

## BACKGROUND NOTE 5

### THE OPEN FORUM: ORGANIZATION OF THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

#### CREATING A GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY CONSENSUS

With thousands of CSOs around the world involved in international development, building of a global civil society consensus on development effectiveness will be complex. The “Open Forum” two-year consultative process (September 2009 to October 2011), at country, sectoral and thematic levels (see Box 1), is intended to foster both civil society ownership of the process and collective outcomes. CSO networks and national platforms will be mobilized to lead outreach, communications and awareness-raising about the Open Forum. These processes will be facilitated by the Open Forum’s Global Facilitation Group (GFG) (see Background Note 4, *The Open Forum: How it is Governed and Led by CSOs*).

#### Box 1 Overview of CSO Consultations

**Country consultations:** Fifty consultations will be funded by the Open Forum budget (15 in Sub-Saharan Africa; 17 in Asia and Northern Africa; 4 in Eastern Europe; 2 in the Pacific; 12 in Latin America and the Caribbean), and additional consultations in other Northern countries will be financed through self-identified sources.

**For international thematic and sectoral consultations:** For example, conflict, gender, equality and women’s rights, rural marginalised populations, churches, trade unions and international NGO networks.

**Five regional workshops:** Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America.

The country / regional consultations will include multi-stakeholder dialogues with donors and developing country governments to develop proposals for an agreement on minimum standards for an enabling environment for CSO development effectiveness.

The outcomes of the consultations will be synthesized and analyzed by the GFG and brought to a Global Assembly of the Open Forum in mid-2010 (see Diagram 1). This Global Assembly will bring together CSO representatives to prepare, based on the results of the consultation process, a draft *International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness*. The Global Assembly will also host a global multi-stakeholder dialogue on enabling conditions for CSO development effectiveness with donors and governments, building on country and regional consultations.

Following the first Global Assembly, the GFG will continue to work on and build support for the draft CSO development effectiveness

framework. The *International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness* will be finalized at a second Global Assembly of the Open Forum in early 2011. This Global Assembly will also revisit the consultation outcomes and develop recommendations for CSOs, donors and governments leading to the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in South Korea in 2011.

## **WHY ARE COUNTRY CONSULTATIONS BEING HELD?**

The Open Forum is based on the recognition that CSOs, as development actors in their own right, have a responsibility to lead a process to improve their own effectiveness. The strength and legitimacy of the outcomes of the Open Forum depend upon maximum CSO participation. Experiences and lessons will vary at each national level. The GFG will be seeking robust consultations at the country level in order to allow the greatest possible number of local and national CSOs to explore, discuss and define CSO development effectiveness. Where feasible, country-level consultations with governments and donors will also be held because national level engagement with these actors is key to CSO development effectiveness, as governments and donors have a strong influence over conditions that enable good CSO practices.

## **WHO WILL BE ORGANIZING CONSULTATIONS?**

At the country level, the GFG will invite national platforms or other CSO networks to organize consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues. For thematic / sectoral consultations, the GFG will work with international CSO networks with a strong capacity, track record and interest in the proposed theme / sector (e.g. women's organizations, churches, labour, etc.).

A Consortium of six CSOs, appointed by the GFG, will provide support to the Open Forum process and training for country-level hosts of consultations (see Background Note 4). Each consortium member will be responsible for specific regions:

- ❑ Sub-Saharan Africa: All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)
- ❑ Asia, Middle East and North Africa: Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN)
- ❑ Europe: European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD)
- ❑ North America and the Pacific (including Australia, New Zealand and Japan): InterAction
- ❑ Latin America and the Caribbean: Latin American Association of Development Organisations (ALOP)
- ❑ International NGOs not affiliated to a specific world region: CIVICUS

## **WHAT IS THE TOPIC OF THE CONSULTATIONS?**

Two-day country-level consultations will provide an opportunity for CSOs to identify key elements for a shared CSO development effectiveness framework. The Global Facilitation Group has developed a Toolkit for organizing consultations to ensure consistent coverage of areas of concern (CSO development effectiveness principles, guidelines and accountability frameworks relevant to country context and external enabling conditions). Each country will structure its own national consultations. Examples of principles and guidelines have been provided in short thematic papers prepared by the GFG. Where possible, a one-day multi-stakeholder dialogue with donors and governments will be organized after CSO-consultations to address conditions enabling or disabling CSOs to contribute effectively to development.

## **WHO IS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSULTATIONS?**

The legitimacy of national consultations will require the participation of a wide range of CSOs. In the run-up to the consultation, outreach to all types of CSOs (trade unions, NGOs, social movements, community-based organizations, CSOs from rural areas etc.) will be crucial.

## **HOW WILL SECTORAL / THEMATIC CONSULTATIONS BE ORGANIZED?**

International-level thematic or sectoral consultations on CSO development effectiveness will be organized from among such areas as: conflict; gender and women's rights; social movements of the most marginalized (urban and rural poor, landless populations); trade unions, and international NGOs. For each sector, the GFG will invite a global network with a strong position and / or expertise in a certain sector / theme to lead the consultation.

## **WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH THE OUTPUT OF THE CONSULTATIONS?**

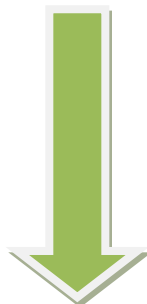
The outcomes of each consultation workshop will be recorded. Organizers of the consultations will be encouraged to use a common GFG template to facilitate writing an overall synthesis report for the first Global Assembly in 2010.

The first Global Assembly of the Open Forum will begin a global consensus-building process leading to the establishment of an *International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness*. The *Framework* will be finalized at a second Global Assembly in 2011 when CSOs will also mobilize for the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum in Seoul, South Korea (see Diagram 1).

## Diagram 1: The Open Forum's Consultative Process

2009

Start of the Process (September 2009)  
Regional, Country and Thematic / Sectoral  
Consultations



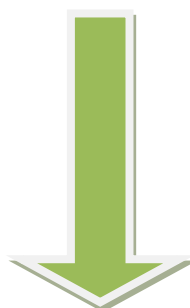
*Regional preparatory workshops*

*Country-level and thematic and  
sectoral consultations, as well as  
outreach at all levels*

*Political dialogue at all levels*

2010

First Global Assembly (Mid-2010)  
To take stock of consultations and political dialogues  
and prepare a draft CSO development effectiveness  
framework



*Consensus building on principles and  
guidelines for CSO development  
effectiveness*

*Multi-stakeholder dialogue on minimum  
standards for enabling conditions for CSO  
development effectiveness dialogue*

*Outreach to build support for a CSO  
development effectiveness framework*

2011

Second Global Assembly (Early 2011)  
To finalize consensus-building on the proposed  
CSO development effectiveness framework and to  
mobilize CSOs for the Fourth High-Level Forum  
(HLF4)



*Political strategies to influence HLF4*

*Dialogue and negotiations on minimum  
standards*

Fourth High-Level Forum in Seoul (October 2011)