

**From Accra to Busan:
The road we've travelled**

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I want to join with others in welcoming everyone to this historic Civil Society Forum. This is indeed a very impressive global forum as we prepare to take our place in the coming days as equal participants in the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

When we look back six and a half years to HLF2 in Paris where 25 or 30 CSOs were invited to make one presentation from the side-lines, we have come a remarkable distance in terms of process and engagement. At the same time we are also very aware of the real lack of significant progress in turning the Paris Declaration norms and commitments into meaningful development on the ground in many of your countries.

The purpose of my presentation this morning is to remind you of the breadth of work undertaken over the past three years since the 2008 Accra High Level Forum. What are some of the markers along this road from Accra to Busan that we should keep in mind as we tackle the opportunities and challenges before us in the coming days?

Many of the CSO policy asks at Accra reflect very much our proposals today for HLF4: a focus on human rights approach with a recognition of the centrality of poverty reduction, gender equality, social justice, decent work and environmental sustainability; strengthening civic actors in development through democratic ownership; addressing the imbalance of power in donor partner country relationships (such as conditionality or aid untying); and commit to measuring progress against meaningful indicators.

We had very mixed reviews for the Accra Agenda for Action. We saw some important progress in norms – a more inclusive, but not democratic, understanding of “country ownership” in policy processes, a passing acknowledgement of human rights and gender equality, more attention to standards for improved transparency and commitments on aid predictability, and finally the big gain at Accra for civil society – recognition as development actors in our own right and a commitment by other aid actors – donors and governments – to create enabling conditions to

maximize CSO contributions to development. But much of our Accra agenda remained largely “unfinished business”.

This “unfinished business” has shaped our priorities in our work over these past three years. We organized ourselves globally, regionally and nationally to create a shared understanding of issues in aid and development effectiveness; we carried out numerous dialogues with government and donor officials on the implementation of Paris and Accra commitments, and we took advantage of unique opportunities to participate as full members in the Working Party to shape the agenda for Busan.

I want to share with you three inter-related dimensions of these civil society efforts: 1) our significant engagement inside multi-stakeholder policy processes; 2) our efforts as civil society to address issues of our own effectiveness and the enabling conditions required to be effective development actors; and 3) your work to deepen engagement at the country and regional level to affect change where it matters on the ground.

First, we have learned a lot about how to carry forward our agenda within multi-stakeholder policy processes, working with officials from donors and developing country governments, as well as parliamentarians, taking full advantage of BetterAid’s membership in the Working Party and on its Executive Committee since late 2008.

This role in the Working Party has given civil society a unique opportunity to influence from the inside, with full access to documents, but also with the right to participate with donors and developing country government officials in policy-oriented Clusters – there were work streams on democratic ownership and accountability, on enabling conditions for CSO development effectiveness, on procurement and the use of country systems, on south-south cooperation, on aid conditionality, on predictability and aid transparency, on financial management country systems. And there were many, many would say too many, which often stretching our capacity to be effective!

In some clusters, our presence was welcomed and encouraged – work streams within Cluster A on democratic ownership and accountability come to mind. In others, often those with highly contested agendas, conditionality or managing for results come to mind, CSOs have had to continuously push to be included and to ensure our views were reflected in what were said to be

“consensus building processes” on these themes. Many of these cluster debates will be present in our preparations for the various HLF4 sessions.

We have made some inroads that are now reflected in the BOD with some but certainly not all, stakeholders – acknowledging “democratic ownership”, linking human rights and enabling conditions for CSOs, or focusing on cooperation for development effectiveness.

Working in a multi-stakeholder environment has also meant different ways of work for civil society policy advocacy. We have accepted responsibilities to find common ground positions with other stakeholders, where the goal is to raise the policy bar for all stakeholders. However, often, the policy outcomes have at best approximated “progress”, when measured against the BetterAid agenda.

A second important dimension of our work since 2008 has been our own work as civil society. We worked through the Open Forum to substantially address issues in our effectiveness as development actors in our own right.

This has been a CSO-led initiative, understood by CSOs to be an essential and integral part of our agenda for development effectiveness. If development effectiveness is focused on the capacities of poor and marginalized populations to claim their rights in development, then for CSOs, strengthening the capacities of CSOs to contribute to development effectiveness means examining our own practices in that regard. But it has also meant challenging the policies and practices of donors and developing country governments with the evidence that they have increasingly restricted effective CSO roles in development.

Through the Open Forum CSOs have met our Accra commitments. Through consultations in more than 70 countries, regions and sectors ...

- ❖ We have achieved a global CSO consensus on a set of principles that define CSOs’ development effectiveness -- the eight *Istanbul Principles on CSO Development Effectiveness*;
- ❖ We recognize that implementing these principles is challenging for all of us. And so to help us carry these principles into our practice we have also set out guidelines, standards and approaches in the *Siem Reap Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness* and in Implementation and Advocacy Toolkits.

- ❖ And, we have initiated dialogue with governments in developing and donor countries, at all levels, on issues in the enabling environment for CSOs. We have a starting point with some standards agreed by the multi-stakeholder Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment.

The enabling environment is a crucial issue for CSOs here in Busan. We need better language in the Outcome Document that stresses that CSO enabling conditions must be based on human rights standards derived from international agreements and treaties.

But clearly our efforts to date are not enough. We need to redouble our efforts with others such as Civicus and Mr. Kiai to address these crucial issues in enabling conditions. But CSOs also need to treat the Istanbul Principles seriously -- in the coming months, we need create our own processes to look critically at our practices, our modalities for accountability and our transparency. The Istanbul Principles and Framework should be thoroughly embedded in our collective efforts as we go forward as BetterAid to transform cooperation for development at all levels.

And this brings me to the third and final broad area of our work since Accra, which is your work at the country and regional level. Through more than 30 different country and thematic consultations in the past 18 months, hundreds of CSOs have been monitoring the implementation of Paris and Accra on the ground. Have these agreements translated into structures and conditions for democratic ownership, in aid predictability? How transparent are the actual resources for development cooperation and budgets? What impact has there been on poverty reduction, decent work, on women's rights, or the rights of disabled populations and excluded minorities?

While most of this work took place under the banners of CSOs as members of BetterAid and the Reality of Aid Network, we are also aware that various networks – faith-based organizations, international NGOs, women's organizations, rural and food sovereignty groups, the international trade union federation, among others -- undertook their own parallel processes.

These are essential experiences – you have deepened CSO knowledge of the development effectiveness agenda among a broad constituency of CSOs; you have challenged other stakeholders and thereby contributed to more effective implementation on the ground. You brought this experience to BetterAid's engagement with the Working Party, and now in the many statements

your constituencies have brought to Busan. No matter what the outcomes of HLF4 next week, they know that you are not going away; that your efforts at the country level after Busan will be the critical ingredient for moving forward for real change for development, for the rights of those living in poverty.

The Reality of Aid Network brought together some of your evidence of the gaps in implementation in a special 2011 Report, Democratic Ownership and Development Effectiveness: Civil Society Perspectives on Progress since Paris. It draws on the experience of 32 country and thematic authors. The Report highlights evidence on deeply rooted structural barriers that stand in the way of peoples' participation in shaping development outcomes through democratic institutions and consultations. All of this evidence that we bring to Busan suggests that the distance traveled for aid and development outcomes for poor people, for women, for sustainable livelihoods, has been very modest at best.

Now, here at Busan, unlike in Paris six and a half years ago, 300 CSOs are full participants in HLF4 where we will affirm norms – norms based on human rights standards – for all development actors. We will continue to press for deep reforms in both the structure and practices of development cooperation – reforms that give primacy to eradicating poverty, that focus on realizing women's rights and empowerment, so crucial for development progress, on the rights of children, on decent work and the rights of the disabled, for norms that put in place conditions citizens engagement for peace and democratic practice, that embeds environmental justice in development, that together make up our collective project for global justice.

We have three years of experience working with governments and other development stakeholders ready to make significant progress on this agenda. I wish all of us the best success as we prepare to take advantage of the many opportunities we will have in the coming days to shape the outcome of this Busan High Level Forum.

Thank you.