conclusions

Closing declaration by Irene Ovonji-Odida, AAI Board Member and Member of the East African Legislative Assembly

Ms Ovonji-Odida closed the seminar with a speech which summarized the meaning and content of this event.

First of all, she appreciated the amount of creative, innovative and open thinking emerged, and stressed the need to carry this process of reflection forward. She stated that the European Development Days are an important event that however missed to involve more people from Africa, and that should be organised in Africa rather than in Europe. She also regretted the unfair image of Africa offered by the media, which do not reflect the strength that Africa has and the contribution that African people can give on governance and sustainable development.

In order to succeed to bring in their positions on governance and development, CSOs must find the right strategies to convince institutional actors that it is in their interest to adopt a people-centred and rights perspective in their development policies. This entails the need to improve CSOs capacity of analysis to understand the interests setting the agendas of media and institutions. Finally, this requires a long-term commitment by CSOs to engage with people having different perspectives and people affected by poverty to empower them.

In short, this seminar matched its objectives and prepared the ground for a deeper commitment by NGOs and other civil society actors to engage in bringing a people-centred perspective in the current debate on governance and development.