

Dear Colleagues,

Paris November 6th

RECENT NEWS FROM THE AID EFFECTIVENESS PROCESS

This is a brief update on the recent news from the aid effectiveness process based primarily on information received through meetings in the International Steering Group of NGOs (ISG) when we met in Paris November 5-6, and from meetings during the same days with the Advisory Group (AG) on aid effectiveness and the Steering Committee (SC) for the HLF3.

Accra Parallel Conference: A draft proposal is developed by the Ghana Forum. It was discussed and will be redrafted. Main changes will be related to description of the ISG and CSO process, reducing the budget, taking out national activities not directly linked to the parallel conference, detailing the agenda. We expect to have a new project proposal by the end of November to be endorsed by the ISG. Based on that we will go on to fundraising.

It is important to have contributions from INGOs. We expect the Northern NGOs to contribute in kind through paying their own participation. Oxfam and Action Aid will be approached as well. Moreover Danida, DFID and Commonwealth Fund will be approached.

Importantly, the parallel conference is taken for granted in planning by all groups including NGOs, bilaterals, SC and AG. At the meeting with the SC/AG it was proposed to include the organisation of the hotels, visas and hospitality in the office organising the official event. The SC will approach the Ghana government secretariat and push this issue, as until now the secretariat has not been cooperative with local civil society.

Venue and hotels will depend on the extent of cooperation with the government secretariat. Right now the Ghana Forum works on two levels. Approaching the government secretariat and plan with them, and simultaneously considering how to organize it independently.

The content of the parallel conference is still to be developed. Overall it is a meeting place for the independent CSO process, where we can discuss and propose issues outside the more narrow Paris Declaration agenda. It is expected that the parallel conference will propose some more specific issues to the official HLF3 as well. Approximately 300 are expected to the parallel conference, 100 south NGOs, 100 north NGOs and 100 Ghana CSOs. This will be clarified in the project proposal.

HLF3: CSOs are considered to have 80 seats, including one round table on CSOs and aid effectiveness and CSO participation in all nine tables. Moreover there will be CSO participation in the market place and a CSO speaker at the ministerial meeting.

Policy proposals and position paper: It was decided to take the existing CSO policy paper out for an open commenting process. An introduction will be included framing the broader development agenda. The draft will be for commenting until new year, thereafter we will urge as many CSOs from all over the world as possible to sign on to the paper, and use the paper as the overall policy position of CSO towards Accra.

At the meeting with the AG/SC the ISG presented our recommendations to the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). The AAA will only be finalised in July 2008 and until then the SC proposes to discuss some issues. The five issues the ISG presented based on the draft policy paper are:

- Democratic ownership without conditionalities
- Untying of aid
- Technical assistance only on demand
- Predictability of aid, accountability and transparency
- Gender and human rights

These five points were well received by the chair of the SC (Jan Cedergreen) and he accepted them to be within the Paris Agenda (though they will probably meet resistance from USA, Japan and others). These five points will from now on be considered key to our advocacy strategy towards Accra, while we insist on keeping a broader agenda for the parallel conference and policy paper (these are the five issues we concretely will try to move on the agenda).

Website: The website www.betteraid.org will be improved with among other things: introductory part explaining the Paris Agenda for beginners, explaining the ISG and organising, links to ODI 'future of aid' website for future merging of the sites, more documents, etc. A proposal for funding for the next year for the site is being developed, A2015 will probably pay some but not all costs as we want commitment from other sources as well.

Research:

Nicaragua: We have a second draft of the research – soon to be finished

Ghana: We have a draft study on the education sector for comments. Moreover the Ghana Forum is doing research in four themes, one of them on the governance sector. We did not manage to do the Eurodad study in Ghana, but we will try to extract the information needed from the studies carried out.

Bolivia. We have a draft study proposal for comments, will be finished end November by CEDLA.

Internal agenda: Northern NGOs (N/NGO) met in Brussels on October 15/16 on a regional workshop with focus on the aid effectiveness agenda and its influence on the work of N/NGOs. A main outcome of the workshop was that N/NGOs appreciate to be involved in the process towards Accra and have to advocate for more involvement of civil society in the process up to and beyond Accra. On the other hand N/NGOs wish to keep ownership of their own development effectiveness agenda, which should be a broader effectiveness agenda (including for example depth and trade issues). This NGO agenda on development effectiveness should be independent of the official aid effectiveness agenda.