

CONCEPT PAPER
CCIC LEADERSHIP FORUM 2008 / CANADIAN NATIONAL CONSULTATION
ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs) AND AID EFFECTIVENESS

Dates: January 17-18, 2008

Location: Ottawa (Specific location TBC)

Communications about this event should be addressed to the organizing team:

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OBJECTIVES

- To provide an opportunity for leaders of the CCIC membership and the Canadian CSO community to develop the Canadian contribution to an international consultative process on issues of civil society and aid effectiveness. This consultative process is leading up to the September 2008 High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra, Ghana, where progress in the implementation of the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* will be reviewed.
- To engage in dialogue with CIDA officials about lessons and issues drawn from CSO experience in international cooperation, with a view to providing input to the February 2008 International Forum on CSOs and Aid Effectiveness.
- To contribute to CIDA's process of redefining and structuring its relationships with its civil society partners.

AGENDA OF THE TWO DAYS

(A DETAILED AGENDA WILL FOLLOW)

- The first half of the first day will be a CSOs-only session, with the CCIC membership and others from the Canadian CSO community, to share perspectives on issues of civil society and aid effectiveness.
- The second half of the first day will be devoted to case studies, best practices and issues in CSO aid effectiveness.
- The second day will involve representatives of CIDA and Canadian CSOs. The focus will be on conveying the lessons from the case studies and their implications for the redefining and structuring of CIDA's relationships with its civil society partners.

BACKGROUND

CIDA is taking leadership in an extremely important international process involving donors, partner (developing country) governments and CSOs on issues relating to civil society and aid effectiveness. CIDA chairs the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, located at the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in Paris. CCIC, with five other CSOs, sits on this Advisory Group.¹

The Advisory Group advises the DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness², which has a mandate to monitor the aid effectiveness commitments made in the 2005 *Paris Declaration*. The Working Party is responsible for preparing the Accra High-Level Forum, which is planned for the first week of September 2008.

Through the Advisory Group, donors, partner countries and CSOs will focus on:

1. Deepening an understanding of the roles of CSOs as development actors;
2. The applicability and limitations of the *Paris Declaration* in addressing CSO issues of aid effectiveness (including how CSOs can better contribute to the implementation of the *Declaration*); and
3. Lessons from best practice related to civil society and aid effectiveness.³

The Advisory Group will make recommendations to the Working Party on how to enhance CSO contributions to aid effectiveness; this will be part of the agenda for the Accra High-Level Forum. An International CSO Steering Committee is working with CSOs in Ghana to organize parallel independent events on aid effectiveness to accompany the High-Level Forum.⁴

Throughout the Fall of 2007, the Advisory Group is facilitating a broad and largely Southern-driven consultative process at the national and regional levels to help prepare contributions from Southern civil society and partner governments for this dialogue on aid effectiveness. A Northern

¹ The Advisory Group is made up of three CSOs from the North (CCIC, ActionAid International, and CARE International), three CSOs from the South (IBON Foundation / Reality of Aid Network, AFRODAD and Third World Network Africa), three partner governments (Rwanda, Nicaragua and Zambia), and three donors (Canada, Norway and France).

² The Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, located at the DAC, is made up of an equal number of donors and partner governments from developing countries (23 from each).

³ The Advisory Group has prepared a Concept Paper and an Issues Paper on its mandate relating to CSOs and aid effectiveness. Both papers will be available on the Aid section of CCIC's site by the end of September 2007. Those interested in following the work of the Advisory Group in detail can apply to have access to a extranet site at CIDA – Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness – at <http://web.acdi-cida.gc.ca/extranet/ExtranetHome.nsf/vluaboutdoc/ExtCivilSocietyEn?OpenDocument>.

⁴ The International CSO Steering Committee recently launched a new web site, www.betteraid.org, which will follow the international CSO debates and contributions to the review of the *Paris Declaration* at the High-Level Forum, as well as other issues relating to changing aid architecture.

CSO consultation is planned for Brussels for October.⁵ The consultations during the Fall will focus on seven key issue areas identified by the Advisory Group to frame its work on CSOs and aid effectiveness:

1. ***CSO recognition and voice***, including the extent to which the various roles of CSOs – as development actors and as part of the international aid architecture – are currently recognized, and the identification of areas requiring greater attention;
2. ***The extent to which the prevailing international aid effectiveness agenda (the Paris Declaration) is useful as a framework*** for addressing issues of aid effectiveness of importance to CSOs, as well as for improving the aid effectiveness of CSOs themselves;
3. ***Relationships between CSOs and their primary constituencies*** (the people they represent or serve): Issues, principles and good practice;
4. ***Relationships among CSOs at the country level and beyond***: Issues, principles and good practice;
5. ***Relationships between Northern and Southern civil society***: Issues, principles and good practice;
6. ***Relationships between CSOs and developing country governments***: Issues, principles and good practice;
7. ***Relationships between CSOs and donors / donor models of support***: Issues, principles and good practice.

This consultative process and the deliberations of the Advisory Group will culminate in an International Forum on CSOs and Aid Effectiveness, which will bring together significant numbers of CSOs, donors and partner governments. This Forum will be held in Ottawa during the first week of February 2008. It will be an international multi-stakeholder process, involving roughly equal numbers of Southern CSOs, Northern CSOs, donors and partner government representatives, many of whom will have participated in the regional consultations.

As part of the consultative process, CCIC is organizing a two-day Leadership Forum / Canadian National CSO Consultation (LF / NC) in Ottawa on January 17 and 18, 2008. This event will bring together Canadian CSOs to develop the Canadian contribution on issues of civil society and aid effectiveness. It will also be an opportunity for CSOs to engage in dialogue with CIDA officials about lessons and issues drawn from case studies and the implications of these discussions for the process of redefining and structuring CIDA's relationships with its civil society partners.

The insights and findings from the LF / NC will be brought forward to the February International Forum, which will be open to only a limited number of Canadian participants (dependent on the balance between Southern and Northern CSO participants). As well, all of the case studies and the record of the LF / NC will be available to CIDA officials working on the aid effectiveness and partnership renewal processes.

⁵ A schedule of the regional consultations and other related Advisory-Group-sponsored meetings will soon be posted in the Aid section of CCIC's site (www.ccic.ca/e/002/aid.shtml).

The Advisory Group will meet after the February International Forum to develop its recommendations to the Working Party. These may include how civil society can contribute to increased aid effectiveness (including the implementation of the *Paris Declaration*), a number of lessons for enabling conditions for CSO aid effectiveness (based on good practice case studies), and best practice case studies related to the seven key issue areas identified above.

METHODOLOGY OF THE CCIC LEADERSHIP FORUM / NATIONAL CONSULTATION

The LF / NC will be an opportunity for CCIC members and other Canadian CSOs to contribute perspectives based on case studies or other evidence-based lessons that highlight issues, best practices and enabling conditions for improving the effectiveness of their partnership relationships with Southern CSO colleagues.

Canadian CSOs planning to participate in the LF / NC are invited to submit a proposal for a case study or other evidence-based contribution, with a short paragraph that sets out the subject, the issues relating to CSOs and aid effectiveness that it may highlight, and the process of engagement with Southern partners / colleagues in developing the case study. Proposals must be submitted to the CCIC's Aid Reference Group⁶ **by October 22, 2007**. The Reference Group at their meeting on Friday October 26, 2007 will confirm the case studies for the LF / NC. (See below for specific terms of reference for the case studies.)

⁶ CCIC's Aid Reference Group is made up of about a dozen member organizations that accompany and provide strategic advice to the Council at key moments of engagement and dialogue with CIDA regarding Canada's aid program.

**SPECIFIC TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CASE STUDIES
CIVIL SOCIETY AND AID EFFECTIVENESS
CCIC LEADERSHIP FORUM / NATIONAL CONSULTATION (LF / NC)
JANUARY 17-18, 2008**

PURPOSE OF THE CASE STUDIES ON CSOs AND AID EFFECTIVENESS

Selected CCIC members and other Canadian CSOs will prepare, with Southern CSO colleagues, case studies of civil society partnerships and initiatives that highlight issues regarding:

- The effectiveness of CSOs as development actors, at country, regional or international levels;
- Implementation of the *Paris Declaration* and its impact on CSOs' effectiveness as development actors;
- North-South CSO relationships that enhance CSO effectiveness as development actors; and / or
- Accountability and policy dialogue.

The case studies will be presented at the Leadership Forum / National Consultation and will provide a foundation for discussions there, with the goal of reaching some conclusions on enabling conditions for the effectiveness of CSOs as development actors.

These conclusions will be fed directly into the process for the February 2008 International Forum on CSOs and Aid Effectiveness, through CCIC participation in the DAC Advisory Group and its role as the lead organization for the February International Forum.

Communications about the Leadership Forum / National Consultation and the case studies should be addressed to the organizing team:

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ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The case studies should consider the question of the aid effectiveness of CSOs as development actors in their own right. Often, CSOs play the role of development actor within the framework of the international aid system. However, CSOs engage in development as citizens' organizations, with mandates, relationships and activities that go well beyond relationships with this aid system. Where appropriate, the case studies should address the impact of the aid system on CSO North-South relationships and on these other dimensions of CSO mandates and roles. The following assumptions need to be considered.

- CSOs include non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with an explicit mission of development, but also, importantly, include a diversity of citizens' organizations such as women's organizations, farmers' organizations, community-based organizations, churches, labour unions and not-for-profit media.
- CSOs play fundamental roles in democratic processes within their societies, holding governments and powerful interests accountable and encouraging policies and practices that enable poor and marginalized people to claim their rights.
- CSOs are mechanisms for development innovation and social empowerment of people living in poverty. They promote the rights of women and the interests of marginalized groups who are the intended beneficiaries of development.
- The qualities of CSO North-South relationships, particularly those conditioned by the international aid system, are an important factor in, or obstacle to, the effectiveness of CSOs as actors in development.
- Effectiveness includes qualitative aspects, which require different ways to measure, evaluate and learn from programs and experiences.

METHODOLOGY

1. While it is expected that each case study will be written by one author, there must be realistic opportunities for Southern partners / colleagues involved in the case to contribute, comment and draw their own lessons regarding enabling conditions for CSO effectiveness.
2. Proposals for case studies must be submitted to the CCIC Aid Reference Group (through the organizing team) **no later than October 22, 2007**. At its meeting on Friday October 26th, 2007, the Aid Reference Group will determine which case studies will be included in the Leadership Forum / National Consultation. **Organizations will have until December 14th 2007 to complete their case studies**. The final case studies can be submitted in either French or English, and will be circulated to the LF / NC in their original language.
3. The LF / NC process for the sessions on CSOs and aid effectiveness will build in opportunities for presentation of key lessons from the cases. Ideally, CCIC members preparing a case should consider sponsoring the presence at the LF / NC of a partner representative or colleague involved in the case.

POTENTIAL THEMATIC QUESTIONS

There are numerous thematic questions that can be addressed in case studies under the theme of CSO and aid effectiveness.⁷ Issues of accountability and policy dialogue are critical dimensions affecting CSO roles that cut across several thematic areas and should be considered in all of the case studies. Specific attention should be given to the impact of aid effectiveness policies and practices on women's empowerment and women's rights. Additional questions in relation to aid effectiveness might include:

- At a country / regional / international level, how are CSOs organized and structured to represent different segments of society (accountability, policy dialogue, recognition of women's rights, etc.)?
- How do / how might CSOs organize themselves more effectively in response to the principles of the *Paris Declaration*⁸ or other aid effectiveness principles that are particularly relevant to CSOs (programmatic approaches vs project-based approaches; institutional sustainability; alignment with country plans; CSO collaboration; alignment with CSO priorities etc.)?
- What are the key elements or qualities of North-South CSO partnerships that enable effective CSO development action? How do current donor and / or partner government policies and practices influence these qualities and thereby affect CSO effectiveness as development actors?
- How might an enabling environment for civil society be adjusted to allow CSOs to play their roles more effectively?
- To what extent is the identification of "local ownership" with central government ownership conditioning donor support for CSOs? How could current donor / partner government / CSO practices be reformed to accommodate the notion of "democratic ownership"?
- What lessons can we draw from CSO efforts to support capacity development within civil society in the South?
- What are the pros and cons of official donors supporting CSO efforts through donor-country CSOs rather than supporting partner-country CSOs directly?
- How might the current aid system be reformed at national or international levels to enable CSOs and parliaments to engage more effectively in holding donors and partner governments to account, and to participate in more equitable mutual accountability mechanisms?

⁷ The Advisory Group has published a Concept Note that frames the substance of its mandate on CSOs and Aid Effectiveness as well as a series of thematic issue papers, each of which highlights a number of pertinent questions. These are available to the authors of the LF / NC case studies.

⁸ The Declaration principles include local ownership; alignment to host-country priorities; donor collaboration and harmonization; results-based approaches; and mutual accountability. See analytical material on the Paris Declaration from a civil society perspective on CCIC's web site, available at <http://www.ccic.ca/e/002/aid.shtml>.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

Each case study should be **no more than 10 to 12 pages in length** and follow a similar basic structure:

- A. **Summary** of the case (1-2 paragraphs) and bullet-form list of the key lessons for CSOs and aid effectiveness. (2 pages)
- B. **Description of the key elements of the case**, highlighting information required to understand the lessons for aid effectiveness and development results for poor and marginalized people. Do not describe every dimension of the case, but rather focus on those most relevant to its purpose and the lessons to be drawn. (3–4 pages)
- C. **The enabling conditions** that will improve the effectiveness of CSOs as development actors, as demonstrated by the case. “Enabling conditions” are factors that affect effectiveness (e.g. the structure of CSO financing in a North-South partnership; certain capacities of national CSOs; legal frameworks for CSO operations, etc.). (2 pages)
- D. **Implications of the case, if any, for the implementation of the *Paris Declaration* principles** for aid effectiveness. (2 pages)
- E. **Implications for principles that CSOs consider essential for their effectiveness** that go beyond or contradict those elaborated in the *Paris Declaration*. (2 pages)