

# Global Assembly Report 2010

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28th to 30th September, 2010  
Istanbul, Turkey

## Table of Contents

<b>Day 1</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Agenda, Communication and Participants .....	4
Welcome and Opening Session .....	5
Update from the Consortium .....	6
Report back on activities of the Open Forum 2010.....	7
Mingling and Reflection Activity.....	8
Keynote Address: Dr. Rajesh Tandon .....	8
Presentation on the Draft Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness .....	10
Small Group Discussions on the Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness.....	11
<b>Day 2</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Regional Discussions on Enabling Environment.....	14
Guidelines, Mechanisms and Indicators .....	15
Future Factory Sessions .....	16
Presentation of the Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness .....	19
GFG Nomination Process .....	21
<b>Day 3</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Multi-Stakeholder Roundtables.....	23
Minimum Standards for an Enabling Environment.....	27
Closing Session.....	27

After launching the work plan of the Open Forum in late 2009 and beginning the national consultation process of the Open Forum in March 2010, the Open Forum Global Assembly began in the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2010, in the Ballroom of the Larespark Hotel, ready to review and discuss the preliminary findings and outcomes from the national-level discussions around CSO development effectiveness from across the globe. The Assembly provided the first occasion for participants to review and discuss these findings, in addition to planning ways forward in preparation for the HLF4 in Busan, November 2011.

### **General Overview**

#### **Venue<sup>1</sup>**

The Ballroom of the Larespark Hotel was the venue chosen for the plenary sessions of the Global Assembly. The hotel is situated near Taksim square, in central Istanbul. Translation for the event was provided in Turkish, English, French and Spanish.



Figure 1: Ballroom at the Larespark Hotel, Day 1 of the Global Assembly<sup>2</sup>

#### **Objectives**

There were five key objectives associated with the Global Assembly.

- The presentation of an initial draft framework on CSO development effectiveness. This framework will be based on the results from the Open Forum national and thematic consultations, and after the Global Assembly, will be refined and finalised in the run-up to the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum in South Korea.
- Share, discuss and analyse the consolidated Global Consultation Report and experiences of the Open Forum consultation process to date
- Explore emerging perspectives on CSO development effectiveness, including the rights, roles and responsibilities of CSOs as actors in development
- Initiate a multi-stakeholder debate with governments, donors and other development actors on CSO development effectiveness and the enabling environment for CSOs.
- Renew the membership and mandate of the global facilitation group (GFG)-governance body of the Open Forum.

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<sup>1</sup> The organisers received positive feedback with regards to the hotel's central location, proximity to local transport and amenable staff. For more information, please visit this [link](#) to view the evaluation results of the Global Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> To view more photos from the Global Assembly, please click on this [link](#).

## Agenda

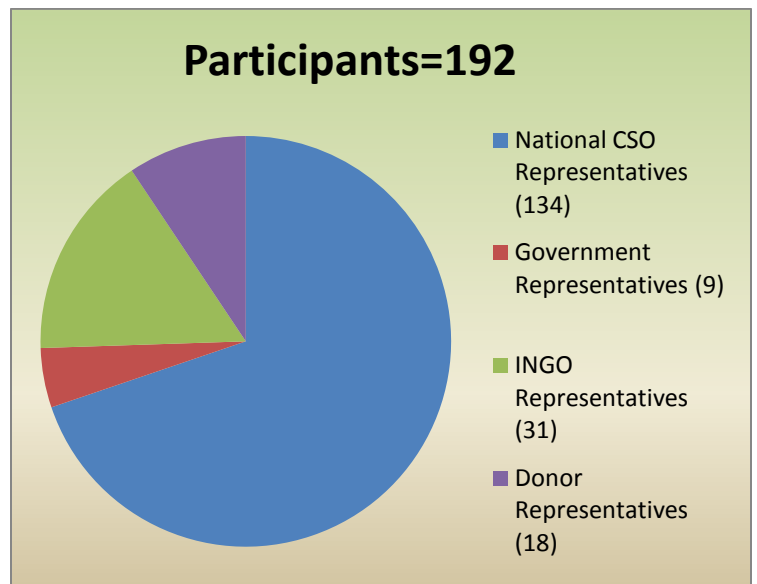
Tuesday, September 28	Wednesday, September 29	Thursday, September 30
CSO Day 1	CSO Day 2	Multi-Stakeholder day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and presentation on the activities completed to date</li> <li>• Presentation of the Global Framework</li> <li>• Evaluation session</li> <li>• Parallel group work sessions on emerging perspectives on CSO development effectiveness, including the rights, roles and responsibilities of CSOs as actors in development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break up into working groups into regions and/or thematic groups</li> <li>• Drafting the Open Forum position to Global Framework</li> <li>• Plenary as a wrap up on main conclusions reached, consensus on framework principles and ways forward</li> <li>• Open Forum Leadership nomination session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the Open Forum Process and draft framework to the multi-stakeholder actors</li> <li>• Working groups on four or five key issues pertinent to multi-stakeholder dialogue. These issues will arise from the draft framework, with a particular focus on the requirements for an enabling environment</li> <li>• Final plenary reporting</li> </ul>

## Communication and Outreach

One of the key objectives of the Global Assembly was to share and consolidate experiences across the CSO development sector, and so communication of these views and perspectives to a wide audience was crucial. As bursaries were limited, it was important to disseminate information garnered from the Assembly to Open Forum stakeholders invested in the process throughout the world in a quick and efficient manner. To this end, nightly newsletters were disseminated amongst stakeholders and participants alike. Facebook and Twitter were also updated on a regular basis in order to engage stakeholders in the Assembly in ‘real time’. You can find copies of the daily newsletters [here](#).

## Participants

The total number of participants amounted to one hundred and ninety-two, representing more than seventy-eight countries. This figure encompassed nine government representatives, eighteen donor representatives, thirty-one INGO representatives, and one hundred and thirty-four national CSO representatives. For more information on participants at the Global Assembly, please visit [this page](#). You can also download a copy of the [final participants list](#).



## **Registration**

Participants who had registered online were welcomed at the lobby of the Larespark Hotel, where they were given a copy of the agenda for the three day assembly along with a conference bag which contained key documents pertaining to the work of the Open Forum, including the draft Global International Framework and Synthesis Report (in English, French and Spanish), an Open Forum USB stick with all of the key documents in electronic format, as well as practical information on Istanbul and the Global Assembly event.



**Figure 2: Sample of the Global Assembly conference bag, containing key documents.**

## **Welcome and Opening Session**

First up to the podium were Daniel Svoboda and Susana Erostequi, co-chairs of the Global Facilitation Group of the Open Forum.

Daniel's introduction took account of the fact that participants at the Global Assembly hail from some seventy-eight countries and the final count stands at 192 participants. The Assembly also welcomed twenty donor representatives, three government representatives from developing countries, and two OECD representatives. Daniel reminded participants of the overarching aim of the Open Forum, to contribute to the Fourth High Level Forum in Busan, Korea due to take place in December 2011.

Daniel reminded participants that it is important to remember why the Open Forum is important, and what the definition of development effectiveness is:

CSOs argue that development effectiveness is about the impact of the actions of development actors, including donors and governments, on improving the lives of the poor and marginalised. It promotes sustainable positive change that addresses, within a democratic framework, the root causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalisation.

The goals of development effectiveness are centred on the realisation of human rights and sustainable development. It gives particular attention to the rights of women, the rights of indigenous peoples, and the right to development for developing countries. Achieving development effectiveness and sustainable impacts should be the overarching concern of all development actors-donors, country governments, CSOs and communities.

Daniel extended his thanks to the Global Facilitation Group and the Consortium, in addition to the thousands of volunteers who have contributed to the Open Forum process to-date.

Susana Erostequi, co-chair of the GFG, then spoke, and reminded participants that the topics up for discussion at the Assembly are encouraging but also hugely challenging. Susana asked what participants at the Assembly should be doing to achieve social change. She reminded CSO representatives that they need to be capable of demonstrating their work and the impact of this work. She issued a call to all participants to coordinate in order to realise global efforts to achieve development effectiveness. Susana reiterated the call to participants to develop national strategies in order to implement results from the national consultations.

## Update from the Open Forum Consortium

Jake Bharier, Chair of the Consortium of the Open Forum, began his introduction to the Open Forum process by telling participants that he acts as the principal governance link between the Open Forum process and the contractual obligations between donors and employees. Jake's presentation included a succinct overview of the history of the Open Forum.

The issue of aid effectiveness first gained prominence during the second High Level Forum in Paris, which was organised by the working party on aid effectiveness at the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. The declaration which ensued became known as the Paris Declaration. As it was signed exclusively by donors and partner country governments, it was widely accepted that the voices and perspectives of CSOs were missing from this Declaration.

### **Did you know?**

*All of the [presentations](#) from the Global Assembly are available on our website?*

In light of this absence, a CSO steering group, henceforth known as the Better Aid Coordinating Group was formed in early 2007 to coordinate advocacy around aid and development. In addition to this group, a temporary advisory group on civil society and aid effectiveness was inaugurated. This group facilitated CSO engagement in the HLF3 held in Accra in 2008. The agreement which resulted from this meeting, known as the Accra Agenda for Action, bore the hallmark of more CSO input than the Paris Declaration and, in order to galvanise CSO participation, the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness was launched. In April 2009, discussions began with donors encouraging their support and engagement with the Open Forum. A donor core group was formed, the primary function of which is to coordinate donor engagement with the Open Forum.

Jake Bharier continued his presentation by briefly explaining the [governance structure of the Open Forum](#). The Global Facilitation Group is the overall governance body of the Open Forum. The GFG is charged with providing; overview, visibility, political leadership and coordination to the Open Forum. The current GFG is comprised of twenty-nine members. You can read more about the current composition, as well as the official terms of reference for the GFG by clicking [here](#).

In January 2009 a consortium was set up on a continental basis, and by December 2009, a memorandum of understanding and bilateral agreement had been signed. The chief purpose of this consortium is to implement and manage the work plan of the Open Forum, in addition to fundraising and other activities.

Latin America and the Caribbean	ALOP
Asia	APRN
Africa	AACC
North America and Pacific	InterAction
Europe	CONCORD

**Table 1: Consortium representation**

CONCORD, based in Brussels, hosts the Open Forum Secretariat. In 2009, donors agreed to fund the Open Forum and Better Aid processes, launching an innovative funding mechanism of pooled funding. For more information, and to access the memorandum of understanding which outlines the principle responsibilities of the CSO management group and the Donor Coordination Group, please visit the Open Forum [website](#) page on our funding. The principal donors of the Open Forum process (at the time of the Global Assembly) are:

Sweden	SIDA
United Kingdom	DFID
Austria	ADA
Finland	MFA
Denmark	Danida
Switzerland	SADC
France	AFD
Netherlands	MFA
Belgium	MFA

Table 2: Principal Donors to the Open Forum process as of October 2010

### **Report-back on Activities of the Open Forum 2010**

Amy Bartlett, Global Coordinator of the Open Forum, delivered her presentation which focused primarily on Open Forum activities to-date. During the first quarter of 2010, the Open Forum Secretariat staff was hired, the website was completely revamped and new communication tools were launched, in addition to establishing a monitoring and evaluation system. In March 2010, the [national consultations](#) began, and sixty-five of these consultations have taken place worldwide in the run-up to the Global Assembly. Between October 2010 and February 2011, an additional ten national consultations are scheduled to take place.

The Global Coordinator presented a preliminary analysis of the national consultations; you can download a copy of the evaluation report from the national consultations [here](#). On average, each consultation hosted approximately 65 participants, but there were huge regional variations; the European average was 30 participants, whilst the average in Latin America was often as high as one hundred and eleven participants. The male/female ratio was quite evenly balanced, with 51.1% female, and 48.9% male. On average, INGOs accounted for 18% of participants. Donors and governments accounted for 8% and 5.5% of participants respectively.

The majority of the organisers of the national consultations were impressed by the engagement and lively interest of the participants, quality of the facilitators and discussions as well as the opportunities for shared learning. Many of the participating organisations said that the consultations had become an important reference point and activity for them. Although feedback was for the most part extremely positive, the Open Forum received some negative feedback from the national consultations; organisers were often disappointed with the low rate of donor and government participation, as well as the lack of time for in-depth discussions.

Amy continued her presentation and introduced the five [Outreach Officers](#)<sup>3</sup> responsible for the organisation and coordination of the national consultations in their respective regions. Participants also learned about the [Thematic Consultations](#), run in conjunction with the national consultations, but which are broader in scope

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<sup>3</sup> Outreach Officers for the Open Forum: Solomon Gichira of AACC for Sub-Saharan Africa; Lyn Angelico Pano of APRN for Asia and North Africa; Carolyn Long and Kimberly Darter of InterAction for North America and the Pacific; Rubén Fernández of ALOP for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Franz Josef Berger of CONCORD for Europe.

and take account of a myriad of issues related to the particular theme of the consultation. The presentation concluded with a series of comments and questions from the floor.

### **Mingling and Reflection Activity**

Nick Roseveare, from Bond-UK and GFG member, introduced the reflection activity, which was predicated on a discussion about the Open Forum and participants' expectations for the Global Assembly. In the first part of this session, participants were asked to collect into small groups where they were seated and to share some stories about their experiences thus far in the Open Forum process. Did they attend a national consultation? Did they organise a consultation? What were their impressions?

This reflection activity was warmly welcomed by participants as it served as an important ice-breaker, and when Nick announced 'time over' participants seemed reluctant to return to their seats!

In terms of expectations, participants expressed opinions around the collective aspect involved in discussion of the principles, being able to communicate with other CSOs, and the difficulties faced by stakeholders in actively engaging and maintaining the interest of CSOs in the Open Forum process. Participants also expected a clear plan to evolve over the course of the Global Assembly and beyond on a mutually-agreed strategy for the HLF4. Certain groups expressed concern over the role and involvement of grassroots organisations at the national level within the Open Forum process, considering the majority of the consultations have taken place. The groups also discussed the proposed agenda for the Global Assembly, and the agenda was approved.

**Expectations**  
*Participants articulated their expectations for the 3-day Global Assembly during the Reflection activity. Chief amongst these was a desire to formulate a mutually-agreed strategy for the HLF4.*

### **Keynote Address: Dr.Rajesh Tandon**

Immediately after a short coffee break, Dr. Rajesh Tandon began his keynote address. Carolyn Long (Interaction and Consortium member), introduced Dr. Tandon, who is held in high regard by civil society experts and civil society organisations worldwide not least for the key role played by him in bringing visibility to the vast network of non-governmental and voluntary associations throughout the world, better known as 'global civil society'. Dr.Tandons' contributions to the enhancement of perspectives and capacities of many voluntary activists and organisations revolve around issues of participatory research, advocating for people centered development, policy reform and networking in India, South-Asia and beyond.

A renowned authority on participatory research, Dr. Tandon has championed the cause of building organisations and capacities of the marginalised through their knowledge, learning and empowerment. He has contributed to the emergence of several local, national and international groups and initiatives to promote authentic and participatory development of societies. He has contributed to the evolution of new thinking and methodologies in people-centered development through his research, practice and writings. His studies, writings and training programmes have helped to advance the concept of strengthening civil society and reforming governing institutions for citizen participation world-wide. With such a passion for civil society, and development effectiveness, Dr.Tandon was the perfect candidate to deliver the keynote address at the first Global Assembly. Dr.Tandon's address, entitled ['What are CSOs all about today: 'Researching'](#)

[development effectiveness](#)’ was an engaging and thought-provoking speech on the role of CSOs and the dialogue around development effectiveness in today’s charged development climate.

Dr. Tandon started out by speaking a bit about the Open Forum process itself, and reminded participants of the range of consultations that have taken place throughout the world within the Open Forum process, and the variety of stakeholders involved. He drew attention to the fact that the consultations have taken place both north and south, east and west. The geographical range of consultations and the diversity of participants are both factors which lend legitimacy to the Open Forum process.

The Keynote Speaker then began to recall the development ‘journey’ over the past several decades. Initially, development was defined exclusively as GDP growth. This definition broadened to encompass ‘basic needs’ and eventually, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, included the basic premise that development is empowerment. Recently, development has become centred on rights and entitlements of the poor and marginalised. Key development players include governments, specifically those involved with Overseas Development Assistance, banks who lend financial assistance, civil society organisations and the private sector. He also referred to public-private partnerships (PPR) which were rampant in the wake of the dissolution of the USSR.

Dr. Tandon spoke about ‘restating’ the principles, there were some areas which he felt deserved more attention. Firstly, he thought the principles ought to refer to endogenous priorities; locally-determined versus externally-imposed. Secondly, with regard to citizen-led processes; these processes need clarity, if voter-led development is generally called democracy, how do we define citizen-led processes? Thirdly, democratic political institutions i.e. participatory democracy should be the focal point of the principles as in the last decade, democratic political institutions have acquired an unprecedented level of significance. Fourthly, accountable market mechanisms need to be referenced specifically in the principles, as market mechanisms are amazingly large and powerful, and have a direct affect on development effectiveness. Thus the problem centres on the issue of trying to make market mechanisms accountable to citizens and not just to consumers. Lastly, Dr. Tandon felt that basic needs, equity and justice merited more focus within the principles as these are core issues relevant not only in the south but also in the U.S, Europe and elsewhere. He urged participants to examine development built around a frame of civility and dignity.

The speaker then went on to emphasise the role of CSOs today, which he described as an “intermediation role between those who are excluded, those who are struggling and those who have the duty, responsibility and the authority to address those questions”. According to Dr. Tandon, CSOs should endeavour to raise awareness, and to provide an enabling voice; to articulate the voice of the voiceless, the excluded and unheard. CSOs should also be innovative, and try to demonstrate solutions: “name any aspect of development,” “and in every one of them the seeds of innovation came from civil society”. CSOs should also endeavour to engage with state institutions, which will require cooperation from both civil society and government representatives. The central focus of CSOs ought to be on building capacities.

Dr. Tandon also raised the issue of CSO accountability and the numerous obligations CSOs are expected to fulfil. CSOs are required to provide a capable response, and not waste valuable resources. Accountability is now ‘multi-polar’ and not just bi-lateral which in a sense heightens the importance of accountability across the

sector. Accountability is anchored in a global context, not just in the local context but accountability to those who are distant and remote and who are most likely to suffer the consequences of ‘bad development’.

To conclude, Dr. Tandon urged participants to think about the ‘missing voices’ in the draft framework such as people working in the informal sector that may or may not have been consulted throughout the consultations. Has the private sector been adequately consulted, he asked, considering the increasing prevalence of Public-Private Partnerships? Although OECD countries are well-represented in the Open Forum process, he feared that ignoring non-OECD countries could prove to be a fatal error, and felt that it was “imperative” that they be included in the framework as many non-OECD countries have a crucial role to play in development throughout the world.

Finally, he reminded participants that he believed the draft framework to be a “great and very powerful” document. Upon conclusion of the Key Note Address, participants broke for lunch provided in the dining room of the Larespark Hotel.

### **Presentation on the Draft International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness**

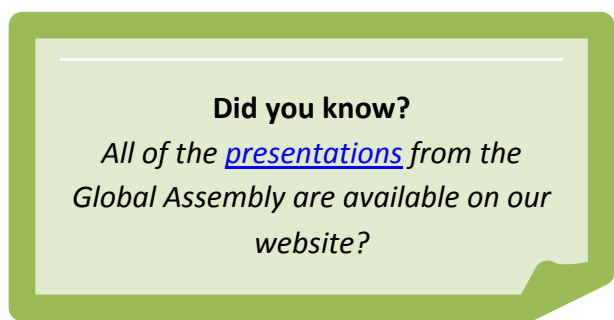
The afternoon of Day 1 began with Brian Tomlinson and Rose Wanjiru, co-drafters of the draft Framework, presenting the draft document and outlining the tasks before the participants of the Global Assembly.

Brian Tomlinson described the framework as a “normative and political tool that complements our work at a regional and national level”. Brian referred to the document as a political reference point, a kind of springboard that would enable CSOs to initiate a political dialogue with donors. Brian complimented the national organisers on their hard work, and spoke of the ‘great privilege’ it was reading and synthesising the sixty-five national consultation reports. He described the accompanying document, the Synthesis Report, as essentially a “global exercise in plagiarism” so closely is the framework linked to the words and aspirations of CSOs who took part in the consultations. The fact that their words and concerns remain unchanged affords the framework a huge degree of legitimacy.

Brian emphasised the preliminary status of the draft framework, assuring participants that words “are subject to change”. Additionally, Brian stressed the importance of enabling conditions, which are a prerequisite to the adoption and implementation of any set of principles. Although universal in content, the principles should be applied in a context-specific manner.

Brian emphasised the definition of development effectiveness, as the draft framework was informed by this definition:

Development is a multi-faceted human and social process focusing on the rights of the poor, vulnerable and marginalised.



He continued by informing participants about the process which led to the formulation of these eight principles. Between March and August 2010, some fifty-five national and thematic consultations took place worldwide. The co-drafters of the draft framework began by thoroughly analysing the results from forty-two consultations which provided a “wealth of context-specific reflection on issues affecting CSO development effectiveness.”<sup>4</sup> This synthesis report guided and informed the preparation of the [Draft International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness](#). In August 2010, the Secretariat hosted a writing workshop which the co-drafters and outreach officers attended. Each outreach officer presented a preliminary regional report and together with the co-drafters, brainstormed over the framework.

It was agreed that the eight principles for development effectiveness must be rooted in several defining characteristics of CSOs, said Brian, which are that the CSO be: voluntary, diverse, non-partisan, autonomous, non-violent, collaborating for change, and linking development process with results and outcomes.

Rose Wanjiru then continued the presentation and outlined the draft Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness. Participants were then asked to review and analyse the draft principles, and respond to some key questions about their formulation. The findings of the various groups were to be presented during the plenary session, after which a small group would meet overnight and deliberate over the recommended alterations.

Guided by these questions, participants divided into seven randomly assigned groups of approximately 25 people (assigned according to a colour sheet found in their conference bags) for approximately ninety minutes.

### **Small group discussions on the Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness**

The co-drafters announced the guiding questions to participants, which were to guide and inform the debate surrounding the principles during the smaller group session. Do these principles collectively capture the essential principles that enable CSO Development Effectiveness?



### **Guiding Questions**

1. Do these principles collectively capture the essential principles that enable CSO Development Effectiveness?
2. What specifically is missing, and how might it included (taking account of the need to formulate a few brief and memorable principles.)
3. Can these principles serve as a universal basis for elaborating diverse and context-specific guidelines and indicators? Do they provide a framework for strengthened accountability mechanisms?

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<sup>4</sup> Tomlinson, Brian, [Synthesis Report](#), p.2  
Wanjiru, Rose

4. Can these principles serve CSOs in establishing conditions with donors and developing country governments, which give practical expression to their recognition of CSOs as “development actors in their own right”?

Guided by these questions, participants divided into seven randomly assigned groups of approximately 25 people (assigned according to a colour sheet found in their conference bags) for approximately ninety minutes.

After a well-deserved coffee break, participants returned to the Ballroom where Maria Theresa Lauron, Consortium Member, facilitated the ‘report back’ plenary session.

In general, there was much agreement over the majority of the principles, as they are the articulation of CSOs and grassroots organizations’ views and perspectives throughout the world, developed during the sixty plus Open Forum national consultations. However, it was recognized that as challenging as it was formulating and agreeing on a universal set of principles for CSO Development Effectiveness, the real challenge lies not in the formulation of these principles, but in their implementation.

Fortunately, a lot of the debate over the various principles centered on semantics and the wording used, thus a general consensus was reached. The following is a short summary of some of the main suggested changes to the principles from the small group discussions.

#### Principle 1

Principle 1 was agreed upon by each group, with some changes in wording recommended. Some participants highlighted the fact that ‘human rights’ is a sensitive term and needs to be used cautiously and with purpose. The importance of human, cultural and socio-economic rights was also raised. Others felt that the terms ‘social justice and equity’ should be included.

#### Principle 2

One group considered whether or not there was a need to single out gender equality, or would it be better to call it embodying equality? Others thought this paragraph needed to be re-worded and the term ‘equity’ inserted in the place of equality.

#### Principle 4

It was thought that this principle should emphasize the terms transparency, accountability and internal democracy. It was argued that this principle should also include unstructured, informal civil society. Some participants felt that the term ‘openness’ should be changed to ‘accountability’ and that the term ‘transparent’ was redundant, and the term ‘accountability’ should be employed in its place. It was also proposed to delete the word ‘honesty’ from this principle as it could prove difficult to quantify.

#### Principle 5

It was felt that the term ‘local’ is very difficult to define and open to interpretation. One group felt that in order to reduce the number of principles, this principle could be linked with Principle 6.

### Principle 6

Many groups pointed to the similarities between principle 5 and 6. Others felt that the phrase ‘charitable response to material needs’ ought to be eliminated.

### Principle 8

It was felt that this principle should be re-worded to encompass the phrase: ‘positive sustainable change’. The majority of groups highlighted the fact that principle 8 failed to focus on ecological sustainability and environmental issues.

On the whole, participants accepted the overall content of the principles, based as they are on the sixty plus national consultations, but recommended some minor adjustments which would ensure that the principles gained a more universal appeal.

After the plenary session finished, participants were invited to a welcome cocktail in the bar of the Larespark hotel. Whilst this activity got underway, a small re-drafting group met to discuss the proposed alterations to the Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness, and prepared a new draft of the principles for presentation the following day.



**Figure 3: Participants discuss the Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness.**

Participants arrived refreshed and eager to discuss development effectiveness at 9am on 29<sup>th</sup> of September, 2010. The small re-drafting group which had convened the night before to refine and reanalyse the principles for CSO Development Effectiveness presented the reworded Principles for participants' consideration. The drafting group welcomed feedback from the Assembly and participants were given time to voice their opinions on the newly revised principles. Although the agenda specified that this re-drafting group would present the finalised version of the Principles at this stage on Day 2, it became clear that there was still some more work to do, thus there was a slight deviation from the schedule and it was agreed that the Principles would be presented later in the day. The group charged with the task of analysing the principles reconvened whilst participants were invited to join their respective regions for discussions on the enabling environment.

### **Regional discussions on Enabling Environment**

Participants met in regional groupings to discuss the enabling environment for their respective regions and/or sectors. After a brief coffee break after the session, participants returned to their seats and Sally O'Neill (Trócaire) facilitated the discussion and feedback session on the enabling environment.

#### **Did you know?**

*You can download notes and conclusions from the discussions on enabling environment [here](#)*

The discussions were rich and lively, it seemed everybody wanted to contribute with some participants claiming that there wasn't enough time to adequately discuss the challenges faced in the different regions/sectors, thus many groups agreed to convene during their spare time to continue the discussions.

As always, participants were given a few guiding questions which helped to stimulate the debate which they then presented at the plenary session. The five questions were intended to provoke debate, ideas and suggestions.

1. What enabling environment points in the draft framework are particularly important for our region?
2. What are the 3 or 4 key minimum standards that Governments, donors and CSOs should adopt to promote an enabling environment?
3. What aspects are missing in the draft framework- if any?
4. What concrete actions can we take to start advocating for, promoting and /or creating a more enabling environment for CSOs at the national, regional and international levels?

Although groups were divided into regions, it became apparent that irrespective of their differences, the key points of an enabling environment found in the draft framework were universal in content. The absence of a legal and regulatory framework was a key issue that emerged from the workshops. It was agreed that such a framework would enable CSOs to function in an environment conducive to their work. The transparency, openness and accountability section in the draft framework also resonated strongly with participants.

It was recommended that governments honour commitments taken at a global level. Certain regions highlighted political interference as a crucial factor which hinders the creation of an enabling environment. It emerged that in certain regions, it has become commonplace for political parties to register CSOs to advocate

and promote their agenda. This is a perturbing trend identified in areas across sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and other regions. It was agreed that faith-based organisations represented a key constituency missing from the draft framework, and their role in the creation and fostering of an enabling environment is important to highlight.

There were many commonalities between the regions, and it was agreed that the creation of an enabling environment was an underlying imperative for CSO engagement. Amongst the points articulated by the different groups were a number of different factors governing the creation, promotion and advocacy for an enabling environment at the national, regional and international levels:

- Promote mutual trust and accountability between CSOs and Governments.
- Mobilize the 'citizen voice' to support advocacy on enabling environment.
- Get buy-in from Government actors and present CSO positions in the build up to the Fourth High Level Forum in Busan.
- Deepen the ownership of the principles at the national level and develop mechanisms to implement the principles.
- More inclusive dialogue.
- Shared concerns: look for issues that affect both CSOs and donors/governments and share and discuss solutions together (e.g. shared concerns about public opinion over the effectiveness of development work).
- Opportunities to participate with government in development activities (participation in the development of the national development strategy, ability to coordinate and cooperate with government).
- There is a need to create essential linkages between public, private and CSO sectors including alignment and linkages to national development plans and action on existing policy commitments made at national, regional and international levels.

It emerged from the plenary session that there needs to be more tripartite dialogue; CSOs must interact with governments and donors in an effort to clarify their position, aware that they are mutually accountable for development results. Another crucial factor in the creation of an enabling environment that came out of the enabling environment workshops was the sharing of information. CSOs from all regions felt that they needed more access to government information. Freedom of expression was viewed as the first step towards the creation of an enabling environment.

### **Guidelines, Mechanisms and Indicators**

After lunch, participants gathered for the 'Guidelines, Mechanisms and Indicators' session, in the ballroom of the Larespark hotel. Facilitators and GFG members, Maliha Khan (CARE International) and Roberto Pinauin (IBON) guided participants through the session, which discussed the technicalities behind the implementation of the eight Principles. The main objective of this session was preliminarily discuss the various guidelines, indicators and mechanisms which might be associated with each individual principle, thus participants broke up into eight different groups each with the aim of analyzing the chief indicators associated with the chosen principle. Groups were allocated forty-five minutes to discuss the various guidelines, indicators and

mechanisms, and were asked to appoint a facilitator, in addition to a reporter charged with reporting back during the plenary session the group's analysis.

It became clear during the report back session that the majority of participants felt the need to contextualize each principle and the guidelines, mechanisms and indicators related to it. Thus the guidelines, mechanisms and indicators could vary according to regional and sectoral specificities.

### **Future Factory Sessions**

Immediately after the guidelines, mechanisms and indicators session came to an end, participants broke out into workshops to discuss upcoming Open Forum activities in a session entitled 'Future Factory'. The topics discussed included: Busan and HLF4: Political Strategy, Volunteers as Development Actors, Emerging CSO/DE perspectives: Case Studies from the African continent, CSOs and Gender, CSOs working in situations of conflict, CSOs working with marginalized groups, and finally Open Space.

#### **Busan and HLF4: Political Strategy**

This workshop was facilitated by Andreas Vogt (CONCORD), Carolyn Long (Interaction and Consortium member) and Jan Dereymaeker (ITUC). The two principle goals of this political strategy were discussed; the first goal was to get endorsement of the Principles, the second to get endorsement of criteria for an enabling environment.

It was also agreed that the five main target groups consisted of; national governments (particularly their representatives intending on travelling to Busan), the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness, the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, OECD/DAC and the South Korean government. It emerged from the workshop that there is a need for national advocacy strategies and it was envisaged that these would be formulated by civil society communities, with support from the GFG and Consortium. It was also agreed that Open Forum representatives should consider approaching regional-level governments before approaching governments at the national level.

As a result of this workshop, a political strategy was drafted and disseminated to civil society stakeholders, you can access the latest version of this political strategy [here](#), as always, in the three working languages of the Open Forum; French, Spanish and English.

#### **Volunteers as Development Actors**

The volunteerism workshop was facilitated by Jake Bharier (Skillshare and Consortium member). The discussion was framed in the context of the work already achieved at the Global Assembly. The Principles and the enabling environment formed the basis of the discussions. The first part of the discussion focused on volunteerism in local society. It was felt that in many countries, particularly former Soviet Union countries, no value was placed on volunteering in the local society, and in many countries, there are negative connotations associated with the term, based on rhetoric surrounding former regimes.

The enabling environment discussion focused on the need for legal recognition of the state of volunteers, without which volunteers cannot access state benefits. Secondly, the issue of stage "encouraged"

volunteering was raised. In some countries, volunteering is a prerequisite in order to access higher education. The risks and benefits of such a system were discussed, in both developed and developing countries.

In terms of international volunteering opportunities, there was a broad consensus amongst participants that the current north/south model of volunteering failed to recognize southern capabilities.

### Emerging CSO/DE perspectives: Case Studies from the African continent (ACPPP)

ACPPP members Paul Okumu, Emily Sikazwe and Richard Ssewakiryanga facilitated this session, which was dedicated to a presentation from the African CSO Platform on Principled Partnership, of which all three facilitators are members. 2010 was a momentary year for the African continent, as eighteen African nations celebrate their fiftieth year of independence. The facilitators told participants that Africa has adopted a strategy that will reverse the undemocratic trends that are becoming apparent across the continent and open a fresh page on relationships based on respect, protection and empowerment by all development actors.

**Did you know?**  
You can find notes and reports from all of the [Future Factory sessions](#) on the [Open Forum website](#)

The presentation listed the challenges faced by CSOs in Africa in their partnership with both governments and development partners such as a lack of information, lack of peer review systems and fragmented engagement on continental policy issues. The ACPPP issued a call for “principled partnership” a partnership that “respects, protects and empowers”. You can read more about the ACPPP presentation by clicking [here](#).

### CSOs and Gender

This workshop was facilitated by Azra Sayeed (APWLD and GFG member) and featured participants from women’s associations amongst others. The group’s primary focus was on the thematic consultation on gender due to be conducted in 2011. The group focused on the mode and logistics of the consultation as well issues to be discussed during the consultation.

It was decided that that two or three sub-thematic gender consultations could be held based on a continental/regional basis. It was agreed that key focal points needed to be arranged in each region, so that one person from each region could conduct outreach and assessments of the CSOs involved with gender in each region.

Amongst the many topics proposed for inclusion in the gender consultation were; the difficulties identifying the patriarchal elements within certain CSOs and the potential difficulties involved in eliminating these patriarchal elements, the difficulties associated with ‘gender mainstreaming’ and the dilemma facing women’s’ groups who desire to work by themselves but also want to be included in mainstream activities and initiatives. Another point of discussion was how to formulate principles on how organizations engage in their respective regions.

### CSOs working in situations of conflict

Iván Marengo facilitated the workshop entitled 'CSOs working in situations of conflict'. Seven participants agreed to present a brief summary of conflicts in the regions where they work. Iván Marengo (Coordinadora Civil) presented a history of the conflict in Nicaragua, Sally O'Neill (Trócaire) spoke about the conflict in Honduras, Gloria Vela (CCONG) spoke about the conflict in Columbia, Anil Singh (Sansad) spoke about conflict in India, David Tola Winjobi (Child Adolescent and Family Survival) spoke about the conflict in Nigeria, Rosalinda Tablang (Council for People's Development and Governance) spoke about the Philippines and Nurgul Dzhanavaeva (Forum of Women NGOs) spoke about the case of Kyrgyzstan.

All participants acknowledged the fact that the difficulties faced by CSOs working in situations of conflict were strongly linked to the behavior of governments. The situations of conflict in Nicaragua, Columbia and Honduras were linked to the presence of authoritarian regimes; the conflict in Nicaragua was attributed to a brutal leftist regime, whilst Columbia and Honduras were ruled by right-wing governments.

Participants learned that the conflicts in India, Nigeria, Philippines and Kyrgyzstan were all attributed to ethnic rivalries, or armed rebellions in geographic zones within the countries. As soon as CSOs in these regions attempted to aid locals in these regions they came into conflict with local authorities in support of governments who didn't want to see any radical changes in their societies.

Consequently CSOs in these regions operate in extremely challenging circumstances. Participants agreed unanimously that there was a need to focus international attention on these issues. It was suggested that an information network should be created for CSOs working in situations of conflict; this could be done via the Open Forum website. Amongst other recommendations which came from this workshop were; the creation of a special fund for CSOs and communities working in situations of conflict, the need to stress the importance of Human Rights in these

regions amongst CSOs working in situations of conflict, and communities who abide there, and finally participants agreed that an early warning system needed to be put in place in these zones of conflict.

### CSOs working with marginalized groups

Gilbert Sape (PAN-AP) facilitated this group, which focused primarily on the thematic consultation on CSOs working with marginalized groups scheduled to take place in 2011. It was agreed that planning for the thematic consultation would involve discussions around resources, the process of the consultation, and timing. The question of funding arose, and it was agreed that if no funding were to be allocated for this thematic consultation, a global consultation of key participants who represent platforms, coalitions and alliances of marginalized groups should occur. It was agreed that the consultation should coincide with major regional meetings and that it should take place over three days, the third reserved for a multi-stakeholder debate.

#### **Did you know?**

*There are thematic consultations happening in 2011 on some of these Future Factory topics? Check out the [Thematic Consultation](#) pages for more details!*

Group participants also agreed on a definition of ‘marginalised’ groups and individuals:

Individuals and communities who are socially and economically excluded like indigenous people/tribes, dalits, internally displaced people in a conflict situation, agriculture workers, fisher folks, migrants, workers from the informal sector, landless peasants, religious-ethnic minorities ,refugees, people with disabilities, labourers, women, amongst others.

Various issues were identified in relation to marginalized groups. It was agreed that these groups routinely experience discrimination and are prevented from accessing productive and natural resources, as well as information. The crucial role of the state and of various international institutions was also identified; these entities could exacerbate or redress the issues. It was agreed that marginalized groups should occupy an important space in the Open Forum process.

### Open Space

The Open Space workshop was chaired by Timo Lappalainen (KEPA) and Franz Josef Berger (CONCORD). This workshop was to provide an open space for dialogue and discussions about pertinent issues which participants wished to discuss. The dominant topic on the agenda was strengthening North/South relationships. Among the numerous issues identified were: competition between INGOs at the local level, INGOs absorbing the work of local CSOs and thus supplanting them, the fact that INGOs work within their own development paradigm and oftentimes don’t consider local contexts, the issue surrounding the fact that some INGOs act like donors. There were some positive aspects of INGO participation in development activities in the South: INGOs can broaden the perspectives, they have the capacity to empower local CSOs and to build capacities and they are also able to mobilize valuable resources.

The group agreed on some key recommendations: INGOs need to address the root causes of poverty and injustice, northern NGOs need to engage in advocacy on behalf of their southern colleagues, INGOs need to strengthen capacities of southern partners, there must be mutual dialogue, good partner relationships need to be developed and finally, southern NGOs must be self-reflective and accountable.

### **Presentation and Endorsement of the Principles of CSO Development Effectiveness**

After a well-deserved coffee break, participants returned to the ballroom at the Larespark and the revised Principles of CSO Development Effectiveness were presented by the re-drafting group. You can download your own copy of the [Istanbul Principles](#) from the Open Forum website.

The final endorsed principles are as follows:

#### **1. Respect and promote human rights and social justice**

**CSOs are effective as development actors when they ...** develop and implement strategies, activities and practices that promote individual and collective human rights, including the right to development, with dignity, decent work, social justice and equity for all people.

#### **2. Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girl’s rights**

**CSOs are effective as development actors when they ...** promote and practice development cooperation embodying gender equity, reflecting women's concerns and experience, while supporting women's efforts to realize their individual and collective rights, participating as fully empowered actors in the development process.

**3. Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation**

**CSOs are effective as development actors when they ...** support the empowerment and inclusive participation of people to expand their democratic ownership over policies and development initiatives that affect their lives, with an emphasis on the poor and marginalized.

**4. Promote Environmental Sustainability**

**CSOs are effective as development actors when they ...** develop and implement priorities and approaches that promote environmental sustainability for present and future generations, including urgent responses to climate crises, with specific attention to the socio-economic, cultural and indigenous conditions for ecological integrity and justice.

**5. Practice transparency and accountability**

**CSOs are effective as development actors when they ...** demonstrate a sustained organizational commitment to transparency, multiple accountability, and integrity in their internal operations.

**6. Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity**

**CSOs are effective as development actors when they ...** commit to transparent relationships with CSOs and other development actors, freely and as equals, based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organizational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity and global citizenship.

**7. Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning**

**CSOs are effective as development actors when they ...** enhance the ways they learn from their experience, from other CSOs and development actors, integrating evidence from development practice and results, including the knowledge and wisdom of local and indigenous communities, strengthening innovation and their vision for the future they would like to see.

**8. Commit to realizing positive sustainable change**

**CSOs are effective as development actors when they ...** collaborate to realize sustainable outcomes and impacts of their development actions, focusing on results and conditions for lasting change for people, with special emphasis on poor and marginalized populations, ensuring an enduring legacy for present and future generations.<sup>5</sup>

These principles were endorsed by all participants at the Global Assembly.

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<sup>5</sup> **Please note**, the Istanbul Principles, as agreed at the Open Forum's Global Assembly in Istanbul, September 28 -30, 2010, are the foundation of the Open Forum's Draft *International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness*. These principles are further elaborated in Version 2 of this *Framework*, which has been updated and can be found on the Open Forum's web site, [www.cso-effectiveness.org](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org).

## **Global Facilitation Group Nominations**

Following on from the endorsement of the Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness, participants were given the opportunity to re-elect the Global Facilitation Group of the Open Forum. You can read more about the GFG Nomination procedure [here](#). The GFG is comprised of representatives from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Middle East and North Africa, North America, Pacific, as well as Women's Organisations and International CSO networks. The deadline for the submission of nominations was the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, 2010, and all candidates were required to submit a completed nomination form in conjunction with a letter of endorsement from the head of the organization applying, and an application form filled with information about their organization. Nominations were screened for adherence to basic criteria and organized per region or sector. A comprehensive list containing all of the nominations received, grouped by region or sector, were distributed amongst the participants on Day 1 of the Global Assembly.

Participants met for one hour in their regional or sectoral groupings to discuss the nominations received and decide on the successful candidates for their region/ sector. At the conclusion of this session, the following GFG members was elected:

### ***Africa***

- AACC-All Africa Conference of Churches-consortium member.
- Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR)
- Collectif des ONG pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et le Développement Rural (COSADER)
- Réseau des Plateformes Nationales d'ONG d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre (REPAOC)
- Uganda NGO Forum

### ***Asia***

- Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN)
- China Association for NGO Cooperation
- Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
- Korea NGO Council for Overseas Cooperation
- NGO Jahon

### ***Europe***

- European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD) (Consortium Member)
- Civil Society Institute Georgia
- FoRS (Czech platform of Development NGOs)
- Nordic

### ***Latin America and the Caribbean***

- Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción (ALOP) (Consortium Member)
- Coordinadora Civil de Nicaragua (CC)
- Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras de las Américas (CSA)
- Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social (UNITAS)

### ***Middle East and Northern Africa***

- Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)

### ***North America***

- InterAction -American Council for Voluntary International Action (Consortium Member)
- Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC)

### ***Pacific***

- Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organizations

### ***International CSO Networks***

- Action by Churches Together (ACT)
- CARE International
- CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation
- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
- People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)
- Plan International

### ***Women's Organisations***

- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)

## DAY 3 September 30<sup>th</sup> 2010

The third and final day of the Open Forum Global Assembly, the Multi-stakeholder Day, began early in the ballroom of the Larespark hotel, and welcomed many new participants to the Assembly representing donors, governments and various INGOs who arrived for this important dialogue opportunity.

The chief objective of the multi-stakeholder day was to initiate debate amongst key stakeholders on the issue of development effectiveness. Participants were welcomed to the event by the GFG co-chairs, Susana Erostequi and Daniel Svoboda, as well as the co-chairs of the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness, Lena Ingelstam (Sida), Brian Tomlinson (CCIC) and Modibu Makalou (Government of Mali).

Following these introductory remarks, and considering the number of new participants to the Global Assembly, Amy Bartlett (Open Forum) and Camilla Linstrom (Sida) introduced a mingling activity which was designed to provoke debate and create momentum ahead of the multi-stakeholder roundtable discussions. The mingling activity required people to adopt an identity different to their own: donor representatives became civil society representatives, government representatives became civil society representatives etc. Participants were asked to reach under their chair where they discovered their new identity.

A 'typical' development scenario was presented to the participants for role playing, and the situation seemed familiar to participants at the Global Assembly. Participants gathered for ten minutes to discuss their respective roles, and to try and comprehend the 'other person's' perspective. They were then given ten minutes to re-focus the debate, and to interact with their colleagues in a spirit of goodwill, trust and cooperation. Participants ended with comments on the value of shifting perspectives, and participated in the remainder of the day with a fresh perspective on the development actors around the table.

### Multi-stakeholder Roundtables

There were a total six roundtable discussions held for a period of two hours throughout the Larespark and surrounding hotels. Discussions were enriched by participants' lively engagement on the issues surrounding development effectiveness. The roundtables and Facilitators were as follows:

'Recognition of the role of CSOs as Development Actors'	Chaired by Jacqueline Wood (CIDA) and Emele Duituturaga (PIANGO)
'CSO accountability and best practice'	Facilitated by Adele Poskitt (CIVICUS), Lun Borithy (CCC) and Camilla Lindstrom (Sida).
'Managing development for results and mutual accountability'	Franz Josef Berger (CONCORD) and Hubert de Milly (OECD)
'CSOs and Capacity Development'	Silvia Guizzardì (OECD) and Bohdan Maslych (GURT Resource Centre)
'Equitable North/South CSO relations'	Chaired by Carol Grigsby (USAID) and Bright Mawudor (AACC)
'CSO Guidelines/Donor Standards: Implementing Development Effectiveness Principles'	Okko-Pekka Salmimimies (Finnish MFA) and Vazha Salamadze (Civil Society Institute)

After these two hour roundtable discussions (and a lunch break), Johanna Mang (Austrian Development Agency) and Bakary Doumbia (FECONG) chaired the plenary discussion where reporters from each of the six roundtables presented the key issues, conclusions and debates to the plenary group for further discussion. Below are summaries of the roundtable discussions.

### *Recognition of the Role of CSOs as Development Actors*

This group, chaired by Jacqueline Wood (CIDA) and Emele Duituturaga (PIANGO), began discussions by asking participants to define what the term ‘CSOs as Development Actors’ means to them. The group agreed upon the following definition:

*CSOs are vibrant groups with the common purpose of playing multiple roles and complementing governments’ roles in the process of developing a society.*

As development actors, it was agreed that a number of key identifying features govern the role of CSOs in the development process. Firstly, CSOs are not sub-contractors but are a pre-condition for the existence of any stable society. CSOs are also political agitators, with an in-depth knowledge of what democracy is and how it works. CSOs contribute to policy making, and monitor government projects, giving advice where necessary. CSOs play the role of ‘ombudsman’ and form the primary link between governments, the governed and other actors.

It was agreed that the kind of recognition sought by CSOs was broad in scope and that legal and or structural recognition was needed to guard against interference. The group agreed that CSOs should maintain the right to audit government and be allowed access information without any hindrance. It was also agreed that CSOs should speak for and with society, and be rooted in that society. It was noted that skilled development actors ought not to be in competition with governments but could rather collaborate with these governments.

The group decided on some key messages for the plenary session. Firstly, there should be mutual accountability between donors to governments and CSOs. CSOs should familiarise themselves with the framework for CSO Development Effectiveness which could serve as a guide in their operation. It was agreed that donors have a certain responsibility to create more ‘space’ in developing countries for dialogue and open, transparent discussions. Finally, each member of the group agreed that development is not about state building, but about nation building and this should be the core objective for all stakeholders.

### *CSO Accountability and Best Practice*

This discussion was facilitated by Adele Poskitt (CIVICUS), Lun Borithy (CCC) and Camilla Lindstrom (Sida). Lun Borithy began by presenting a best practice case from Cambodia where there is a certification process in place, a certificate guaranteed for up to 3 years with constant monitoring in place. Columbia also has a certification mechanism in place, it involves self-certification. It was agreed that certification is not just a

matter of acquiring a certificate, there should be emphasis placed on improving accountability. Certification is a process, and as such is only one step in the creation of and drive towards accountable CSOs.

The main issues surrounding the discussion on CSO accountability and best practice revolved around certification. It was felt that certification can sometimes exclude weaker and smaller organisations. Donors can choose which organisation is in charge of certification and in this manner, can learn about their own processes regarding the allocation of funds. It was agreed that the inherent danger with certification lies in a government's ability to use this method to rule out an opposing organisation. Participants agreed that there is no one size fits all mechanism and various mechanisms are needed to ensure all CSOs are accounted for. It was agreed that certification and capacity building go together.

#### *Managing Development for Results and Mutual Accountability*

This discussion was facilitated by Franz Josef Berger (CONCORD) and Hubert de Milly (OECD). The discussion centred on the issues of transparency, the variable and often subjective nature of transparency, accountability with a particular focus on social accountability which it was felt is often overlooked and finally, the usefulness of the Istanbul Principles. The issue of the logical framework approach and the possibility of pre-determined results was raised; some donors felt this was a crucial part of the development process whilst others disagreed. It was felt that some donors emphasised short-term results, while citizens want long-term results.

It was agreed that there was space for innovation for donors, governments and CSOs alike.

#### *CSOs and Capacity Development*

This discussion was facilitated by Silvia Guizzardi (OECD) and Bohdan Maslych (GURT Resource Centre). Silvia Guizzardi presented a comprehensive analysis of capacity building as referenced in the Accra Agenda for Action. Paragraph 13b calls for increased capacity of all development actors including CSOs. Paragraph 20 ensures that both CSOs and the private sector abide by their respective roles. Most donors have capacity building guidelines but the extent to which these are implemented remains unclear. CSOs can act as capacity development providers, and capacity development should ensure enable CSOs to play an effective role in the development process.

Amongst the key messages that arose from this discussion was the issue of sustainability; capacity building programmes should be long-term and comprehensive. CSOs need to identify their own needs and need to provide/request capacity building support according to these needs. It was agreed that donors should use different capacity development approaches to respond to the different needs of grassroots and professional organisations. Donors should also support CSOs to use developed capacities as part of sustainability and exit strategies. It was felt that governments should provide fiscal incentives to support the growth of local philanthropy as a way of contributing to CSO resource sustainability. Government should also commit to implementing the Accra Agenda for Action Capacity Development clause by simplifying information and

publishing results. All stakeholders should support ownership of capacity development by CSOs, and a pool of experts from local CSOs should be created to facilitate this.

### *Equitable North/South CSO relations*

This session was chaired by Carol Grigsby (USAID) and Bright Mawudor (AACC). The group began by identifying key issues in the relationship between CSOs from the north and south. The persistent imbalance in power relations continues to be a problem. There is a noted increase on 'bureaucracy' and the focus has become on administration rather than strategy. CSOs are disempowered in both the north and south. It was noted that these relationships are evolving in constantly changing context, and while the current development focus is on outcomes and impact this could be subject to change. There is a notable discrepancy between aid/trade and foreign policy. New donor trends in contractual relationships are weakening southern CSOs capacity.

This group also identified some worrying trends in the relationship between CSOs north and south. There is a notable increase in competition amongst INGOs and local CSOs for funds and policy spaces. More INGOs are taking on implementer roles, this results in the eventual displacement of the local CSO and violates partnerships. Donor conditions often require that INGOs hire expats for roles which qualified local staff could fill.

The group agreed that a new reflection is needed, on what it means to practice equitable partnerships. It was agreed that, henceforth, values of solidarity need to underpin the discussions. Politics needs to be included in the discourse. The group suggested that the impact of division of labour trends on CSO roles and relationships needs to be monitored. Core funding needs to be maintained for CSOs in the south to ensure sustainable and strong organisations. Finally, the group wanted to impart their final message to participants at the Global Assembly; development problems are not just southern issues, it is imperative to keep a focus on the interconnected and transnational nature of the development challenges everybody involved with development works on.

### *CSO Guidelines / Donor Standards: Implementing CSO Development Effectiveness Principles*

This last session was facilitated by Okko-Pekka Salmimimies (Finnish MFA) and Vazha Salamadze (Civil Society Institute). The group worked on identifying a key priority to ensure the successful implementation of the CSO Development Effectiveness Principles; it was agreed that the need to obtain financial backing was a key priority. It was agreed that donor policy coherence should be a priority. National platforms have important roles to play and need to adopt more active accountability structures.

It was suggested that thematic involvement needs to be considered. Advocacy tools will be crucial in this process. The group identified some key issues with regards the implementation of the Principles. Firstly, it will be necessary to recognise the critical role and autonomy of CSOs. There is a need to discuss with donors the role of CSOs. Finally, it will be necessary to collect all available data on pilot initiatives currently underway.

### **Minimum Standards for an Enabling Environment**

In this session, participants were given ninety minutes to discuss opportunities and challenges for governments, civil society organisations as well as donors in developing minimum standards for an enabling environment. Leah Ingelstam (Sida), Modibu Makalu (Malian government) and Lee Kyungshin (KCOC) facilitated the plenary session and report back.

### **Closing Session**

Susana Erostequi and Daniel Svoboda announced the conclusion of the Global Assembly, and just as they had inaugurated the event, they also delivered the closing words. Each pronounced the Assembly to have been an ‘unprecedented’ success, meeting and even surpassing everybody’s expectations by endorsing the eight Principles for CSO development effectiveness. Susana said that a number of conclusions had been reached at the Assembly. She pointed to the need for CSOs to be able to hold decision makers to account, the need for strong institutions, without which civil society is unable to build capacities. She also pointed to the need to develop strategies for the dissemination and implementation of the Principles, and for an open public debate on the effectiveness of CSOs in each national context.

As participants had gathered to hear the different perspectives offered by CSOs, government and donor representatives, it was only fitting that each representative would be given ‘homework’ to take home! During the final section of the closing session, participants were asked to contribute towards a set of to-do lists, acknowledging all that they had learned and discussed throughout the multi-stakeholder day. You can download a copy of these to-do lists [here](#), in all three languages of the Open Forum.

After more than thirty-six hours of discussions, debates, cooperation and achievements, participants applauded the end of the Open Forum Global Assembly, inspired by the momentum garnered during the three days, and ready to bring the conclusions, energy and tools from the Global Assembly to their national and regional contexts. As the [evaluation results](#) testify, the Open Forum Global Assembly was deemed a success by participants, and fulfilled its mandate to present the preliminary findings from the national consultations and the draft International Framework, and to initiate multi-stakeholder debate and discussion on CSO development effectiveness.