

CSOs on the Road from Accra to Busan

CSO Initiatives to Strengthen Development Effectiveness

DOCUMENTING THE EXPERIENCES OF THE CSO BETTERAID PLATFORM
AND THE OPEN FORUM ON CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

BetterAid

in cooperation with



Brian Tomlinson

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and the Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness*

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in cooperation with
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Preface and Acknowledgements

Since the 2008 Accra High Level Forum, hundreds of CSOs have been collaborating globally and in their various countries through the BetterAid Platform to bring about significant reforms in development cooperation. These reforms are aimed at creating a more equitable and just architecture for development cooperation. They seek to strengthen the efforts of all development actors to focus on democratic development, social justice and the realization of human rights in the face of mounting impacts global economic, social and climatic crises on poor and marginalized populations around the world. They seek an effective enabling environment for CSOs contributing to development outcomes around the world.

BetterAid participated alongside governments and donors in the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and in the fourth High Level Forum in Busan, Korea, in November 2011. They came to Busan with a global CSO consensus on Key Messages and Proposals, based on two years of extensive country, regional and sectoral outreach and consultations around the world. This outreach, was facilitated by IBON International and the Reality of Aid network. The direct inclusion of CSOs in the Working Party and in the negotiations for the outcome of Busan were highly unique policy experiences for CSO policy engagement in a multilateral arena.

CSOs have also acknowledged their responsibilities to improve the effectiveness and accountability of their development efforts. Since July 2008, thousands of CSOs have taken up the challenge to define the principles and practices that should shape their own effectiveness in development as distinct, diverse and independent development actors. These initiatives came together in an extraordinary journey of self-reflection through the global CSO-led Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness. Through country, regional and thematic consultations, CSO reflected and reached a global consensus on the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and the Siem Reap Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness, frameworks for implementation of the Principles.

At HLF4, all development actors were acknowledged in the Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation the Istanbul Principles and the International Framework. Guided by the Principles, CSOs have committed to take proactive actions in their own contexts to improve and be more fully accountable for their development practices. The International Framework, with its principles, norms and guidelines, and proposals for an enabling environment, has made a significant contribution to global efforts to strengthen CSO collaboration with other development actors. In

the coming years making progress on enabling conditions in donor and government policy will be crucial for CSOs in realizing the vision of the Istanbul Principles.

Over the past three years, on the road from Accra to Busan, BetterAid and Open Forum carried out unique, multi-faceted CSO and multi-stakeholder processes. They were also highly complex, engaging and inter-dependent with other development actors, particularly at both the country level and through the Working Party. This book is an effort to document these initiatives, bringing together information on how the processes evolved, what were the main policy directions, and what were the main outcomes.

A deeper understanding of the processes has been greatly enhanced by interviews and an online survey with different stakeholders, many of whom were very much actors within and alongside BetterAid and Open Forum. The book extracts quotations from the survey and interviews to create a more dynamic perspective. The author is deeply appreciative of those who took the time to give their understanding and opinions on what was accomplished. While the quotations identify the person and an organizational affiliation, those who were interviewed or responded to the survey did so in their personal capacity. Their views cannot be taken to represent in any way the positions of their respective organizational affiliation.

The author, Brian Tomlinson, has also been very closely associated with BetterAid and Open Forum over these three years. A personal reflection on the processes is unavoidable. I take full responsibility for any errors or omissions in the content of the book, in the interpretation of activities, and in the selection and transcription of the quotations. It was a privileged opportunity to reflect on these three years of work. I can be reached at brian.t.tomlinson@gmail.com.

Finally, I wish to express my deep appreciation for the support of the BetterAid Secretariat (Roberto Pinauin, Goldie Liza Tanglao, Matt Simonds and Reileen Dulay) and the Open Forum Secretariat (Amy Bartlett and Gaelle Nicodeme) for their financial support and collaboration in documenting these processes. They have contributed both their repository of knowledge, as well as their keen insights on the text. Documentation would not have been possible without their support and the collaboration of dozens of informants who participated in interviews and answered survey questions. They are an inspiration for the next stages post-Busan in realizing more just, inclusive and effective practices in development cooperation.

Brian Tomlinson
June 2012

Table of Contents

Acronyms	vii
Introduction and Summary	1
Chapter One	
Setting the Stage: A Comprehensive CSO Process for HLF4	9
Chapter Two	
What was accomplished?	27
Chapter Three	
Membership in the Working Party: Setting an agenda for development effectiveness	39
Chapter Four	
At the Table: Perspectives on negotiating the outcomes of Busan	67
Chapter Five	
Open Forum: Determining the principles and guideline for CSO development effectiveness	77
Chapter Six	
Changing Conditions on the Ground: Engaging developing country governments and donors in the Busan process	100
Chapter Seven	
An Enabling Environment for CSO Development Effectiveness	117
Chapter Eight	
Reflections on Busan: Shaping Post-Busan actions	127
Annex A	
Timeline of the Key Activities in the CSO Processes to Busan	137
Annex B	
BetterAid Coordinating Group Membership	138

Annex C	
Membership of the Open Forum Global Facilitating Group	140
Annex D	
Summary of BetterAid Key Messages and Proposals for Busan	142
Annex E	
Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Selected Paragraphs	144
Annex F	
IBON/Reality of Aid Country Outreach: Location of Multi-stakeholder Consultations	146
Annex G	
Location of Open Forum Consultations	147
Annex H	
The Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles	148
Annex I	
Approaches to Strengthen CSO Accountability Mechanisms, The Siem Reap Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness	150
Annex J	
Multi-Stakeholder Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment - Summary of Key Messages for the Busan HLF4	151
Annex K	
Conditions for Successful Multi-Stakeholder Processes, Lessons from the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment	153
Annex L	
Interviews for the Documentation Project	155
Key Documents	157
Endnotes	162

Acronyms

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action (Outcome Document for HLF3)
AF	Africa Union
AG-CS	Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness
APWLD	Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
BACG	BetterAid Coordination Group (BetterAid Platform)
BGCSF	Busan Global Civil Society Forum
BOD	Busan Outcome Document for HLF4
BPd	Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, sometimes referred to as the BOD, the Busan Outcome Document
CCIC	Canadian Council for International Cooperation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
Cluster A	Voluntary cluster of stakeholders in the Working Party reviewing evidence and making proposals on democratic ownership and mutual accountability
CORT	Country Outreach Team (based in IBON, working with the Reality of Aid Network)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DCD	Development Cooperation Directorate [for the DAC]
DCF	Development Cooperation Forum (UN ECSOC biannual Forum on development cooperation)
EURODAD	European Network on Debt and Development
GAEF	Ghana Aid Effectiveness Forum
GFG	Global Facilitation Group (Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness)
HLF3	Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Accra, September 2008
HLF4	Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Busan, November 2011
INGOs	International Non-governmental organizations, also referred to as ICSO, International Civil Society Organizations
ISG	International Steering Group (CSO coordinating mechanism pre-Accra)
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
KoFID	Korea Civil Society Forum on International Development Cooperation
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development (within the Africa Union)
PCFS	People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty
PBIG	Post Busan Interim Group (preparing the post-Busan architecture)
RoA	Reality of Aid Network
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
TT-CSO	Task Team on Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Enabling

	Environment (within WP-EFF Cluster A)
TT-SSC	Task Team on South-South Cooperation (within the Working Party)
UKAN	UK Aid Network
WIDE	European feminist network of women's organizations, development NGOs, gender specialists and women's rights activists.
WP-EFF	Working Party on Aid Effectiveness

Introduction and Summary

Without any doubt, ‘the road from Accra to Busan’ has been an eventful one for civil society. Recognized at HLF3 in Accra in 2008 as “development actors in their own right”, CSOs as the BetterAid Platform broke new ground in 2009 as full participants in the post-Accra Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) and in the 2011 negotiations for the *Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation* (BPd). These experiences of CSO inclusion represented a profound and meaningful shift in power relations in multi-stakeholder civil society diplomacy.

Equally significant was the July 2008 launch of the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness. This was a unique CSO-led process at the global level addressing the effectiveness and accountability of CSOs as development actors. Its goals were to reach global CSO consensus on development effectiveness principles for CSOs, on ways to strengthen CSO accountability as actors in development, and on minimum standards for government and donor policies and practices to maximize CSO development contributions.

Together, these initiatives provided significant opening for BetterAid and Open Forum to advance a civil society vision and messages for fundamental reforms to development cooperation at the Busan Fourth High Level Forum in November 2011. Early in 2011, BetterAid, in cooperation with Open Forum, came to a consensus on *Key Messages and Proposals* for HLF4. These messages highlighted the centrality of democratic ownership in realizing the unfinished business of Paris and Accra commitments, the fundamental importance of human rights standards to guide development cooperation, and the urgency of a just and equitable architecture for development cooperation beyond Busan.

CSOs *Key Messages* for Busan also affirmed the essential importance of participation of the full diversity CSOs as independent development actors in their own right. In June 2011, more than 250 different civil society actors from around the world came together in the final Global Assembly of the Open Forum to conclude an extra-ordinary consensus: the *Siem Reap Consensus on the International Framework for Development Effectiveness*. CSOs were making a profound voluntary commitment to implement the *Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness* in all aspects of their development practices. These *Principles* were agreed by CSOs the previous year in Istanbul, Turkey, as the foundation for strengthening their own effectiveness as development actors.

At the end of November 2011, 600 CSOs attending the Busan Global Civil Society Forum prepared 300 official civil society delegates to the HLF4 to bring CSO messages to its many official sessions and side events. The main messages of the Civil Society Forum informed the priorities of the CSO Sherpa in the highly contested negotiations for the Outcome Document, which became the *Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation* (BPD). The BPD represented significant achievements in several crucial areas of importance for CSOs – acknowledgement of democratic ownership as a key tenet of development effectiveness, strengthened commitments to transparency and accountability, significant references to human rights standards for the principles guiding development effectiveness, and the acknowledgement of the *Istanbul Principles* and the *International Framework* as the underpinning for CSOs' initiatives to improve their development effectiveness. In several other areas, CSOs were less successful and came away with bitter-sweet reactions to the BPD policy directions – such as an exclusive reliance on economic growth – for implementing development effectiveness.

This book is the story of the BetterAid and Open Forum journey from Accra in 2008 to Busan in 2011. It describes processes at the global, regional and country levels that combined in complex and innovative ways. But it also reveals the frustrations, the continued blockages from other stakeholders and the challenges in CSO capacities in order to take full advantage of opportunities to make progress on their issues.

“All that glitters is not gold. ... Busan marks a milestone for civil society in international cooperation. But we must organize ourselves to effectively manage the implications of Busan for us. We must demonstrate non-governmental diplomacy. You sit at the table, but things are not simple. We do not agree on everything, far from it.” (Aurélien Atidéglá, REPAOC, Benin, Interview)

The main purpose of this book is to tell a story. It offers various reflections on what was accomplished and what was not, but it is not intended to be an evaluation of these processes.¹ While it sets out a narrative of the main activities, it also tells the story through the perceptions of stakeholders in the process by quoting directly from their reflections. Each chapter focuses on an important feature of this CSO journey. This Introduction provides an overview for the various chapters.

Chapter One, *Setting the Stage: A Comprehensive CSO Process for HLF4*, identifies the origins of BetterAid and Open Forum in pre-Accra CSO initiatives. It briefly describes their goals and intentions as global initiatives. It makes the links to implementation of the Paris/Accra agenda at the country level through the IBON/Reality of Aid Country Outreach Program. It highlights an innovative pooled-funding mechanism that coordinated and balanced donor support for the components of a comprehensive three-year proposal for resources by BetterAid and Open Forum.

Chapter Two, *What was accomplished?*, looks more closely at the degree to which CSOs achieved their policy objectives in Busan. It also highlights stakeholder perceptions identifying key accomplishments through BetterAid and Open Forum as civil society initiatives. The most important can be grouped around six themes:

- A highly inclusive mobilization of diverse sectors of CSOs through the BetterAid Platform and the Open Forum consultative processes, with outreach to thousands of CSOs across the Global South and in the Global North.
- A deepening of CSO legitimacy and credibility as witnessed in the respect by other stakeholders for the remarkable consensus achieved in Härnösand by the BetterAid Coordinating Group (BACG) and the Open Forum Global Facilitation Group (GFG) on the *CSO Key Messages and Proposals* in early 2011. CSOs were able to speak as one voice in Busan.
- Fulfillment of CSO pre-Accra commitments to CSO Development Effectiveness is a major accomplishment. A serious and deep process reflecting on CSO development practices and accountability resulted in a global consensus on the *Istanbul Principles* and *International Framework* to implement these *Principles*. The Open Forum established an authenticity to the notion of CSOs as development actors in their own right. These outcomes, and the inclusive process through which they were achieved, took some stakeholders by surprise.
- Engagement that was constructive and effective in the Working Party and in Busan, with CSOs bringing a variety of expertise, including country level knowledge, to inform its contributions to the Busan processes. CSOs were remarkably well coordinated in all aspects of the process.
- A transformed discourse on important issues for the future. CSOs brought new issues to the table in a substantive way, most particularly moving the paradigm from aid to development effectiveness. In many ways, the CSO discourse on development effectiveness, gender equality, human rights, and democratic ownership has set the forward agenda for the Global Partnership post-Busan.
- A transformed culture for inclusive global partnerships, as the logical expression of the recognition of CSOs as development actors in their own right. There is little doubt that the opening of the WP-EFF over these past three years has set a precedent for multilateral processes for which there is no turning back, and upon which civil society can build in the future.

Chapter Three, *BetterAid and the Working Party: Setting an agenda for development effectiveness*, explores the modalities through which BetterAid responded to the opportunities presented by its full participation in the Working Party. CSOs had to

retool their approaches to advocacy post-Accra, particularly at the global level in the Working Party, while still bringing to the table a strong critique and their concerns for fundamental reforms in development cooperation.

Full and equal CSO participation in the Working Party represented a significant achievement for CSOs and a strong precedent for multilateral processes that most often are exclusively inter-governmental. It transformed not only the WP-EFF processes and agenda, but it also initiated a new level of CSO politics and power towards deepening aid and development effectiveness.

The chapter highlights the processes through which CSOs developed common proposals for the Busan agenda, leading to the Hännösand *Key Messages and Proposals*, in close cooperation with Open Forum. It points to some of the multiple opportunities in advancing policy messages through the various Working Party Clusters and Task Teams. At the same time, it acknowledges the weaknesses of some of these processes—on conditionality, on procurement or on the private sector as a development actor—to accept CSOs as full participants and take account their views. It concludes with an overview of the Busan Global Civil Society Forum, which engaged 600 CSOs to prepare the final messages for HLF4, which followed immediately after the Forum.

Chapter Four, *At the Table: Perspectives on negotiating the outcomes of Busan*, looks more closely at CSO participation in HLF4 itself. The presence of civil society leadership in both the opening (BetterAid) and closing (Open Forum) ceremonies in the High Level Forum, along with their presence in key plenaries, sent a strong symbolic message of the great distance traveled since Accra. A BetterAid Sherpa in the negotiating group for the outcome of HLF4 was a unique and defining experience in HLF4 for civil society. While fully supported by the 300 CSO delegates to HLF4, some CSOs pointed to some real dilemmas and challenges that arise from direct civil society participation in these negotiations. These were expressed along the following lines:

- There were challenges in representing a normative and inclusive civil society constituency in inter-governmental negotiations. CSOs bring a normative and policy-active constituency to the table. Sometimes it was difficult for the Sherpa to fully represent these views, but also to have respect from other Sherpas on issues that were not seen to be “the concern of CSOs”.
- The need to have a focused CSO negotiating strategy in the context of CSO policy diversity creates challenges for determining CSO priorities in the midst of highly charged negotiations, leading some to question the relevance of the negotiations for the CSO agenda.
- Sustaining CSO engagement with the process in its final stages requires effective modalities of communications with the 300 CSO delegates that was not always possible in the final stages in Busan.

- CSOs are captured within the operating modalities of informal inter-governmental negotiations, which may not be fully appropriate for multi-stakeholder negotiations. Some pointed to the ILO tripartite modalities where lessons could address some of these concerns.

The risk of being captured by the multi-stakeholder politics of Busan, which is still dominated by a donor agenda. Most CSOs thought that Busan represented an opportunity for CSOs to set the broad agenda for development effectiveness while retaining their integrity as actors. But the lack of agreement on the interpretation of development effectiveness opened space for policy options not supported by CSOs such as the uncritical linkage between development and growth in the BPD. Yet CSOs as participants in the negotiations are going to be held accountable to the outcomes of Busan. With respect to their own development effectiveness commitments, will CSOs be able to live up to the expectations that arise from its promotion of the *International Framework*?

Chapter Five, *The Open Forum: Determining the principles and guidance for CSO development effectiveness*, turns to the CSO-led Open Forum process. For many CSOs, the *Principles* and *International Framework* represents an outstanding achievement. These statements are the first global civil society's affirmation on the effectiveness of CSO practices, bringing together hundreds of self-reflections by CSOs around the world on their roles in development. This chapter traces the origins and mandate of the Open Forum in realizing these goals. It describes the organization and challenges in conducting intensive consultative processes. They involved thousands of CSOs in more than 70 countries and in thematic consultations coming to consensus on the eight principles that define civil society's effectiveness as an actor for development. The chapter gives an overview of the content of the *Istanbul Principles* and the *International Framework* as they emerged from intensive discussion at the first Global Assembly in Istanbul and the second Global Assembly in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Finally it introduces the political challenges of promoting the *Framework* with governments, including the key conditions on the part of donor and government policies that enable CSOs to live up to the *Principles*. This theme of enabling conditions is picked up again in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Six, *Changing Conditions on the Ground: Engaging developing country governments and donors in the Busan process*, picks up the story from the point of view of CSOs working in various country contexts. CSOs clearly opened a significant space at the global level for policy dialogue with the Working Party. But the same could not be said for the national level in many countries, where the onus for implementation lies. This chapter looks more closely at the IBON International / Reality of Aid Country Outreach Program, with more than 60 country level country consultations and information dissemination activities across the Global South. It examines the different ways in which the CSOs attempted to engage, particularly, the OECD DCD-

led Country Survey on the implementation of the Paris and Accra commitments. It describes the limited degree to which democratic ownership has been realized in many countries. Civil society organizations participation in institutional mechanisms that set country development priorities was a critical concern for CSOs. In several countries, however, CSOs were able to participate directly in government delegations for Busan.

Given the post-Busan emphasis on country level implementations, this chapter concludes with some observations on essential conditions and issues shaping CSO engagement at the country level:

- CSO and government capacities that bring a solid understanding of global aid and development effectiveness commitments are a pre-condition for effective engagement. The sustainability of inclusive country level policy processes requires not only political will, but also major ongoing investments in knowledge and skills for local monitoring and advocacy.
- Country and context matters. This context is very dynamic, with policies and access for engagement varying among different governments in the same country. A competitive and political dynamic within the CSO community at the country level can also an important variable for strong collaboration.
- Policy engagement is often affected by both the absence of multi-stakeholder policy spaces for sustained and inclusive dialogue and the lack of effective polices for transparency. The Reality of Aid's special *2011 Global Report* documents some improved political space in a few countries. But most country cases studies from the Country Outreach Program indicate either no consultations or perfunctory meetings with a few chosen stakeholders. Issue of transparency and accountability in consultations remain common concern.
- A more deliberate CSO strategy to engage governments is required, with many CSOs commenting that CSOs in the Busan process did not take adequate advantage of common interests with partner countries in the process. The notable exception was the engagement of African CSO leaders with African governments through the Africa Union/NEPAD venue to work together on a common African position for Busan.

Chapter Seven, *An Enabling Environment for CSO Development Effectiveness*, explores CSO and multi-stakeholder initiatives from Accra to Busan on issues affecting the enabling environment for CSOs. CSOs have documented, sometimes with donor support, the disabling conditions facing CSOs in many countries. The chapter describes the crucial role played by CSOs, donors, and partner governments in the multi-stakeholder Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling

Environment. This Task Team was able to agree on a set of (non-binding) minimum standards to enable CSOs to maximize their contributions for development. The chapter concludes by looking at possible initiatives coming out from Busan. It stresses the imperative for monitoring and acting to improve on disabling conditions. Global monitoring of the BPD within the Busan Global Partnership and the continued work of a multi-stakeholder Task Team will be essential in bringing political attention to these issues.

Finally, **Chapter Eight**, *Reflections on Busan: Shaping Post-Busan Actions*, brings together CSO reflections on the outcomes of Busan. What lessons can be drawn from the CSO experience of the Accra to Busan journey? It points to five areas:

- Sustaining CSO engagement as independent actors for development is essential, participating in the Busan Global Partnership, while bringing an agenda for fundamental and systemic changes for equality and justice.
- Sustaining and giving priority to a focus on country level implementation requires a deliberate effort. CSOs caution that over-expectations for country-level CSO engagement to support progress in the implementation of the Busan commitments, in the absence of new resources for this type of work, are bound to fail. Strengthened CSO capacities at the country level, with an enabling environment for inclusive engagement, and deeper engagement by donors, are crucial preconditions for making progress.
- Civil society must live up to its commitments. They must build systematically upon voluntary CSO initiatives in many countries to work with the *Istanbul Principles* and the *International Framework*. But donor and government policies in many countries remain a substantial barrier to improving CSOs capacities to undertake development work consistent with the *Principles*.
- Implementing reforms from Busan, in the context of dysfunctional global policy processes, is seen by CSOs to be a significant challenge. The absence of strong incentives for change within donor agencies to address their ways of working at the country level is problematic for many of the Busan commitments that depend in part on behavioral changes affecting practice. Moreover, some CSOs see the need to relate the relevance of BPD to emerging development policies in some countries coming from the G20 or from South-South cooperation.
- Can the lessons from the Working Party be applied in other multilateral processes to strengthen CSO inclusion? Should the Global Partnership be more firmly rooted within the United Nations system? CSOs are unanimous in drawing lessons from the Busan process for other multilateral arenas. But they have varying views on the degree to which inclusion may be possible in more formal

UN bodies and processes. It was acknowledged that the UN Development Cooperation Forum has become more open as a multi-stakeholder Forum than its earlier manifestations.

On this road from Accra to Busan, thousands of CSOs were involved in the preparations for HLF4 and in reflections on their own roles as development actors. CSOs are now ready to pick up the principles and directions for reforms through the *Busan Global Partnership* and join with others to realize change on the ground. Civil society brings a strong commitment to norms alongside a deep practical experience in development. Human rights standards, gender equality, social justice and environmental sustainability inform their proposals. Their experience lies in putting poverty reduction at the center of their work, creating conditions for decent work, livelihoods and social services for poor and marginalized populations. But the key question remains: Are political leaders from all sectors ready and open to continue, deepen and implement the commitments and directions they set in Busan?

Chapter One

Setting the Stage: A Comprehensive CSO Process for HLF4

1. The Origins of a BetterAid Platform

In 2007, several international NGO networks and civil society organizations (CSOs) gathered at the Nairobi World Social Forum to discuss collaboration for the 2008 Third High Level Forum (HLF3) to be held in Accra Ghana. From this meeting, a CSO International Steering Committee (ISG) of about 20 CSO networks and INGOs was born to coordinate CSO mobilization and policy messages towards HLF3.¹

In January 2008, the ISG's *Civil Society Position Paper for the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness* laid out the key messages that were the focus of CSO engagement with the Working Party preparing HLF3.² By September 2008 on the eve of HLF3, more than 700 civil society organizations had identified with the ISG agenda. They did so mainly through a highly successful Accra Civil Society Forum and the launch of the BetterAid Platform representing these hundreds of CSOs. Immediately following the Accra Civil Society Forum, 80 CSO delegates had full access to HLF3 Roundtables and Plenary sessions as well as to government delegates, but not the negotiations for the *Accra Agenda for Action* (AAA).

This CSO engagement was widely recognized as the hallmark of HLF3. CSOs were instrumental in a political success that strengthened the ambition of the AAA. CSOs brought renewed momentum for change into the global aid effectiveness process. ISG's policy focus for HLF3 advocacy not only concentrated on deepening the 2005 *Paris Declaration* commitments in key areas, particularly in broadening notion of "country ownership", but also, with some modest success, in focusing the Accra agenda on the promotion of human rights, transparency, aid predictability and the removal of policy conditionality.

The role of CSOs in strengthening development and aid effectiveness became a central agenda for HLF3 in Accra. Both the ISG and a multi-stakeholder Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS) promoted the inclusion of civil society in the preparations for HLF3. The AG-CS reported directly to the

Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, but was a body in which civil society was well represented from the ISG. A key outcome of the AG-CS's work, supported by the ISG, was paragraph 20 of the AAA. This paragraph specifically recognized civil society as development actors in their own right, acknowledged civil society efforts to address their development effectiveness, and committed to put in place an enabling environment that maximizes CSO contribution to development.

“The CSOs were excellent in raising their visibility [at HLF3]. CSOs contributed substantially, and the issue of ownership is a good example: it is clear now to everyone that governments need to interact with CSOs. ...” (Felix Zimmerman, OECD DAC [Quoted in Wood & Valot, 2009])

“A key indicator is the strength and presence of CSOs in Accra itself. They were more vocal and present at HLF3 than many governments... CSOs were in the audience, at the podium; they were in all Round Tables. They were in the panels, the posters, the side events; government representatives picking up points made by CSOs... Now CSOs need to walk the talk.” (Philippe Besson, SDC [Quoted in Wood & Valot, 2009])

“Absolutely, there is now a huge increase in the appreciation of the value of dialoguing with CSOs. The DAC sees the CSO engagement as one of the main successes of Accra! And it recognized that CSO participation is not only required for participation, but that it actually contributes to the agenda.” (Goran Eklof, AG-CS, DAC [Quoted in Wood & Valot, 2009])

In early 2009, donors and some CSOs from the Accra process met informally in Stockholm to discuss the importance of maintaining the momentum for the main recommendations of the Advisory Group and CSO-related clauses of the AAA. This body evolved over several months in the multi-stakeholder Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment, co-chaired by CSOs, donors and partner countries, which was eventually located within the Working Party.

The big gain for civil society at Accra was this recognition of civil society as diverse and independent actors for development, and the consequent full inclusion in the efforts to improve the effectiveness of aid. Full membership in the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) was the political expression of this inclusion at the global level.

Nevertheless, post-Accra, most CSOs understood the AAA as largely “unfinished business” when compared to civil society’s policy expectations for Accra. Beyond paragraph 20, the AAA represented some limited progress in norms—a more inclusive, but not democratic, understanding of ‘country ownership’ in policy processes. There was only a passing acknowledgement of human rights and gender equality as a framework for effective development action, and it showed undefined attention

to standards for improved transparency and a commitment on country systems, aid conditionalities, aid untying and aid predictability. This “unfinished business” shaped many of civil society policy priorities and advocacy in the three years leading from Accra to HLF4 in Busan.

2. Creating the BetterAid Coordinating Group

The ISG met in October 2008 in Paris to review the outcomes of Accra and to develop forward plans for CSO engagement with the post-Accra process.³ It began by assessing the Accra outcomes and the ISG initiatives to influence outcomes at HLF3. On one hand, CSOs were encouraged by HLF3 Roundtable discussions where they witnessed a change in discourse away from aid effectiveness towards development effectiveness. On the other hand, the evident lack of progress on the *Paris Declaration* commitments and a general absence of monitorable new AAA commitments in several important areas such as gender equality remained a major concern.

Development effectiveness is a potentially broad agenda. At the October meeting, the ISG agreed to continue to stay focused on the effectiveness of development cooperation, placed within the broader frame of development effectiveness and social justice. The emphasis on the effectiveness of development cooperation had been CSOs’ strength going into Accra. Some CSOs were concerned that extending the post-Accra CSO remit within a broad notion of development effectiveness would dissipate its potential for making further progress. It was also acknowledged that civil society’s understanding of the meaning of development effectiveness had to be clarified. Deepening this understanding of development effectiveness as a framework for international cooperation would be a recurring theme in the Accra to Busan process (*See Chapter Three*).

At its Paris meeting, the ISG affirmed the central importance of putting maximum attention to holding donors and partner governments accountable by looking at how Paris and Accra commitments are being implemented on the ground. In order to enable relevant monitoring at this level, the ISG was aware that it needed to develop a deeper engagement with CSOs at the country level. While this country-level work was seen as essential, equally important was the awareness that the power to change effectiveness for development outcomes rested mostly with the donors, requiring incentives at both in headquarters and on the ground.

Notwithstanding these concerns, the ISG decided that its post-Accra mandate was not to directly carry out such country-level activities. Its core mandate was to remain focused on the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, and to a much lesser degree, on the UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). CSO legitimacy with the Working Party was strengthened by its connections to policy lessons and

evidence from the actual practices of development cooperation on the ground. Many members of BetterAid had been doing, or were supporting, this work on the ground in the lead-up to Accra. These efforts would continue and expand post-Accra. CSO initiatives and representation within the Working Party were to be structured to ensure effective communication of the on-the-ground realities of implementation of Paris/Accra commitments. But these commitments were to be monitored by national CSO networks.

The BetterAid Platform of more than 700 CSOs would continue to be a highly inclusive umbrella for CSOs working together on aid and development effectiveness issues, within a framework of social justice. A revision of the CSO *Position Paper* for Accra would serve as a point of reference for membership in the Platform. But the adoption of this *Paper* was not considered a condition for Platform membership. A CSO wishing to identify with the Platform agrees only not to speak explicitly against any of the core positions of the Platform. With more than 700 CSOs coming out of Accra, the Platform sought to maximize its inclusiveness (North/South, sectoral, and types of organizations). BetterAid continued to be a space for capturing the widest diversity of CSO experience and perspectives that engage in development cooperation. Coming into the Busan High Level Forum in November 2011, more than 1,700 CSOs had identified with the Platform and its agenda for Busan.

Lacking resources for most of its pre-Accra work, the ISG operated with a high degree of informality in membership and organization. As a result of this informality, there had been issues for some, in transparency, accountability and communications that should be dealt with after Accra. The Paris ISG meeting in October launched a review of membership and operational guidelines for its work. The result was the transformation of the ISG into the *BetterAid Coordinating Group* (BACG) at its first meeting in Johannesburg in late February 2009.

The BACG Overarching Goal

Working on behalf of the BetterAid Platform, the BACG will monitor and influence the implementation of the AAA (with a specific focus on issues in democratic ownership), while broadening the agenda from the AAA towards development effectiveness in HLF4, and addressing policies for development effectiveness in proposed reforms of international aid architecture (including the work of the DCF).

BACG Meeting, Johannesburg, February 2009

The BACG is the operational body of the Platform. By March 2009, the BACG had adopted *Terms of Reference* that set out an explicit set of objectives, roles and membership criteria to guide its operations. The BACG's role was to coordinate CSO efforts focusing on multilateral and international opportunities to deepen reforms for aid and development effectiveness, with primary attention to the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness. It would develop analysis, proposals and give priority among different advocacy issues. Between Accra and Busan, its work was informed by sectoral (e.g. trade unions, women's organizations, rural movements), country, and regional CSO and multi-stakeholder consultations on the implementation of the AAA and the Paris Declaration.

The *Terms of Reference* established basic principles for membership in the BACG. Membership was balanced to reflect geographic and regional balance (with organizational representation of Southern CSOs of various types making up at least 60% of the Better Aid CG members). These criteria included provisions that organizations that have an *explicit* primary mandate for gender equality and women's rights will be no less than 5 members. At least 5 members will be membership-based grassroots organizations. (See Annex B for a list of members in 2009 and in 2011). CSOs in the BACG formed a working membership. Each organization committed to work with at least one BACG working group and to also consider joining a relevant workstream within the Working Party.

The BACG continued the ISG practice of co-chairs, taking a balanced and positive gender and south-south approach. Tony Tujan (IBON) and Cecilia Alemany (AWID) were co-chairs up to October 2010; in 2011, Mayra Moro-Coco (AWID) assumed the co-chair position with Tony Tujan, continuing through to Busan and in the post-Busan transition. Tony Tujan was also elected by the BACG to be the CSO "Sherpa" for the negotiations of the Busan Outcome document.

By 2011, the number of CSOs on the BACG had expanded from 10 to 14, notably with the addition of the Korean platform, the Korea Civil Society Forum on International Development Cooperation (KoFID) an important addition with the Republic of Korea, the host country for HLF4.

3. Transforming CSO engagement with the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness

At the end of October 2008, the then-ISG wrote to Ambassador Jan Cedergren to propose full CSO participation in an expanded post-Accra Working Party. Full inclusion in the Working Party was also strongly recommended in the final meeting of the Advisory Group on CSO Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS) that month. This proposal was widely supported by CSOs and by other stakeholders as the logical extension of

the AAA recognition of CSOs as development actors in their own right and CSO participation in Accra. But it was not without some debate at the ISG's October meeting. Full inclusion implied the need to be more systematic in reaching out to other CSOs and INGOs that were not necessarily identifying fully with the BetterAid Platform in Accra. Some CSOs were also concerned that participation in determining WP-EFF outcomes should not undermine the independence of CSOs to challenge donors and governments to live up to their Paris and Accra commitments.

The ISG letter called for 10% CSO representation in an expanded multi-stakeholder WP-EFF, based on CSO proportionate representation at the Accra HLF (80 out of 800 delegates). This would have implied 8 to 10 CSOs in the Working Party. The BetterAid Platform, coordinated by the ISG/BACG, was proposed to be the mechanism for determining this representation. The letter also suggested that the AAA's emphasis on transparency should ensure that there would be full and timely transparency of all documentation for the WP-EFF accessible on a web site. For the ISG, "full membership" means full access to information, right to speak, and also full participation in the workplan and its associated working groups over the next three years leading to HLF4, depending on expertise and issues, and in overall decision making within the WP-EFF" (ISG, 2008). Finally, the letter called for a regular structured dialogue with CSOs on issues of concern to a broad representative number of CSOs.

At its first meeting following Accra in November 2008, the Working Party transformed itself into a body that fully brought to the table a significant representation, not only of CSOs, but also parliamentarians, local governments, and an increased number of partner governments. While CSOs did not achieve its goal of 10% of the participants, there were two positions for CSOs at the table accompanied by an agreement that CSOs could rotate in and out of these positions depending on their expertise. The BetterAid Coordinating Committee was the vehicle through which this representation was managed. CSO inclusion was fully realized, not only with guaranteed access to all the subsidiary WP-EFF clusters and task teams, but also on the Executive Committee, which managed the agenda of the WP-EFF. In addition, the DAC-managed a web portal for the WP-EFF where all documentations, including draft documents, would be posted and made accessible to all members of the WP-EFF.

"In Busan we did not have big NGOs talking on behalf of many others; civil society had this BetterAid Platform, [that is] quite open, that had the legitimacy of having so many different civil society perspectives. You managed to have a common position for the essential issues. The fact that you had one civil society speaking with one voice was very positive."
(Eduardo Gonzalez, DAC DCD, Interview)

"One of the most important elements for us being a formal actor is that we got access to information about the process at the same time as everyone else. We say the negotiating

drafts at the same time as the donors and partner countries did. We gained access to all the official comments that were shared on the extranet site... If we were not involved, we wouldn't have been able to respond quickly enough to influence the process from the outside.” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UKAN, Interview)

A renewed BACG, with its mandate to participate in the Working Party on behalf of a broad BetterAid Platform, raised the importance of communications in the activities of the BACG secretariat and BACG members. A communications strategy was elaborated after the Johannesburg meeting, which in 2009 and 2010 focused mainly on an effective and dynamic web site, a comprehensive list-serve and an e-newsletter as communications vehicles for BetterAid's policy analysis and advocacy messages. A Liaison Officer in Paris regularly communicated developments in the Working Party and DAC clusters and task teams. Publications, backgrounders and press releases were widely distributed. In 2011, a specialist in communications was added to the Secretariat to facilitate broad communications of BetterAid messages through social media, press engagement, photo and video coverage, including a global postcard and petition partnership with the Global Campaign Against Poverty.

Full and equal CSO participation in the Working Party represented a significant achievement for CSOs and a strong precedent for multilateral processes that most often are exclusively inter-governmental. It transformed not only the WP-EFF process and agenda but also initiated a new level of CSO politics and power towards an enhanced aid and development effectiveness. In many respects, the agenda and outcome of Busan were deeply affected by the opening of space for civil society engagements. Subsequent chapters will look more closely at CSO participation in the Working Party process and preparations for Busan, at CSO engagement at the country, regional and sectoral level, and at the process and outcome of Busan HLF4 itself. The inseparable relationship between these new CSO roles in a multilateral arena and the evolving discourse on development effectiveness was illustrated by progress on democratic ownership and human rights framework in Busan (*See chapters Three and Four*).

4. Launching the Country Outreach: IBON International and the Reality of Aid Network

Following Accra, CSOs were encouraged by AAA policy advances, but they were also troubled by the lack of time-bound commitments and indicators in the AAA to monitor progress, particularly at the country level. While CSOs had clearly opened significant space at the global level for policy dialogue with the Working Party, the same could not be said for the national level in many countries, where the onus for implementation lay. If the normative advances made in Accra and the original Paris commitments were to be meaningful, reforms in policy and behavioral changes

were essential on the ground in developing countries and in donor home offices. The first Paris Monitoring Survey undertaken by the DAC in the lead up to Accra, accompanied by an independent evaluation coordinated by DANIDA, demonstrated that a much more concerted effort was needed to bring about these changes.

In its early meetings post-Accra, the BACG agreed on a “division of labour” whereby the BACG would focus more of its attention at the global level. IBON and the global Reality of Aid network had been very active, alongside the AG-CS, in organizing pre-Accra regional and country consultations. The Reality of Aid (RoA) network is a long-standing network of country-level CSOs working on issues of aid reform. In this new post-Accra BetterAid division of labour, IBON International would work with the RoA network to deepen a country outreach program to strengthen CSO capacity and catalyze country-level policy spaces. The BACG and the Country Outreach Program would create global-country-level linkages. These linkages would strengthen both the legitimacy of BetterAid with country-level evidence and inform CSOs at the country level in their advocacy for more robust implementation of Paris and Accra commitments.

It was also expected that other CSOs with global or regional reach, such as the trade unions through the ITUC, or the protestant faith-based organizations through ACT-Alliance, would undertake capacity development, research and engagement at the country level, making linkages between their processes and involvement in the global process.

Reality of Aid had organized some pre-Accra country-level workshops. These workshops were in addition to regional CSO consultations on the theme of CSOs and aid effectiveness implemented by Reality of Aid for the AG-CS. These regional consultations not only informed the work of the AG-CS but they also resulted in unprecedented country-level interest and activity among CSOs who understood the need for aid reform to reduce poverty in their countries. Many of these CSOs were already providing country analysis for the biannual global Reality of Aid Reports. For more than 15 years, these Reports had been examining the practices of aid for poverty reduction through the lens of a rights-based approach. The orientation of these CSOs was therefore consistent with the promotion of this approach by BetterAid.

BetterAid, IBON International and the RoA secretariats worked closely together to develop an integrated post-Accra proposal bringing together the different initiatives for CSO engagement for HLF4. This proposal set out coordinated CSO activities to deepen donor, developing country government and international institutions commitments to aid and development effectiveness. IBON International and RoA set out a comprehensive approach to country outreach to catalyze country-level multi-stakeholder monitoring of the implementation of the AAA. The BACG would involve and draw substantive content for global positioning from the outcomes

of these country-level workshops and processes, as well as consultations by other international CSOs and sectoral CSO actors. Indeed, the BetterAid *Key Messages and Proposals for Busan* in 2011 reflected country-level CSO consultation proposals and preoccupations.

The IBON/Reality of Aid country initiatives reached more than 20,000 CSOs. It did so through seven regional consultations, four thematic workshops and 64 country-level consultations and information dissemination campaigns in 52 countries. The Country Outreach not only focused on consultations with CSOs, but also on strengthening, and sometimes stimulating the existence of, CSO coalitions at the country level to engage in sustained political dialogue with governments and donors. These efforts included capacity building workshops, country CSO consultations and information sharing, and multi-stakeholder efforts focused on the implementation of the Paris and Accra commitments. They were to be inclusive, but also complemented by parallel monitoring and engagement in independent initiatives by trade unions, women's rights organizations, rural organizations and international NGOs. (See Chapter Six)

“Looking back in hindsight, the way we engaged [in Cambodia], the way we formulated our advocacy messages, we really strongly relied on [BetterAid and Open Forum] networks in the international sphere.” (Borithy Lun, Cooperation Committee for Cambodia, Interview)

Integrating the outcomes of country processes would be ensured through the BACG, which had several members of the Reality of Aid Network, and through both the BACG and the RoA secretariats within IBON. The Country Outreach Program drew attention to country-level initiatives with its regular *Newsletters*, its summary of 14 country case studies, and a concluding November 2011 Report on the outcomes of country processes.

In addition, in 2011 the Reality of Aid published a special edition of its biannual Global Report, *Democratic Ownership and Development Effectiveness: Civil Society Perspectives on Progress since Paris*. This RoA Global Report brought together country-level evidence from more than 30 countries, derived largely from the country outreach process. It also was a CSO “shadow” monitoring report assessing the implementation of the Paris and Accra commitments on democratic ownership and development effectiveness. These areas, essential to the CSO agenda coming out of Accra, were not significantly covered in the final DAC-sponsored Survey on the implementation of Paris nor by the Independent Evaluation in the lead up to Busan.

5. Creating the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness

In the Accra preparatory process, the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS) played an important role in raising the profile of CSOs as development actors in aid effectiveness. But the AG-CS's process also contributed more directly to CSO reflections on issues affecting CSOs as aid and development actors.

As already noted, a series of AG-CS-sponsored regional CSO consultations were crucial in informing the AG-CS's work and coalescing CSO positioning on aid and development effectiveness issues before the WP-EFF. The donor and partner country representatives in the AG-CS were also instrumental in bringing increased attention to CSOs' own obligations with respect to their effectiveness as development actors. If CSOs are development actors in their own right, as claimed by the ISG and supported by the AG-CS, then should they not share the obligation to address the effectiveness of their development actions?⁴

Goals and Objectives for the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness

The Open Forum was established to realize a global development effectiveness framework for CSOs, building upon CSO commitments and the Accra recognition of CSOs as development actors in their own right. The Paris meeting established five core objectives in relation to this goal:

1. Develop an inclusive, participatory and representative process, owned by CSOs around the world, with regional equality of representation, and taking into account issues of gender equality;
2. Increase awareness within CSOs around the world regarding their effectiveness as development actors and innovative agents of change and social transformation;
3. Increase understanding and reach consensus on the principles guiding the effectiveness of CSOs as development actors;
4. Develop guidance related to the implementation of such principles, which will facilitate adaptation to country, regional or sectoral conditions; and
5. Generate political dialogue with donors and governments to address the needs for enabling environments for CSO effectiveness, based on the recognition of the distinct roles and voice of CSOs as development actors in their own right.

Adherence by CSOs to the *Paris Declaration* five principles (ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability) was strongly promoted by governments and donors in the pre-Accra processes. As a result, CSOs began to discuss their own roles and development actions in relation to this Paris agenda more systematically in the AG-CS regional workshops.⁵ Would CSO development effectiveness be improved by greater CSO adherence to the Paris principles, irrespective of the origins of these principles in the relationship between official donors and partner country governments? Or were the roles and actions of CSOs at many levels in development unique, requiring different but complementary principles to guide their effectiveness?

The AG-CS deliberations came together in a multi-stakeholder International Forum on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, held in Gatineau, Quebec, in February 2008. This Forum has been marked as the first significant event that brought a truly multi-stakeholder dialogue on aid reforms and the Paris Principles, and the need to deepen their meaning to improve their relevance and impact on the ground.⁶ The Forum demonstrated, for many of the participants, the value of multi-stakeholder dialogue in building political will in building political will for more ambition at Accra and for its outcome.

Several CSO coalitions and INGOs, who were present for the Forum, took advantage of the opportunity to initiate a side discussion on issues of CSO effectiveness. Did sufficient interest exist in a CSO-led process, where CSO would deepen their own understanding and elaborate their commitment to improve CSO effectiveness, in the context of Paris and Accra?

Coming out of the Forum, these CSOs, representing a broad range of CSOs in the global South and North, were convinced that they must become proactive. CSOs must take leadership on issues of their own development effectiveness. They cannot just be responsive to the different emerging critiques of civil society, its legitimacy and contributions in implementing the Paris Principles, coming from donor or developing country governments. Many CSOs welcomed the commitments by governments and donors to aid reform in the 2005 *Paris Declaration*. But they rejected the notion that the Paris principles were automatically applicable to CSO development actions; they took no part in the negotiation of these principles. CSO can be donors and service providers, but they have many other roles in development as watchdogs and expressions of social solidarity. For example, as expressions of diverse citizens' concerns and promoters of development alternatives, CSOs could be undermined by adherence to several of the Paris principles (for example, alignment with country development strategies and harmonization of their actions). It also became increasingly clear to CSOs working on donor/government aid reforms that they would be more effective in this advocacy if they were perceived to be serious about their own roles and practices as development actors.

Consequently, a few months later, in June 2008, a globally representative gathering of CSO platforms and networks⁷ met in Paris. The meeting was coordinated by the European-wide platform, Concord, working with an Interim Facilitation Group, and hosted by Coordination Sud.⁸ As an “Exploratory Meeting,” it brought together more than 70 CSOs and its outcomes were historic. For the first time, there was a collective CSO commitment to address CSO development effectiveness at a global level. Over three days, the CSOs present established an overarching mandate and key approaches for a CSO-driven initiative that would result in global CSO commitment to a framework to guide their development effectiveness efforts.

The Paris meeting intentionally launched an *Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness*. The credibility and legitimacy of this CSO-led process relied upon its inclusiveness by engaging and synthesizing the views of the diverse kinds of CSOs working in the many different and crucial roles as development innovators for change and social transformation. The constituency for this initiative was not to be defined by affiliation or membership, but by a CSO’s identification with the process and ownership of its outcomes.

CSOs in Paris agreed on several critical assumptions and directions that would define five key dimensions and approaches for the Open Forum and its relationship to a post-Accra agenda on development effectiveness:⁹

1. CSO development effectiveness cannot be reduced to a donor/recipient aid relationship. CSOs are first and foremost highly diverse expressions of social solidarity for the active engagement of people in their own development efforts. CSO development and advocacy work mostly derive from grassroots experience, analysis, and open dialogue in community and constituency-based processes. A framework for CSO development effectiveness will therefore situate CSO aid relationships within a broader paradigm. This is one that focuses on the vision, approaches and actions of CSOs in support of people claiming their human rights, that is, on the development effectiveness of CSOs.
2. The challenge to build consensus on CSO principles for development effectiveness is complex, requiring a global process that is deliberately constructed from the specificity of country, regional and sectoral context, involving many different CSO actors. The goal is a CSO consensus on global principles that would capture and allow for country and sector-specific diversity of CSOs, including civil society’s role in promoting democracy, active citizenship and human rights. Its legitimacy depends upon engaging the widest range of CSO stakeholders, leveraging national CSO platforms, faith-based networks, and various social movements.
3. The Open Forum must be a multi-stakeholder process, which is managed and led by CSOs, aimed at an agreement on minimum standards for an enabling

environment for CSOs. CSOs require the space in the Open Forum to debate among themselves issues affecting their own development effectiveness. This effectiveness is not only shaped by the many challenges emerging from CSO practices. CSOs as development actors are also profoundly affected by the context in which they work, often determined by donors and developing country governments. Progress will require, therefore, active engagement with donors and government to determine minimum standards for government policies, laws and regulations and donor modalities of support, affecting the capacities of civil society to be effective development actors.

4. Reaching consensus on the principles that are essential for CSO development effectiveness is insufficient; the Open Forum must also provide the guidance on how to apply these principles in country and sector-specific practices. Improving CSO accountability to development effectiveness principles is essential. But the Forum will not aim for a new global accountability mechanism or impose a global “code of conduct”. Effectiveness has different meanings for CSOs in the global North or global South and in different sectoral contexts. This diversity in CSOs and country context requires an approach that will strengthen the many already existing accountability mechanisms of the civil society. The Open Forum will aim to provide overarching guidance to ground universal principles in important areas that strengthen CSO practice consistent with these principles.
5. The Open Forum will be a key CSO contribution towards HLF4 that focuses on a truly multi-stakeholder agreement on development effectiveness, with CSOs equally participating at the negotiating table, along with other development partners. CSOs are recognized as equal partners in development alongside donors, governments and other stakeholders. The Open Forum will work closely with BetterAid to advance key ideas in shaping a vision of development effectiveness rooted in human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability for HLF4. To be effective in the broader agenda and process of HLF4, including negotiations, the Open Forum process must be politically unassailable— unassailable in terms of its openness, its inclusiveness, its legitimacy and its commitment to change.

The Paris meeting also addressed the governance of the Open Forum through the establishment of a CSO Global Facilitation Group (GFG) made up of 25 CSO nominated members, with fixed representation from different regions, national and international CSOs, platforms and gender balance. The GFG, with two elected co-chairs, provided political leadership and representation of the Open Forum (*see Annex C for its membership*). Concord agreed to continue to provide coordinating support for the identification of financing for the initiative and came to house the Open Forum Secretariat. At its first meeting in Kuala Lumpur in January 2009, the GFG delegated a Consortium to provide day-to-day management support with Concord for staff and logistics to carry out the main areas of work. The GFG provided oversight

for extensive regional, country and sectoral consultations, supported the organization of two inclusive global assemblies to agree on the principles and framework for their implementation, and developed political strategies for engaging donors and governments in multi-stakeholder dialogue (*see the timeline in Annex A*).

Looking back, it is remarkable the degree to which the achievements of the Open Forum followed closely the vision of civil society to establish this process and develop the guiding principles and framework for CSO development effectiveness. Chapter Five elaborates its work of over three years. In short, more than 70 region, country and sectoral substantial CSO consultations informed two broad-based Global Assemblies of the Open Forum: in Istanbul in September 2010 and in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in June 2011. The results were the global agreement on the eight *Istanbul Principles for CSOs Development Effectiveness* and the *International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness* to guide their implementation. Both the Open Forum GFG and the BetterAid CG engaged donors and country governments on minimum standards for a CSO enabling environment (*See Chapter Seven*). They did so through country and regional multi-stakeholder consultations and, globally, through the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment within the Working Party (particularly Cluster A on inclusive ownership and accountability) and CSO participation in HLF4 in Busan.

6. Ensuring synergies between BetterAid/Reality of Aid and Open Forum

BetterAid and Open Forum have common roots in civil society preparatory processes for the Accra High Level Forum. Many of the most active CSOs in these processes had membership in both the ISG and in the Open Forum's GFG coming out of HLF3 in September 2008. Many of these CSOs understood that progress in Accra with respect to civil society as development actors (paragraph 20 of the AAA) could and should not be disassociated from the Working Party's opening of space to CSOs and from broader CSO efforts to advance donor and partner country commitments in aid reform. This was seen as a shared post-Accra agenda by the CSOs involved. Nevertheless CSOs in both BetterAid and Open Forum, in their early meetings in late 2008 and early 2009, defended the practical need to maintain parallel organizational processes.

“There is agreement with the GFG that the mandate of the Better Aid Coordinating Group has an overarching mandate that includes the implementation of the AAA, including paragraph 20. This overlap will require close coordination and engagement between the GFG and the BACG.” (Minutes, BACG Meeting, Johannesburg, February 26-27, 2009)

“BetterAid and the Open Forum are two distinct and complementary CSO-led processes. While the Open Forum focuses on how CSOs can improve their own effectiveness as development actors (including by improving the environment that is provided by donors and governments), Better Aid aims to monitor and influence the implementation of the AAA (with a focus on democratic ownership), while broadening the agenda to development effectiveness and addressing this within the reform of the international aid architecture.” (Open Forum, Outreach Toolkit, April 2010, p. 16)

The mandate of the BACG was understood to include all aspects of the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the AAA, including paragraph 20, as well as the coordination of CSO activities with respect to the Working Party and HLF4. The mandate of the Open Forum focused more directly on carrying forward CSO commitments as a shared responsibility to articulate principles and guidance for improving their own effectiveness as development actors. These two mandates intersected in the promotion of enabling conditions for CSO development effectiveness on the part of governments and donors, who were represented in the Working Party and in the agenda for Busan.

“The main influence of [Open Forum] has been to strengthen our legitimacy as development actors... If you are calling for donors to be more transparent and accountable and CSOs are not making such efforts, then you have limited leverage to actually achieve the change you want from these actors.” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UK Aid Network, Interview)

“Indeed we have created an element of legitimacy in talking about CSO effectiveness and how we intend to improve... [But] most governments in Busan were not aware that there were two groups; they were just aware that there were CSOs with whom they wanted to interact.” (Vitalice Meja, Reality of Aid Africa, Interview)

Close coordination was essential and the relevance of two parallel process sometimes proved challenging to convey to donors and other stakeholders. In early 2009, the BACG (including IBON/RoA Country Outreach) and the Open Forum presented to donors a “Chapeau Proposal”. This is a joint presentation of two interlinking three-year proposals for activities by the BACG and Open Forum, in which they “proactively acknowledged the essential importance of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to national, regional, and global CSO activities leading to HLF4”.

Both the BACG and the GFG committed to practical ways of sharing and coordinating their agendas. However, as these parallel processes evolved, avenues for cooperation sometimes proved to be elusive. Regular contact between the co-chairs was sometimes episodic until the final months in 2011 prior to Busan. A minority of members on both the BACG and the GFG informally helped each body understand directions and political strategies.

“We should have given more attention to how these two processes coordinated. I think we might have increased our impact within civil society. We had overlapping constituencies. People sometimes got confused between the two processes... Open Forum tried to communicate BetterAid and BetterAid tried to communicate Open Forum, but perhaps we both needed better coordination with the communications on messages and with whom ...”
(Amy Bartlett, Secretariat Open Forum, Interview)

In late 2010, some members of the BACG and GFG proposed a joint Busan strategy meeting of BACG/GFG to be held in Hårnösand, Sweden, in March 2011. This meeting was a critical juncture in bringing together a unified document with the *Key Messages and Proposals for Busan*. While sometimes problematic, this meeting launched the basis for joint political strategies, which were to be led by BetterAid in close coordination with the Open Forum GFG. A joint body assisted in determining CSO participation in Busan and in coordinating CSO priorities for the Busan Outcome Document.

Given the importance of country-level consultations, concerns about the coordination of parallel consultations for both processes were potentially an issue. In point of fact, these were two different globally-driven processes, with different timeframes, and with a different set of CSO actors at the country level. The Open Forum consultations were specific events, mostly happening within an eight-month period in 2010, linked to the Forum’s Global Assemblies. They had to be very inclusive of different types of CSOs. On the other hand, IBON/Reality of Aid worked in various ways to increase country-level capacity by advocacy-oriented national CSOs or platforms for sustained engagement with other stakeholders on the implementation of aid reform. In the end, while participants may have been different, it was usually the same country-level platform that coordinated both initiatives. The involvement of a common platform certainly facilitated coordination between Open Forum and BetterAid at the country level, but this reliance on a few also affected the relative emphasis on each agenda, depending on the interests and context for each CSO platform.

“Actually in Ghana we were not always conscious of the two [processes]... There was overlap in the membership, you know, and we seemed to accommodate them fairly easily with the Ghana Aid Effectiveness Forum... So we always saw the two as complementary and really didn’t split us. We were always working together to the point that sometimes we were not so conscious of the distinctiveness, of the differences in the two.” (Emmanuel Akwetey, GAEEF, Interview)

“I think that for us the movement produced by the Open Forum was more important for us in Latin America. It was something new. We had networks around international development cooperation in the Reality of Aid. But the issues for CSOs, their identity, their roles, the principles and effectiveness of CSOs, I think that was a very interesting framework for us.” (Ruben Fernandez, ALOP, Interview)

7. Innovating a Pooled Funding Mechanism for BetterAid/Reality of Aid and Open Forum

At the informal donor-CSO Stockholm meeting in early 2009, to address follow-up to on the AG-CS and CSO-related agreements in Accra, donors and CSOs explored an innovative pooled funding mechanism for a holistic donor approach to funding post-Accra CSO initiatives. The mechanism was implemented through a Memorandum of Understanding between a Donor Coordination Group, representing the major donors for the initiatives and a CSO Management Group, representing IBON and Concord, the fiscal agents for BetterAid/IBON & Reality of Aid and the Open Forum respectively. (Donor Coordinating Group & CSO Management Group, 2009)

The pooled funding mechanism has been unique in its coordinated support for a highly complex global civil society process:

- The mechanism retained the independence of the BACG and the GFG to autonomously manage their programming priorities and activities, respectively. It allowed for a coordinated and managed donor single response to a “BetterAid and Open Forum Chapeau Proposal” for these “two distinct but closely inter-related global CSO processes” (MOU). It did not preclude donors supporting other CSO initiatives not formally part of the BetterAid or Open Forum.
- The mechanism established two funding pools (for BetterAid and for Open Forum) to which donors could contribute. It strongly encouraged donors to contribute un-earmarked funds, or at least, to consider the balance of funding between the two initiatives in earmarking any funding. Donors “will seek to ensure balanced funding of each [pool] to ensure full implementation of these distinct but related CSO processes and thus achievement of their respective objectives and the over-arching objective of the Chapeau.” (MOU)
- The mechanism has been managed through joint meeting of the Donor Coordination Group and the CSO Management Group. Twice yearly meetings oversee the implementation of the MOU and reviews and makes proposals to ensure balance in funding between the two initiatives.
- The MOU established shared principles between donors and CSOs recognizing the complementarities and comprehensiveness of the two processes, the importance of harmonization requirements for reporting, auditing etc. to minimize donor transaction costs for CSOs involved, encouragement of maximum levels of information sharing and transparency, and the importance of establishing realistic indicators against which to measure and report progress for the initiatives.

- While each donor has an individual donor agreement with the CSO fiscal agent(s), the donor agrees to pool commentary on the proposal and subsequent reports to the donors, to harmonize to the maximum extent against common financial and narrative reporting templates, and to refrain from setting conditions incompatible with the MOU.

Overall the joint funding mechanism was seen to work very well. CSOs were particularly pleased with the roles of SIDA and DFID in working to mobilize interest in funding on the part of other donors in the early months of the process. These donors also took leadership in balancing donor funding for each process, particularly in relation to some individual bilateral funding arrangements. In the end, funding covered approximately 90% of proposed activities for both programs. On top of these original budgets, the mechanism also facilitated additional funding for a joint meeting of the BACG/GFG in Härnösand to develop a common platform for Busan and for the Busan Civil Society Forum prior to HLF4. Coordinating reporting to, and comments by, the donors not only facilitated an efficient funding relationship between the fiscal agents for the CSO processes and the 12 donors, but collective discussion of these reports also enabled more substantive dialogue on issues as the two processes evolved during the three years.

“There were a lot of areas where there was quite substantial dialogue with donors that went well beyond immediate funding issues... It created an open relationship where we were able to develop understanding of some donor demands, for example value for money, and they understood more about the iterative development of CSO processes, such as the country-level IBON/Reality of Aid outreach... We need to learn more from this funding modality as it has positive lessons for future multi-donor funding of complex CSO global policy processes.” (Roberto Pinauin, IBON Foundation [fiscal agent for BetterAid/Reality of Aid], Interview)

Chapter Two

What was accomplished?

Following Accra, CSOs working through BetterAid set out not only to hold donors and partner governments accountable to their commitments, but also to propose a bold forward-looking agenda for Busan involving all development actors. Just four years before the deadline of 2015 targets for the Millennium Development Goals, CSOs were pursuing a renewed inclusive partnership in development cooperation. It was to be a partnership in which CSOs were fully present as accountable development actors. CSOs were ambitious in their focus on strengthening development effectiveness, calling for the centrality of human rights standards, democratic ownership, poverty reduction, gender equality, social justice, decent work and environmental sustainability as outcomes of the Busan HLF4. While seemingly unachievable at Accra in 2008, progress can be documented for these goals in Busan in 2011.

“This is one of a few process that I have been involved where civil society on the onset set out goals for itself and then achieved them.... It is not so much what was particularly achieved in Busan, but Busan in general was shaped by what we set out for ourselves. Civil society had a conceptual and political leadership in the Busan process, even though our role was not within the official leadership or Bureau ... It not only energized the process, but it was competent and innovative.” (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

The first section of this chapter looks more closely at the degree of success in realizing the CSO policy framework for a renewed partnership in Busan with the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation* (BPd). While for many CSO participants a clause-by-clause review of the BPd are mainly mixed, the accomplishments for the three CSO areas of initiative – BetterAid at the WP-EFF, the IBON/RoA Country Outreach, and the Open Forum – are much deeper and more profound. The second section highlights some of these impacts. In many respects, the success of CSO participation in Busan represented a convergence of impact for these three post-Accra initiatives.

1. BetterAid perspectives on the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

BetterAid and its 300 CSO delegates¹ joined all stakeholders in welcoming the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation* (BPd), the conclusion of

the 4th High Level Forum. In many respects, this outcome represents a significant achievement in several areas crucial to CSOs. The agreement has transformed the aid effectiveness agenda of Paris, which was focused primarily on the technical aspects of aid delivery. The discourse has and moved significantly towards a new inclusive development effectiveness agenda that is more political and more directed to achieving development outcomes. For the first time, democratic ownership, a key tenet of development effectiveness, has been acknowledged as a fundamental principle of development cooperation, to be implemented through inclusive partnerships at the country level. CSOs also welcomed the strengthening of transparency and accountability as both a principle for development effectiveness and an actionable commitment in development practice. Finally the Bpd has laid the basis for a new global governance framework that succeeds the WP-EFF in June 2012. (See BetterAid 2012 for a full accounting of CSOs analysis of the Bpd.)

The Bpd reaffirmed CSOs as development actors in their own right, acknowledging the *Istanbul Principles* and the *International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness* as the underpinning for CSOs' initiatives to improve their development effectiveness. It asserts that donors and partner countries have an obligation to support an enabling environment for CSOs guided by international human rights standards.

“We are pleased to have achieved global legitimacy through the recognition and the endorsement of the Istanbul Principles and the Siem Reap Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness in the BOD. Through this framework, we commit to improve our own practices and will strengthen our transparency and accountability as well as our contribution to development effectiveness.” (Emele Duituturaga, co-chair, Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, Closing Ceremony, HLF4)

Nevertheless, while proud of their participation and influence, CSOs came away from Busan with some bittersweet reactions to many aspects of the Bpd:

An inclusive partnership. Creating an inclusive partnership for development based on common principles for pursuing reforms for development cooperation is a very significant progress. For the first time, this partnership includes the BRICS economies such as China, India and Brazil, along with the DAC donors, developing country governments and CSOs. Yet much of the DAC donors' “unfinished business” in the commitments of Paris and Accra remains largely unfinished after Busan. The non-DAC BRICS donors, on the other hand, have approached the table with a great amount of caution.

CSO enabling environment. While taking the commitments beyond Accra and HLF3, CSOs pointed out that the enabling environment commitments for CSOs in §22 of the Bpd should have acknowledged that an enabling environment must be informed by specific human rights, both in law and in practice. They also suggested

possible contradictions between §22 and the interpretation of other paragraphs in the Bpd, such as those on the use of country systems or results that could continue to undermine enabling conditions for CSOs in many countries.

The instrumentalization of gender equality and women's rights. The Bpd made important advances over Accra in giving attention to the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women [§20]. But in doing so, it identifies women's economic empowerment, not as an inalienable right, but as a "prerequisite for sustainable and inclusive growth." Furthermore, it makes no time-bound commitments to advance gender equality and women's rights, nor pledges any financing specifically to support the attainment of these rights.

"Well, some important progress was made but much remains unchanged and uncommitted to in terms of some of the long outstanding CSO and women's rights demands. For example, the inclusion of a specific paragraph (§20) on gender equality and the empowerment of women was important, but it does not go far enough, and can only really stand if it goes hand in hand with an integrated human rights based approach to development and if there is actual implementation." (Ana Inés Abelenda, AWID, Contribution to the Documentation Project, March 2012)

Few time-bound targets. CSO were highly critical of its overall lack of ambition. The Bpd did reaffirm without any specificity the unfinished commitments of Paris and Accra. But the few time-bound target and indicators in earlier drafts of *Bpd* were largely stripped out from the document and "selective and relevant indicators and targets" are only to be determined by June 2012 [§35]. Donors, partner governments and CSOs were debating the ambition of global indicators for monitoring progress in the meetings of the Post Busan Interim Group up to June.

Private sector growth as the driver for development. The Bpd acknowledges that "decent work" is essential to address the central challenge of inequality. But at the same time, the Bpd asserts that the underlying model for strengthening development effectiveness is private sector-led growth as the driver for development. While the Bpd failed, after much negotiation, to elaborate the minimum standards for enabling civil society as development actors, it commits uncritically to a robust enabling legal and regulatory environment for the private sector. It also fails to reference an accountability framework for the private sector as development actors based on their adherence to human rights standards and the development effectiveness principles articulated in the opening section of the Bpd.

Limited references to human rights standards. The Bpd does deepen the Accra acknowledgement of the importance of human rights standards for development progress as a principle for development cooperation. But it largely fails to apply the principles and standards of human rights through rights-based approaches in other

parts of the document. The primary reference for a rights-based approach is to civil society, whereby civil society “plays a vital role in enabling people to claim their rights [and] in promoting rights based approaches [to development]” [§22]. Ensuring a rights-based approach to development requires a commitment by all stakeholders, not just civil society.

Limited progress for a more equitable and just architecture for development cooperation. The BPD calls for an inclusive Global Partnership that would govern and monitor the implementation of the outcomes of Busan. But it leaves as unfinished business the structure and mandate of this Global Partnership as the successor to the Working Party. The basic principles governing participants and ways of working are also unclear. The BPD also points out the need for more engagement with the UN system, including the DCF, and a collaborative secretariat to support the Global Partnership between the OECD DAC and the UNDP.

“The invitation in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation to the UN Development Cooperation Forum— ‘to play a role in consulting on the implementation of agreements reached in Busan’ (§36)- was a step forward considering that women’s rights groups demanded that a new equitable development cooperation system should be put in place under the United Nations. However, concerns remain as to how this will be done in practice.” (Ana Inés Abelenda, AWID, Contribution to the Documentation Project, March 2012)

2. Areas of Achievement

a) An inclusive mobilization of diverse sectors of CSOs. BetterAid has been a highly inclusive platform involving up to 1,700 CSOs, with a reach that extends well beyond this number through networks, platforms and associations that inform and engage their members. Its reach was particularly strong across the Global South. As will be evident in the chapter on Open Forum, its mandate was premised in particular on consultations that were highly inclusive among sectors, regions and countries, with broad reach across all continents. Many of these CSOs also identified with BetterAid. The CSO managing groups for both BetterAid and Open Forum (BACG and GFG) were unique among global platforms in that they were deliberately structured to ensure dialogue in the context of sector and organizational diversity.

An inclusive platform

“The beauty of the Open Platform [BetterAid] was that everyone had the right to be involved, and even at the last minute. The INGOs were free to engage in any way they pleased and be present in any level they choose... For them it was satisfactory; – why should we work against a group that is so open to us? We defended their right to have a session

in Busan and promoted that session. By doing that, they also recognized the principles of the open platform and they operated along those principles.” (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

“An achievement for the CSOs has been to coordinate civil society from the Global South and provide a platform where they can engage on development processes and the aid regime.” (Tafadzawa Muropa, GREAT, Zimbabwe, Survey)

“The achievement of BetterAid as an open platform was very good. We did not have impossible ideological debates. We always understood that the common results were important. We managed quite well to get an open space for southern CSOs. Everybody could make their points and were listened to. I am not sure it is very sustainable, but it is remarkable as an achievement and it would be bad to lose this for the future.” (Jan Dereymaeker, ITUC, Interview)

“The country outreach and consultations were very important because they raised awareness among CSOs. And that awareness at country level mobilized CSOs, with CSOs engaging their own government. It created ownership at the country level.” (Lyn Pano, Asia Pacific Research Network, Interview)

“The Open Forum was very important for us because we were able to do national consultations and also sectoral consultations, with small and medium enterprises and with farmers’ groups, prior to the national consultations. It was a very good process for people, who were often treated as ‘beneficiaries,’ could understand the whole mechanism of aid, including aid through NGOs.” (Don Marut, INFID, Interview)

Dialogue within the sector

“Another achievement was the broadening of CSOs involved in the process (monitoring and advocacy) and how this has increased from Paris to Accra. Equally important was the level of coordination to present one common agenda. Both show the capacity of civil society to reach out and be inclusive, but at the same time the capacity of civil society to ally, commit to principles and positions and to advocate for them.” (Mayra Moro-Coco and Anne Schoenstein, AWID, Survey)

“Yes, I think there are new elements. Particularly the [Open Forum] process has initiated more frank discussions with INGOs in the country, whose actions are not always consistent with their principles when it comes to relationships with national NGOs and local social movements.” (Federacion de ONG de Nicaragua, Nicaragua, Interview)

“[The CSO global processes] built a stronger base for us in Cambodia, because we were able to build awareness of Paris and Accra at the grassroots level and the sub-national level, who in turn were able to use this knowledge in their interaction with the administration,

the donors and in dialogue with the INGOs. We can claim that impact.” (Borithy Lun, Cooperation Committee of Cambodia, Interview)

b) A deepening of CSO legitimacy and credibility. Many observers commented on the strength of CSO engagement occupying spaces in the Working Party, bringing a critical normative vision, a depth of knowledge, and constructive proposals. A deliberate process by BACG and the GFG to develop a shared policy platform (i.e. the *CSO Key Messages and Proposals*) in early 2011 was critical in creating the foundation for a unified voice in the final stages of the Working Party process and in Busan.

One Voice and Effective Coordination

“I would say that the feeling that civil society speaks with one voice that was evident in Busan, I think this was a major achievement. The way civil society had coordinated itself – that was very impressive. You were in the right places in Busan. You were in all the meetings. I think it was strategic.” (Charlotta Norrby, Sida & Task Team, Interview)

“I really believe in the power of a prepared voice that is clear and legitimate and backed up. We had the potential to be such a powerful voice, with the diversity, with the messages. And I think we lived up to that potential in ways that many people didn’t expect. We surprised people. There is an element of surprise in what we accomplished ... which put us in a position of being more influential in these processes.” (Amy Bartlett, Open Forum Coordinator, Interview)

“A great achievement was also that CSOs were very creative and constructive, That was very much the interpretation that we had from engagement in the Task Team, that CSOs participated with a lot of enthusiasm and good will, and wanted indeed to get joint and good results.” (Karin Fallman, Sida, Interview)

“CSOs have a normative role to play and the power of CSOs is not like the power of governments and multilateral institutions; our power lies in this normative role. That role means that we should always be a watch-dog. Therefore we may not exhort about Busan at the event, but point to its omissions later. And CSO have been doing that...” (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

Creating CSO Identity

“This was an opportunity for the sector to really create an identity, a purpose and a value, not just for donors and governments, but for ourselves.” (Amy Bartlett, Open Forum Coordinator, Interview)

Acting on the recognition of CSOs as development actors

“One of the key achievements was that governments in Africa and globally recognized civil society as development actors in their own right; the fact that we could go and say that we, as civil society, are groups that have something to say about development and there was respect for our position – this was an important achievement.” (Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Forum, Interview)

“Among the members of the government delegation, I was the person who was the most knowledgeable because I followed the process since Paris... That’s why in our initial meeting before going to Busan, the Minister asked me to provide input into all the positions of the government in order to make sure that the government position was in line with the whole trajectory of progress in aid effectiveness to date.” (Don Marut, INFID, Interview)

c) Fulfillment of CSO commitments to CSO development effectiveness.

The success of the Open Forum in reaching global agreement on the *Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness* and an *International Framework* to guide their implementation clearly strengthened CSOs in relation to other stakeholders.² A serious and deep process reflecting on CSO accountability created an authenticity in relation to the notion of CSOs as development actors in their own right.

“I really admire the process of the Open Forum – they really walked the talk of the promises leading up to Accra and they did it. I was in Istanbul and Siem Reap. I was really impressed by the achievement it represented – not only the substance, but the way it was done. The galaxy of CSOs is even more complex than official aid. It was really a challenge and most observers were quite skeptical about the capacity to come up with the Istanbul Principles.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

“The global framework for debate created by the Open Forum for us was very, very important in Latin America... In some ways [this debate] was something new for us [and it] had not occurred for many years within civil society... In my point of view, the most important achievement was the consensus on the Istanbul Principles. This was something new, something very concrete. It provides an interesting, useful tool for organizations to build from that agreement. It is the most important accomplishment for me.” (Ruben Fernandez, ALOP (Colombia), Interview)

“I would say the major achievement is the Istanbul Principles and the Framework. I think it really shows that civil society did its homework from Accra. You can’t say exactly the same thing for governments when it comes to enabling environments.” (Charlotta Norrby, Sida & Task Team co-chair, Interview)

“At the national level in France, we engage through platforms, NGOs, trade unions etc. The Open Forum is not well known in France, but the Istanbul Principles resonate with

their experience. These principles will progressively structure the thinking of CSOs.” (Daniel Verger, Coordination Sud, France, Interview)

d) Engagement that was constructive and effective. CSOs were seen to be well-prepared and brought a variety of expertise, including country-level knowledge, to inform their contributions. In the words of Bert Koenders, the former Co-Chair of the Working Party, at the launch of the global 2011 *Reality of Aid Report*, based on country cases studies, “the conclusions in your *Report* are very important in improving the behavior of many actors both at the recipient and contributing sides; we have to be open to having some improvements in the sectoral level, some improvements in transparency...” CSOs were also effective because they had an overview of the full Busan process, unlike many other stakeholders who experienced the process through a particular role on the WP-EFF itself or on one of its Clusters. Other stakeholders in some countries began to look to CSOs to brief them and inform their country positions.

“The fact that you had your own monitoring [Reality of Aid Report], this was taken seriously.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD, DCD)

“Civil society engagement was constructive. This in itself built confidence. People became much more open to the views from civil society. A measured engagement gains much more traction.” (Paul Sherlock, Irish Aid, Interview)

“We had dedicated and consistent teams of people working towards our agenda, getting traction by consistent engagement with different aspects of the Working Party and its Task Teams, including the Executive Committee. This was really useful and effective as a strategy.” (Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Forum, Interview)

e) A transformed discourse on important issues for the future. It was widely recognized that CSOs brought new issues to the table in a substantive way. For example, the Open Forum and BetterAid worked with the DCD for a workshop on development effectiveness, attended by the WP-EFF co-chairs, alongside the October 2010 WP-EFF meeting. In many ways, the CSO discourse on development effectiveness, gender equality, human rights, and democratic ownership established the future agenda from Busan.

“In Korea, we said that Busan was successful in agenda setting, but not standard setting. There are no clear commitments. Busan tried to do a paradigm shift, but what happened was a power shift, from the OECD donors to the non-OECD. But from CSO point of view, CSOs participated as equal partners in terms of policy making.” (Anselmo Lee, KoFID, Korea, Interview)

Development Effectiveness

“Development effectiveness’ appears to be an attractive expression – it has broader appeal to all stakeholders working on development. However, the discussion showed that there is no agreed definition of what this expression means, as it is applied by various actors for different purposes.” (Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, 2010)

“The development effectiveness agenda, broad as some other criticize it, gives CSOs an enabling environment to pursue various development initiatives – be they human rights, development and growth, etc.” (Meja Vitalice, RoA Africa [Kenya], Interview)

“The problem of development effectiveness is that it means different things to different people. But yes we have to talk about all of the resources for development. It couldn’t happen that much in Busan because we mainly had the ministers for development cooperation. They could talk a little bit about this, but could not take decisions outside the field of development cooperation.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

“Aid effectiveness is about the quality of the process of delivering and managing aid; development effectiveness is about the development results – both in the MDG sense as well as growth – achieved through using all resources, including local and domestic resources. It is thus about managing aid so that it increases other resources – for example, trade, domestic resources, remittances – to move towards aid exit. Local level capacities are key to manage this.” (Naomi Ngwira, Government of Malawi, Quoted in Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, 2010)

Human Rights

“There seemed to be more focused messages on a few key themes – obviously transparency, but I think issues around inclusive ownership, human rights, came through much more strongly, in a way that made sense in terms of what we were trying to do ... Getting language on rights and getting a discussion about this in a form that didn’t become two sets of football supporters, having to fight with each other. There was an actual discussion about rights...” (Brenda Killen, OECD DCD, Interview)

“The issue of rights in general is rising at the world level, and it was your hard point during the final negotiations. You got some of it, not necessarily all of it. But it was enough to make it clear that it is a crucial dimension for CSOs, and that is the main point.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

Gender Equality

“The regional CSO consultation on gender equality internal to CSOs was a landmark event. It involved the broad participation of many different organizations (over 300), and

not only women and feminists, reflecting on a future agenda for CSOs to contribute more decisively to the inclusion of women in development outcomes.” (Rosa Ines Ospina, Iniciativa Regional Rendir Cuentas, Argentina, Survey)

“The achievements in paragraph 20 of the BOD are a result that should allow CSOs to push for further deepening. Of course as always it would remain a major goal for CSOs to monitor and push for actual implementation.” (Maya Moro-Coco and Anne Schoenstein, AWID, Survey)

“I think the fact that we had an AWID representative all the way through helped keep gender equality as a topic, which was never sidelined. Obviously there was a coalition of different forces that brought this together. They reinforced each other, but for my colleagues in Gendernet, it meant a great deal to them that we had people representing gender CSOs in the Working Party... What’s different about the commitment on gender at Busan was it wasn’t just at the last minute you have to put in a couple of lines on gender. It actually represented some work, which is going to happen because there has been a commitment at the head of state level...” (Brenda Killen, OECD DCD, Interview)

“BetterAid integrated quite well in documents, processes and operating structures the principles of gender equality and a feminist dimension. This became “normal” in the process... and I think it is a major achievement that BetterAid and civil society more generally are doing this without any discussion, bringing in women’s groups and inserting gender equality and women’s rights analysis into our positions.” (Anne Schoenstein, AWID, Interview)

Generating debates on development

“It gave rise to a very important debate around the concept of development, which revealed the various positions present in civil society, and the difference with those of government actors, even the multilateral system. Development today is a very public debate, at least in Latin America, with the transition to democracy in some countries being revised and re-conceptualized.” (Equipo Pueblo, Mexico)

“We are also in a challenging situation now in Indonesia because the government wants to integrate all international commitments in one policy framework of positions linked to the national development plan. And for this, Indonesia puts the G20 commitments as the lead commitments. So this is our challenge, because we cannot talk about aid effectiveness separately from the development agenda of the G20. We cannot talk about financing for development without the financial perspective of the G20, or for economic growth in the G20... Also at the end of this year, the government is preparing to become the chair of APEC, and so now aid effectiveness, G20 commitments, are now brought into APEC.” (Don Marut, INFID, Interview)

“Recognition of CSOs as development actors has implicitly created opportunities for wider interpretations in the definition of development, whereas development is understood not only in economic terms, but as the creation of freedom for humanity.” (Syamsul Ardiansyah, Christian Foundation for Public Health, Indonesia, Survey)

f) A transformed culture for inclusive global partnerships. BetterAid’s full participation on the Working Party, including its Executive Committee and the Sherpa process for finalizing the outcome of Busan, was the logical extension of the Accra recognition of CSOs as actors in their own right. It was also transformational at many levels, not just for the WP-EFF or the OECD DAC. While respect for CSOs in these roles were mixed and sometimes criticized, there is little doubt that the opening of the WP-EFF over these past three years has set a precedent for multilateral processes for which there is no turning back, and upon which civil society can build in the future.

“Let me start with culture in Accra, and afterwards. In Accra you were outside the tent by and large. You were invited. Something clicked. BetterAid and Open Forum became one of the driving forces. I have heard a lot of people expressing frustrations towards BetterAid; but nobody ever questioned the basic notion of BetterAid being at the table when it came to the negotiations.” (Philippe Besson, Swiss Chair, WP-EFF Cluster A, Interview)

“And I think it is quite phenomenal that at the end of the day it was quite clear that we were sitting at the negotiating table as equal partners. And we did not have state identity formally, but recognized as civil society, we could organize ourselves and be presented at the global level in negotiations and have our views taken on board. I thought it was a phenomenal achievement.” (Emmanuel Akwetey, Ghana Aid Effectiveness Forum, Interview)

“Participation was a key issue in the whole process... It wasn’t perfect. We are still treated as some strange animal in the room, but I think it is making its way through the institutions and that is very important.” (Jan Dereymaeker, ITUC, Interview)

“When it comes to Korea, there is really a change in perception of civil society coming out of the Busan conference. Among ourselves, within civil society, the perception of civil society also changed. We think that the Korean civil society community has been very domestically oriented, but they have now opened to an international perspective... It is a huge empowerment, confidence building... Change has happened to the Korean civil society. ... Korean civil society has more international responsibility, not only providing service delivery, but also engaging in policy discourse. In a sense this is the best outcome of Busan for us.” (Hyuksang Sohn, KoFID, Interview)

“We have been part of an informal coalition of partner countries and several progressive donors who are saying Paris and Accra agendas need to be retained and pursued. We have a strong and consistent voice on that agenda. We have been part of the reaffirmation of these commitments in Busan.” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UK Aid Network, Interview)

“Part of the achievement in Busan was translating the multi-stakeholder approach beyond the global level to the regional and national level. You could see attempts by governments to include CSOs, not just because it is required, but because they were making an effort to get to know exactly what CSOs are thinking. What are their positions? How can they partner with CSOs to put their [government] agenda forward at the global level.” (Meja Vitalice, RoA Africa [Kenya], Interview)

“We need to reflect very carefully what it means to become part of the system, which has been highly contested, and even if there has been some gains and partnerships are broader, we still need to be very careful and remain critical. We can easily become co-opted and instrumentalized.” (Anne Schoenstein, AWID, Interview)

“In the end many of your representatives didn’t look much different from others around the table. In such processes maybe you lose some of your refreshing difference. The moment you are part of the game, it is unavoidable. But what is important, and I got signs of this, is that you were really in touch with actors on the ground. Also, Southern actors got a real chance to engage.” (Philippe Besson, Swiss Chair, WP-EFF Cluster A, Interview)

“I think that the fact that everyone was talking with each other and working with each other, they got to know one another... Having a better understanding of what CSOs do and what their role is, and how the policies and behaviours that we discuss in these kinds of international discussions (WP-EFF) shape how CSOs are actually relevant to people at all these levels. Actually this is a measure of success....” (Brenda Killen, OECD DCD, Interview)

Chapter Three

BetterAid and the Working Party: Setting an agenda for development effectiveness

1. The Working Party: Responding to new political dynamics in development cooperation

BetterAid's full participation on the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF), through the BetterAid Coordinating Group (BACG), was a unique innovation and learning experience for CSOs in their relationship with inter-governmental policy bodies. This participation is clearly an affirmation of the Accra recognition of CSOs as "development actors in their own right". But participation on the WP-EFF also significantly changed CSO modalities for engagement. CSOs had to retool themselves in BetterAid to take advantage of these new opportunities. As a full partner with equal responsibilities for the outcomes of the WP-EFF, CSOs had to adapt their approach to their advocacy goals through the full implementation of the Accra commitments and an ambitious agenda focusing on development effectiveness for the Busan HLF4. They did so in ways that achieved significant impact on the outcomes of Busan. This Chapter sets out some characteristics of CSO engagement with the Working Party and its importance for shaping the agenda and outcomes of Busan.

The informal and voluntary basis of the Working Party as a multilateral body created a post-Accra opportunity for all stakeholders to consider innovative approaches in structuring the WP-EFF's oversight of global policy initiatives in aid reform. In the absence of formal membership, informality created the flexibility to not only bring into the process CSOs, but also parliamentarians and organizations representing the private sector as development actors. It created a political space where the WP-EFF could respond to the changing political dynamics of development cooperation. Developing country governments increasingly focused on strengthening the norms and approaches to South-South cooperation. Donors and the DAC worked to encourage reluctant BRICS donors, such as China, Brazil, South Africa or Mexico, to collaborate to shape a new Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. All these actors were contributing to complex development processes at the country level. It was very positive, therefore, that all stakeholders were seen to be essential participants in a post-Accra WP-EFF in shaping norms and reforms for development.

“...[A] change for which there is no going back on is that everyone now accepts that CSOs are part of the discussion and a credible, constructive, informed partner in the discussion... That is a major achievement and I think it changed what is acceptable behaviour now for other fora where development is being discussed.” (Brenda Killen, OECD DCD, Interview)

As noted in Chapter One, the pre-Accra Advisory Group on CSOs and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS) laid the groundwork for this transformation of the Working Party. But CSO representation was also the consequence of strategic engagements and contributions by CSOs to the Accra HLF, a view that was widely shared by donors and developing country governments. Full participation by CSOs in the WP-EFF, built upon this Accra experience, and has created new political dynamics in the interplay of CSOs with inter-governmental multilateral policy processes. (Tujan 2012)

“The turning point was Ottawa [AG-CS International Forum in February 2008] where many relatively high level staff were present, the kind of people that can really influence the debates. Then the change happened substantially at Accra – the message was clear: CSOs are well organized, they can be part of a multi-stakeholder debate, they will be useful for the whole debate.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

What did CSOs bring to the Working Party process? CSOs certainly brought a diversity of on-the-ground development experience often working directly with poor and marginalized populations. But equally important, they came with a normative understanding of development as a dynamic political process of socio-economic change focusing on human rights, equality and social justice. The reach of CSOs across the world and the coordination and the representation of their different networks in the BACG provided a clear foundation for a legitimate CSO engagement with the WP-EFF. The voice of CSOs at the Working Party table was never the voice of an individual CSO, but rather the outcome of CSO dialogue within the Coordinating Group. As members of the Working Party, CSOs were sometimes challenged by tensions between their interest in contributing practical ways for aid reform and their embedded normative or ethical legitimacy, which was reflected in a shared CSO agenda seeking the implementation of human rights standards.

“Having a seat at the table was a huge benefit... However I think that Working Party process needs to be more flexible to the needs of civil society for consultation. We are not a government with a ministry. We have a huge population. There was a lot of places where civil society tried to organize but was not given adequate time to be able to do that in a way that was meaningful.” (Amy Bartlett, Open Forum Secretariat, Interview)

BetterAid enabled a diversity of country-level experiences to inform WP-EFF debates in key policy areas (see Chapter Six). This experiential dimension of CSO legitimacy in development was reinforced in the WP-EFF by the parallel Open Forum

commitment to examine CSOs own effectiveness as development actors. CSOs were less considered as instrumental agents for donor or governments agendas. As independent expressions of citizenship, CSOs had legitimacy in a Working Party process that puts strong rhetorical importance on country and democratic ownership and accountability.

In its engagements with the Working Party, CSOs consequently understood its roles to be unique but also complementary with other governmental actors at the table. In the words of the BetterAid co-chair, Tony Tujan:

“As development actors, CSO influence within the aid system is different compared to that of other actors. Thus the nature of the power they exercise is different from that of developing country governments, where the executive branch represents state role and responsibility; likewise it is different from that of development agencies – multilateral or bilateral – from donor countries, who act as development partners...”

“Thus, CSO participation in the aid effectiveness reform process has had several implications, such as opening up the dialogue, focusing on normative and strategic issues of development, acting as a form of beacon for democracy and human rights in development in official processes and policy dialogue, as well as acting as an agent for active transparency and accountability in policy and operational processes...” (Tujan, 2012, pp. 34-35 and 39)

2. Structuring CSO Engagement with the Working Party

The post-Accra Working Party was a large and complex body, with a responsibility to monitor the implementation of government commitments from the Paris and Accra HLFs and to develop the agenda for HLF4 in Busan. The latter provided a unique opportunity for CSOs to shift the paradigm of the Paris process towards commitments related to the promotion of development effectiveness. The Paris commitments for aid effectiveness, while largely unmet, expired in 2010 and the 2011. Busan HLF4 would renew an inclusive multi-stakeholder agreement that could strengthen the contributions of development cooperation in improving the lives of poor and marginalized populations.

Officially, the WP-EFF was composed of 77 recognized participants and seven observers, divided among 24 recipient countries, seven countries that were both donor and recipient (such as Mexico and South Africa), 31 donor countries, ten multilateral organizations, including the Chair of the OECD DAC, and five other institutions. The last category included BetterAid, the Business and Industry Advisory Committee, AWEPA and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. United Cities and Local Governments were among the seven observer organizations.

The leadership of the WP-EFF also changed post-Accra. An informal process among members selected two co-chairs, one from the global north and one from the global

south. While there were two different co-chairs from donor countries, Talaat Abdel-Malek from Egypt represented partner countries as co-chair over the three years. With the resignation of Bert Koenders from the Netherlands due to another appointment, Talaat alone chaired the final months of the Working Party and its post-Busan process. The World Bank and the Government of Korea (as host of the HLF4) served as vice-chairs, and the Bank continued to be an important player in influencing Working Party directions. The OECD Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD) provided day-to-day Secretariat functions for the operations of the Working Party. In doing so, it also played a significant role in shaping the WP-EFF workplan and agenda, including the politically sensitive summary of progress in meeting Paris and Accra commitments, as well as drafts of the Busan Outcome Document.

In recognition of the numbers and diversity of CSOs in BetterAid, CSOs had two seats at the Working Party table. The co-chairs of BetterAid occupied these seats for most meetings, but CSOs were also allowed to substitute for agenda items, bringing particular expertise to the table when required. This flexibility in representation provided greater opportunity to profile CSO competency and expertise on multiple issues, in areas ranging from gender equality, country systems to donor procurement policies.

The BACG also had an important and influential seat on the WP-EFF Executive Committee. While there was only one BACG seat on the Executive, both co-chairs could be present for its meetings. The Executive Committee played a major role in designing the agenda for the Working Party and in elaborating the goals and process for the Busan HLF.

The Working Party's mandate was to review progress in the implementation of the Paris and Accra HLF outcomes and to develop an agenda for Busan. As noted, the formal conclusion of the *Paris Declaration* opened new potential for the Busan HLF to not only renew unmet aid effectiveness commitments, but also create a new partnership focusing on issues important for development effectiveness in development cooperation.

To accomplish this mandate, the structure of the processes within the WP-EFF was complex, with a myriad of different voluntary task teams and working groups on different issues. There were five major issue Clusters, which expanded to eight working areas during the course of three years. There were several different Task Teams within some of the Clusters. In Cluster A (chaired by Switzerland and Tanzania), for example, the multi-stakeholder Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment (*see Chapter Seven*), a Task Team on Broad-Based Democratic Ownership and a Work-stream on Accountability led by Ireland, were located. In Cluster C there were working groups on Conditionality, on Transparency and on Division of Labour.

The Clusters and their various working groups were open to all members of the Working Party and therefore to any BetterAid members. However, there were

Major Issue Clusters in the Working Party

Cluster A: Ownership and Accountability
Cluster B: Use of Country Systems
Cluster C: Transparent and Responsible Aid
Cluster D: Assessing Progress
Cluster E: Managing for Results
Task Team on South/South Cooperation
Health as a Tracer Sector
The private sector and Effective Aid

often no resources to enable participation, and receptivity to CSO participation varied in practice among some Clusters, particularly during the time they were being formed in 2009. CSOs were particularly active in Cluster A, to which both the Open Forum and BetterAid contributed in a number of different areas – expanding the notion of “democratic ownership”, the work of the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness, and work on mutual accountability. Conditionality in Cluster C was a core agenda for CSOs coming out of Accra and they were very active in this work-stream. Also important, but with sometimes less sustained CSO participation for varied reasons, were the Task Team on South-South Cooperation, Managing for Results, and the Health as a Tracer Sector Work-stream. A working group on the Private Sector and Effective Aid was created late in the process and CSOs had to persist to be invited, but were never really recognized as a stakeholder by the group.

On several occasions, the BACG had to write formal letters to strenuously protest the disregard of CSO views or their non-inclusion in several Clusters and Task Teams. Nevertheless, the BACG CSOs generally took the great advantage of systematically participating in Working Party processes. CSO views were often taken into account even in areas where CSOs put forward “controversial” positions, and BACG managed to shape the outcomes in several important areas such as democratic ownership, country systems and procurement and, to some degree, conditionality within the Clusters. However, in the end, it was not always clear how Cluster policy outcomes would shape the discussions in Busan and its Outcome Document.

“In general, too often we spend much more time talking to ourselves [clarifying our positions], and too little time presenting these positions to the individuals we are trying to influence... We need to spend more time nuancing our strategy on the inside to identify country positions that might fit with our own, or identify blockages to our positions that we need to address.” (Fraser Reilly-King, CCIC, Canada, Survey Response)

The BACG was very ably supported by a global Secretariat based in Manila, Paris, Stockholm and Brussels. A Paris-based Liaison Officer played a very important role in assuring strong linkages with the day-to-day processes of the Working Party and with the OECD-DAC based Secretariat for the Working Party. He monitored many of the Paris meetings, produced biweekly updates on key WP-EFF processes that the BACG were following, and alerted BACG members on impending opportunities for CSOs to engage. The BACG Manila-based Secretariat coordinated the organization of BACG meetings and international engagement with the various Clusters and Task Teams of the Working Party outside of Paris. Since 2010, a communications specialist worked out of EURODAD to facilitate professional communications of BACG messages and media relations, particularly in the lead-up to Busan. Unlike the pre-Accra ISG, which had no direct secretariat support, the BACG Secretariat was critical to effective and timely BACG policy engagements with the Working Party.

Members of the BACG were also engaged (from pre-Accra days) with several donor-based DAC subsidiary networks such as Gendernet on gender equality issues and aid effectiveness, and from a more critical point of view, Govnet on issues of governance and domestic accountability. These DAC processes worked, sometimes alongside CSOs in the case of Gendernet, to integrate their issues into Working Party processes and into the Busan Outcome Document. Another important parallel initiative from 2008 onward was the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). IATI was launched in Accra as a DFID-led commitment to substantially strengthen the transparency of aid transactions (for all donors including CSOs as donors), particularly in relation to developing country budget processes. CSOs from the BACG and Open Forum were members of the IATI Steering Committee, alongside other NGOs such as Publish What You Fund. CSOs organized consultations on their interests in aid transparency, contributed to the development of the IATI transparency standard, and promoted donors to sign and implement the IATI standard.¹

Finally, BACG members were active in the Advisory Group of UN Development Cooperation Forum, which held preparatory events and organized a biannual UN conference on issues in development cooperation. In the years following Accra, BetterAid promoted greater integration of the Working Party with the DCF, promoting improved global legitimacy for commitments to reform in development cooperation. Unfortunately, unlike the Working Party, the space for CSO participation in the DCF processes was sometimes limited by both UN rules and a lack of UN resources for the DCF process. However, this situation changed post-Accra where the conduct of the High Level Symposia and the DCF HLF itself mirrored the Working Party space and the ways of working for CSOs and other non-executive stakeholders, albeit resources remain wanting.

The focus for the UNDCF in 2010 was accountability, South-South and triangular cooperation, and aid policy coherence with a view of shifting aid relationships to a

more long-term and sustainable sources of development financing. The BACG made available its policy positions on these topics to the 2010 Development Cooperation Forum; and to some degree, the DCF's research informed the work of Cluster A on mutual accountability. The 2012 DCF is focusing on the nexus between sustainable development and development cooperation, and CSOs remain involved in the Steering Group and in its preparatory meetings.²

3. Developing BetterAid Policy Proposals for the Working Party

Following Accra, the BACG launched a policy review process that reflected on both the outcomes of Accra and a policy framework for development effectiveness built upon human rights norms and standards. A BetterAid January 2010 policy brief called for “fundamental reforms in current aid priorities and practices, guided by principles and approaches to ensure development effectiveness drives international development cooperation”. The paper signaled that BetterAid would be seeking in Busan an agreement that had an “ambition and a set of commitments for change that go beyond what has been agreed in the Paris Declaration and the AAA and with the political will to be fully implemented and respected by signatories”. [BetterAid 2010a]

For BetterAid, development effectiveness focuses on “the impact of development actors' actions on the lives of poor and marginalized populations”. It also “requires significant changes in international global governance structures at all levels, including trade, financial markets, foreign direct investment and debt. In practical terms, it means empowering the poor and respecting, protecting and fulfilling international human rights standards.” [BetterAid 2010a] Many of these ideas were subsequently elaborated in a series of policy position papers in 2010 (see BetterAid 2010c, and BetterAid 2010d). These papers were widely circulated among all stakeholders in the WP-EFF, as well as civil society organizations who were following the WP-EFF process. But development effectiveness remains a contested concept for various Working Party stakeholders (see section 4).

Cumulatively, the collective discussion of these policy papers and the sign-off by the members of the BACG created an emerging consensus for a BetterAid policy agenda for Busan. Policy issues were debated in several BACG meetings from late 2009 throughout 2010. These debates were enriched by a more focused work of BACG members on key issues such as a post-Busan development cooperation architecture or policy conditionality. During this period, BACG CSOs brought their own policy knowledge to the table; AWID, WIDE and APWLD on gender equality and development effectiveness, Transparency International on aid transparency and corruption issues, ITUC on decent work, social protection and the governance experience of the ILO, EURODAD on procurement and the private sector in development, and PCFS

on rural development, for example. Members of the BACG, including faith-based organizations such as ACT-Alliance, and some organizations outside the BACG, such as INGOs, also had their own policy and advocacy trajectory towards Busan.

In the latter part of 2010 the BACG realized that CSOs were strategically well-placed to influence the priorities for Busan. Unlike many of the Working Party actors, CSOs had a comprehensive overview of the Busan process, including a country-level perspective on the assessment of progress for the Paris and Accra commitments that were to inform the WP-EFF agenda for Busan. BACG CSOs were engaged in many of the Clusters and Task Teams, giving them a window on the interests of other stakeholders and the directions for an emerging discourse within the Working Party on development effectiveness. At the same time, there was growing evidence that several important donors were interested in very modest goals for Busan, which had to be counteracted with strong CSO advocacy.

“CSOs had a big advantage compared to other actors in that they could see the whole process. Some donors were only present in one or two of the task teams or clusters and they are very focused on their particular issue. Civil society had the advantage that they had so many people that they could have people in the different clusters, giving feedback to their colleagues, and having the whole picture.” (Eduardo Gonzales, OECD DCD, Interview)

CSO advocacy would be most effective if CSOs could speak as one voice in the lead-up to Busan. But this required a strong consensus on a clearly articulated set of CSO policy priorities, which would also be acknowledged by INGOs that were outside the BACG processes. Speaking with one voice as BetterAid also required a convergence of BACG and Open Forum advocacy messages while, at the same time, respecting the integrity of the Open Forum process to address issues for CSOs’ development practices beyond specific Busan commitments (see Chapter Five).

In March 2011, approximately 60 CSOs from the BACG and the Open Forum’s GFG gathered for three days of intensive policy discussion at Sida’s civil society centre in Härnösand, Sweden. The purpose of this joint meeting was to develop consensus on CSO policy priorities and agree on an overarching civil society strategy towards Busan. CSO priorities from Härnösand were distilled and agreed in *CSOs on the Road to Busan: Key Messages and Proposals* [BetterAid 2011a].

CSOs on the Road to Busan was widely circulated within the BetterAid and Open Forum networks in the months following Härnösand. Its *Key Messages* were discussed in subsequent regional and country consultations, aligned with regional or country issues, and were reiterated to governments around the world. Härnösand initiated a collective CSO mobilization towards Busan, which focused on advocacy strategies for those working closely with BetterAid, Open Forum and the Reality of Aid networks. Through these networks, CSOs were able to mobilize country-level advocacy and

identify 300 CSOs who would come to the Busan HLF sharing the goals of the *Key Messages*. Several regional consultations developed their own declarations for Busan based on these *Messages*.

CSOs on the Road to Busan was structured around four overarching policy goals. These goals framed a comprehensive CSO proposal for renewed partnerships in Busan towards a more just development cooperation system. For each goal, CSOs sought specific, time-bound and measurable commitments. CSOs also challenged the “profound incoherence between aid and development policies and those policies guiding trade, investment, debt or climate finance”. It drew attention to policies and practices that were undermining CSOs as development actors despite the Accra commitments. Annex D has a summary of the main proposals:

A) Fully evaluate and deepen the Paris and Accra commitments through reforms based on democratic ownership. Democratic ownership for CSOs requires strong governance institutions for participation and accountability, with particular attention to the rights of affected and vulnerable populations. Democratic ownership also requires the full realization of the commitments made in Paris and Accra for aid reforms, as well as the adherence to the highest levels of transparency.

B) Strengthen development effectiveness through development cooperation practices that promote human rights standards and focus on the eradication of the causes of poverty and inequality. Human rights standards guide both the priorities for development cooperation and the behaviour and practices of aid actors through the implementation of human rights approaches to development. Human rights norms place gender equality and women’s rights at the center in achieving development effectiveness. They also point to economic development approaches that promote social inclusion, protection and dialogue – the Decent Work Agenda.

C) Affirm and ensure the participation of the full diversity of CSOs as independent development actors in their own rights. BetterAid called on all development actors to endorse the *Istanbul Principles* and *International Framework* as the basis for assessing CSO contributions to development and evaluating the minimum standards for enabling environment for putting these principles into practice. The latter are rooted in human rights guarantees, including among others freedom of association and freedom of expression.

D) Promote equitable and just development cooperation architecture. CSOs were calling for a Busan Compact (subsequently a Busan Partnership) with an independent and mandatory accountability mechanism for monitoring HLF4 commitments. They called for a successor to the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness that is an equitable, inclusive forum with a mandate for policy dialogue and standard-setting for development cooperation.

These were inevitably broad policy messages and proposals. In many respects, they re-express, perhaps more clearly, the core policy elements of the CSO agenda that the earlier ISG brought to Accra. But with a more deliberate and inclusive BetterAid Platform and a more extensive process for seeking views to confirm these priorities, BetterAid was able to coalesce a much more disciplined and unified voice in the months preceding Busan. By November 2011 and HLF4, close to 2,000 CSOs had explicitly endorsed the *Key Messages*.

From July 2011 onward, these *Messages* informed the BACG's careful responses to the various drafts of the Busan Outcome Document (BOD), the possible themes for HLF4 sessions, and future multi-stakeholder Building Blocks on key issues for continued work post-Busan. In the next chapter we will look more closely at the negotiations process in HLF4 around the BOD.

4. Engaging with other Stakeholders in the Working Party

The Working Party's Clusters and Task Teams between 2009 and 2011 were unique and often intensive experiences for CSOs in multi-stakeholder policy dialogue and consensus building. The outcomes of these engagements exemplify both the opportunities and also the frustrations and limitations of multi-stakeholder informal ways of working. CSOs participated in most Cluster activities during this period in varying degrees. The several instances highlighted in this section, as examples of the scope of these engagements, are by no means exhaustive of CSO contributions. The degree to which Clusters actually influenced the outcomes of the HLF4 was very mixed. But several engagements were also important because they set the stage for a continued multi-stakeholder dialogue in core policy areas for the post-Busan architecture, now called "Building Blocks" for carrying forward the Busan Partnership commitments.³

"CSOs managed to organize themselves to be influential in most of the Clusters. That was a big job, but obviously with success and failures. In some meetings CSOs might not have been as well prepared as they should have ..." (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

"So civil society participation in the clusters were affected by a number of factors. First, there was no strong resource base to support capacity and travel and most clusters were run in the North by Northerners. Second, Northerners do not really provide a good representation of civil society, because their lens and experiences and how they handle issues are in many ways different, but the few civil society people from the South with experience [in global engagement] were overstretched." (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

"In multi-stakeholder processes you have a lot of interests around the table. One of the challenges is how to ensure we reconcile our interests as civil society with the interests of other

CASE STUDY:
**CSO experiences in integrating
gender equality and women's rights in policy reform**

A contribution by the Association for Women's Rights in Development
(AWID)

Ana Inés Abelenda, AWID

As key development actors, women's rights organizations are essential for creating a climate of social, political, and economic change and reducing poverty, social inequality, and gender inequality. Women's groups in particular still receive only a tiny portion of overall Official Development Assistance (ODA).¹ Even though some progress on gender equality commitments was made in Accra² and Busan³, there are still many concerns as to the level of actual implementation and monitoring progress of these commitments.

Women's rights organizations mobilized to influence the aid and development effectiveness agenda and the development cooperation framework on the road to HLF4 in Busan, both by looking at the process and the results from a feminist perspective. This has not been an easy journey, particularly due to the current context of economic and financial crisis that is part of a wider systemic crisis. This crisis has impacted not only funding for women's rights organizations, but also the global political landscape at large, with austerity measures and cuts that threatened to undermine what was already agreed on paper.

The modest successes during the Accra HLF3 and its outcome text (the AAA) for gender equality and women's rights were a consequence of civil society advocacy prior to Accra, and particularly women's rights advocates from different parts of the world. The latter held several consultations and meetings resulting in ambitious expectations for the HLF3, including the Accra International Women's Forum that took place in Accra, Ghana in August 30, 2008.

Lessons learned from the pre-Accra mobilization demonstrated that gender equality and women's rights messages are stronger when working in alliances within women's movements and with other civil society platforms. Thus, alliance building and capacity building among women's rights organizations, parallel to lobbying and advocacy work, was crucial to the strong presence and integration of gender equality and women's rights issues in the Busan process, both in HLF4 and its outcome.

A core group of three women's rights organizations that were members of the BetterAid Coordinating Group (BACG) —The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), WIDE network, and AWID —kicked off a mobilization process towards Busan with the support of UN Women. They were later joined by Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) and Coordinadora de la Mujer, Bolivia, both also members of the BACG.

This mobilization included a series of strategy meetings or consultations with women's groups from diverse regions to come up with common positions and proposals to influence the Busan process and outcome. It also included efforts on information dissemination, acknowledging the need to re-politicize this agenda given the high level of technicality that, in some cases, prevented new women's groups from engaging more actively. BetterAid also supported some of these efforts.

More concretely, women's rights groups have been critical of the OECD DAC-led aid effectiveness process and have engaged at this level over the past years through the BetterAid platform. They convened for a strategy meeting⁴ in New York in February 2011, and later in the International Consultation on Development Cooperation, Women's Rights and Gender Equality⁵ in Brussels in June 2011.

One of the key outcomes of these engagements was the *Key Demands from Women's Rights Organizations and Gender Equality Advocates*, a document which, urged the that HLF4 to produce an outcome that would provide the basis for a new development cooperation architecture that is inclusive and just, and thus also responsive and sensitive to women's rights and gender equality. It should be situated within the United Nations.⁶

Moreover, as BetterAid's CSO *Key Messages and Proposals* were developed, women's groups contributed proposals for a human rights based vision of development effectiveness and a just development cooperation architecture. Women's organizations, as full members of BetterAid, gave their views directly by sitting at the official table of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.

As part of the Global Busan Civil Society Forum prior to HLF4, women's rights organizations⁷ co-organized a Global Women's Forum to prepare and strategize further for HLF4. The political statement that came out of the Women's Forum makes clear that emphasis on economic growth as a focus of development has not resulted in empowerment of women in all their diversity, particularly those who are most marginalized.⁸ A rights-based approach is imperative to drive development for women.

While progress was made in Busan (*see Chapter Two*) it remains imperative for women's rights and gender equality advocates to pursue their advocacy for a shift in the dominant development discourse. More so in the face of an economic and financial crisis that is part and parcel of a multiple interlocking systemic crisis. Women's groups will continue to struggle for development effectiveness and a development cooperation framework that are human rights based, understanding of women not as victims in need of aid, nor as catalysts to be utilized for more economic growth, but as rights holders.

1. See AWID's "2009-2010 Fundher Research Update: Trends in Bilateral and Multilateral Funding", page 17 accessed at <http://www.awid.org/Library/Brief-1-FundHer-Research-Update-Brief-Series>.

2. See AWID's Primer 8: "The Accra Agenda for Action: A brief review from a women's rights perspective", 2011, accessed at http://www.awid.org/content/download/103005/1189184/file/Primer_8.pdf.

3. See the Friday File "A Feminist View Of The Fourth High Level Forum On Aid Effectiveness", January 2012, accessed at <http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Friday-Files/A-Feminist-View-of-the-Fourth-High-Level-Forum-on-Aid-Effectiveness>

4. The strategy meeting was lead by AWID and co-organized with FEMNET and WIDE Network.

5. The consultation was hosted by WIDE Network and co-organized with AWID, APWLD, Coordinadora de la Mujer, Bolivia and FEMNET. See the report at <http://betteraid.org/en/news/events/445-on-the-road-again-feminist-visions-and-strategies-towards-busan-and-beyond-9th-10th-june-brussels.html>.

6. This document is accessible at <http://www.awid.org/Library/Key-Demands-from-Women-s-Rights-Organizations-and-Gender-Equality-Advocates-To-the-Fourth-High-Level-Forum-on-Aid-Effectiveness-Busan-Korea-2011-and-the-Development-Cooperation-Forum-2012>

7. The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), WIDE Network and Coordinadora de la Mujer/ Bolivia.

8. The Statement can be found at <http://awid.org/Library/Busan-Global-Women-s-Forum-Political-Statement>

stakeholders... We have a cacophony of voices... and we add our voice to that. It is a good thing that ours was a distinctive voice and focused on a few things that we were pushing. But clearly a multi-stakeholder process is one that has a lot of interests and we just have to contend with those interests.” (Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Forum, Interview)

“Where we concentrated also reflected our capacities and our strengths. We went in those directions where we really had the ability to engage right away, because the [multi-stakeholder] arena was not one that said ‘we are waiting for you to catch up’. The game was on... I think it objectively showed our capacity limitations... I thought we didn’t have the resources... But the one thing that almost always trapped us was that capacity at the national level did not automatically translate into capacity at the global level. The global game was just different. It had its own roles and demands.” (Emmanuel Akwetey, GAEF, Ghana, Interview)

“We tried to decide what were the most important areas [in the Clusters] and engage in these, but the fast moving nature of some of these process were a challenge and [it was] difficult to consult with other CSO colleagues... We were able to make a stand and our point was taken some of the time.” (Anne Schoenstein, AWID, Interview)

a) Cluster A: Ownership and Accountability

Cluster A was a crucial space for the BACG (and Open Forum) to develop its core ideas around democratic ownership and strengthening the practices of mutual accountability. It was co-chaired by the governments of Switzerland and Tanzania. It hosted the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment, the Task Team on Broad-Based Democratic Ownership and a Task Team on Accountability (coordinated by Ireland, also involving the UNDP and the DAC Govnet team).

“The contribution of civil society in Cluster A was important. On the accountability side, the work that the Commonwealth Secretariat was doing on domestic and mutual accountability was very important... It is important that we are also self-critical and engaged in debate on these critical issues and certainly civil society was quite useful in that.” (Paul Sherlock, Irish Aid, Interview)

“Evidence played a role. We weren’t always good at it, but certainly better than others at generating evidence and having stakeholders face this evidence. There were lots of spaces for protected interaction where different sides could admit what they had done was not appropriate or consistent.” (Philippe Besson, Swiss Chair, WP-EFF Cluster A, Interview)

Cluster A produced for HLF4 an analytical synthesis of evidence, from which it developed a consensus entitled “*Summary of Recommendations and Terrain for Debate on Ownership and Accountability*”. The Cluster advanced substantive and important recommendations for inclusive ownership, capacity development, and mutual and domestic accountability, all of which resonated with CSO priorities and policy proposals. CSO members played significant roles, working mainly with the leadership of the Cluster, in elaborating these recommendations.

“Where civil society made some of the biggest contributions was the presentations of pieces of research and analysis, which others might not have done, and talking through the issues that were emerging from the research.” (Paul Sherlock, Irish Aid, Interview)

Nevertheless, the agreed Cluster recommendations fell short of CSOs’ expectations in a number of crucial ways. In Busan, these areas proved to be ones where CSOs made some further advances. For example, the Cluster called for inclusive ownership, seeking respect for the diversity of policy perspectives from various development actors. But it left open to debate a proposal for democratic ownership – the importance of strengthening national and local institutions and processes for democratic governance for ownership – which is now recognized in §12a of the BPD. The Cluster recommendations reinforced concerns by CSOs and the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness for an enabling environment, but it failed to go further than what Accra had set in specifying standards for this enabling environment. In the end, it was BPD §22a which went further linking the enabling environment to human rights agreements.

“Democratic ownership should have been centre stage. We achieved something, but that may, however, be forgotten soon. We could have been instrumental with BetterAid in ensuring that we consistently talked about democratic ownership. It was a common concern and I liked very much working with the BetterAid CSO colleagues, but the actual practical impact of what we tried to do on democratic ownership was not what I would have hoped for, because – in my opinion, we didn’t focus our efforts as we could have – I felt that Better Aid focused mainly on the Task Team and the Open Forum, i.e. on CSOs and only CSOs, instead of CSOs as actors in interrelation with others...” (Philippe Besson, Swiss Chair, WP-EFF Cluster A, Interview)

With the support of BACG, Cluster A developed a multi-stakeholder proposal for an indicator on inclusive ownership consistent with the AAA, in the Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey. Cluster A and BACG actively lobbied for mandatory Survey questions that would probe the degree to which inclusive ownership and gender equality was being implemented at the country level. The World Bank, along with one of the WP-EFF co-chairs and other influential stakeholders on the WP-EFF Executive Committee, strongly resisted adding new AAA areas to monitor beyond the indicators for the Paris commitments. Despite support from the TT-CSO and some WP-EFF members, these questions for inclusive ownership became an “optional survey module

on broad-based ownership” in an Annex to the Survey, joining the similarly “optional survey module on gender equality” that had been proposed by Gendernet and AWID.

Unfortunately, the 78 countries completing the Monitoring Survey largely ignored these optional modules.⁴ Nevertheless the work of Cluster A members significantly strengthened the hand of BACG co-chairs in vigorously arguing for a Survey Tool that would fully respect the commitments made in Accra. The Cluster also socialized an emerging discourse on democratic ownership, issues in enabling environment and mutual accountability within the Working Party.

b) Task Team on Conditionality (Cluster C)

The AAA committed donors and governments to “continue to change the nature of conditionality to support ownership” based on national development strategies, including making public all conditions linked to disbursements. There was an agreement to review, document and disseminate good practices in conditionality at the international level (AAA §25). These AAA commitments formed the workplan for the Task Team on Conditionality. CSOs participated actively in this Task Team, but with mixed reception and results.

The main activity of the Conditionality Task Team in carrying forward the Accra commitment was a two-part study of current experience and good practices in conditionality in aid relationships. As the study evolved, CSOs on the Task Team had the growing concern that the review was not being approached from the AAA perspective of ownership and in a multi-stakeholder manner that took account civil society and developing country views. Alarming, the terms of reference for the first phase of the study (setting out the practices and issues) were amended mid-study to “exclude any review and discussion of the perspectives of the partner countries, legislatures and CSOs, except in describing the approach of donors to dialogue with these stakeholders”. The study under the new terms of reference was to provide solely a donors’ perspective, that is, “a description of how donors present conditions but excluding any discussion of the perspectives of partner countries.”⁵ Only in the second phase would there be any validation of the findings with partner countries and other development stakeholders.

BetterAid raised these concerns with the Task Team and its chairperson, who responded positively to assure that a number of CSOs were included in the second phase country consultations. This phase documented the practices of conditionality at the country level. While the timeframe was short, CSO perspectives were indeed well-reflected in the outcomes of this second phase of consultations. BetterAid has been calling for an end to policy conditionality, which fundamentally contradicts the notion of country ownerships. As an alternative, development partners should fully respect human rights covenants and conventions in their aid relationships.

Unfortunately, the positive inclusion of the views of various stakeholders at the country level and the evidence from the study were not reflected in the final recommendations from the Task Team to HLF4. The study identified very limited progress in implementing the AAA commitment. Yet the Task Team, whose members included the World Bank and the IMF, as well as major bilateral donors, could not even agree to reaffirm the Paris and Accra commitments on conditionality. Decision-making in the Cluster on its recommendations was seen by CSOs as untransparent and highly political.

Despite efforts on the part of CSOs, as well as the Task Team co-chair, Manju Senapaty of the Asian Development Bank, and several partner countries on the Task Team, there was no consensus for a recommendation to address conditionality in the Busan Outcome Document. In a letter to the Task Team and the Co-Chairs of the Working Party, the BACG strongly objected to the Task Team's failure to develop even a mild consensus. It was clearly a step backward from the limited progress at Accra on an issue that is seen by both partner countries and CSOs to be central to the power dynamics of aid practices. In the end, the BPD has nothing to say on reducing policy conditionality, on focusing conditions on results, or even on the more limited Accra commitment to transparency of conditions in aid disbursements.⁶

c) Task Team on South-South Cooperation

Under the influence of South Africa and Brazil, the AAA made an initial acknowledgement of development cooperation between developing countries. It distinguished this cooperation from the dynamics of north-south cooperation and from the principles of the *Paris Declaration*:

“South-South co-operation on development aims to observe the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, equality among developing partners and respect for their independence, national sovereignty, cultural diversity and identity, and local content. It plays an important role in international development co-operation and is a valuable complement to North-South co-operation.” (AAA, §19e)

South-South co-operation was also increasingly seen by the DAC to be a major dynamic behind the changing architecture of development cooperation. Many DAC members had a political goal of bringing BRICS donors, particularly China and India, to Busan inside the Working Party framework and discourse on aid effectiveness.

Following Accra, a prominent Task Team on South-South Cooperation (TT-SSC) initiated a work program to elaborate best practices in South-South and Triangular (South-South-North) cooperation modalities. Co-chaired by Colombia and Indonesia, facilitated by the World Bank and the UNDP, the TT-SSC became an important forum

for discussion of South-South cooperation issues. But it was largely unsuccessful in bringing the larger BRICS donors to the table. Its relationship to parallel UN processes promoted by the G77 in the UN was often unclear and sometimes competing. Several CSOs participated on the Steering Group of this Task Team, but with little influence.

In March 2010, Colombia sponsored a major High Level Event (HLE) in Bogota on behalf of the TT-SSC. The goal of this HLE was to deepen understanding through mutual learning and to outline good practices in enhancing the effectiveness of South-South development cooperation. More than 110 case studies in South-South cooperation practices were collected and disseminated.⁷ The BACG and the Reality of Aid Network (hosted by ALOP) held a parallel forum in Bogota. At the HLE, the BACG launched its statement on South-South Cooperation (BetterAid, 2010b], which was based on a special Reality of Aid *Report* with CSO case studies on these same themes (Reality of Aid 2010).

BetterAid noted that South-South Cooperation (SSC) had a long history dating back to the 1950s. It has taken many forms including economic integration, regional cooperation, the formation of negotiating blocs within multilateral institutions, humanitarian assistance, technical cooperation, cultural exchanges, and military alliances. BetterAid welcomed SSC and its potential to help better understand and

South-South Development Cooperation should

1. Promote human rights, social justice and sustainability as the fundamental principles and goals of South-South Development Cooperation;
2. Promote a strategy by which all people and countries of the South pursue economic independence and self-reliance based on shared interests, common objectives and solidarity;
3. Abide by the principles of mutual benefit, equality and solidarity in an affirmative manner;
4. Adhere to the highest standards of openness and transparency;
5. Strengthen democratic local ownership and accountability to all citizens in program countries as well as partner countries;
6. Work for debt cancellation, not add to debt accumulation;
7. Establish a more equitable, transparent and inclusive aid governance system encompassing DAC donors, emerging donor countries, developing country governments and civil society representatives; and
8. Ensure meaningful participation of CSOs in the DCF 2010 and HLF42011.

Source: BACG *Policy Paper on South-South Development Cooperation*, March 2010

respond to developing countries' problems and realities, given that middle-income donors share many of those same problems. Nevertheless, SSC often implemented their actions within an aid paradigm.

“But while South-South development cooperation may mean a more balanced development partnership than in the case of North-South development cooperation, ODA and aid embody fundamentally unequal relations that need to be addressed through affirmative mechanisms of equality and mutuality in order to avoid the recurrence of common problems inherent to such power-based relationships.” (BACG 2010b, pp. 1–2)

To avoid abetting relationships of dependence, South–South Development Cooperation must be framed, according to the BACG Statement, “by a broad agenda drawn from South-South political alliances that are based on alternative models of Southern development, taking a more holistic vision and encompassing all forms of cooperation and financing for development including aid, trade, debt relief, foreign investment, domestic resource mobilization, etc.” (BetterAid 2010b, p. 3) In this regard, SSC has a mixed record. The BACG proposed a set of principles that should guide the practice of SSC for development, which it hoped would be reflected in the outcome of HLF4 (see the accompanying box).

In Busan the BPd did recognize the distinctive character of South-South Cooperation. Paragraph 30 of the BPd states that “South-South and Triangular Cooperation have the potential to transform developing countries' policies and approaches to service delivery by bringing effective, locally owned solutions that are appropriate to country contexts”. It goes on to call for knowledge sharing and mutual learning to scale up these approaches.

Yet the BPd leaves unresolved the degree to which Southern donors will be bound by the agreements reached in Busan. Paragraph 11 binds all development partners who identify with the BPd to uphold four key principles for effective development cooperation. But in the final stages of the negotiations, language was added to §2 in order to bring China and India into the Busan Partnership. This language states that “the principles, commitments and actions agreed in the outcome document in Busan shall be the reference for South-South partners on a voluntary basis,” thereby greatly undermining the commitment to these principles in South-South development cooperation.

d) Understanding Development Effectiveness

A central advocacy goal for BetterAid, predating the 2008 Accra HLF3, was to shift the debate and commitments from a largely technical fixes in support of “aid effectiveness” (*Paris Declaration*) towards a paradigm based on “development

Development Effectiveness (BetterAid and Open Forum)

Development effectiveness promotes sustainable change, within a democratic framework, that addresses the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalization, through the diversity and complementarity of instruments, policies and actors. Development effectiveness in relation to aid is understood as policies and practices by development actors that deepen the impact of aid and development cooperation on the capacities of poor and marginalized people to realize their rights and achieve the Internationally Agreed Development Goals.

(CSOs on the Road to Busan, p. 9)

effectiveness”. While Accra was seemingly about assessing the implementation of the *Paris Declaration*, the actual discourse at Accra in the Roundtables and AAA had already started to shift towards development effectiveness. Post-Accra, the first versions of potential themes for HLF4, produced by Canada and Morocco for the Working Party, gave a central place to development effectiveness. But a greater challenge remained – coming to an agreement on the meaning of development effectiveness within development cooperation. There were clearly divergent views among Working Party members, which were not fully resolved in Busan.

BetterAid’s understanding of development effectiveness was both normative (rooted in the application of international human rights standards) and comprehensive in calling for donor policy coherence, oriented to the human rights of poor and marginalized populations. It explicitly recognized that measurable commitments to improve the effectiveness of aid were necessary to achieve development effectiveness.

“I think CSOs brought in some high level political ambitions in terms of international goals, which sometimes brought forward the reaction ‘how are we going to achieve that?’. But it was a reminder that the framework within which [the Working Party agenda] takes place is actually in the UN, in the kind of rights that people have, and in longer-term commitments that nations have made. I think it kept us on our toes...” (Brenda Killen, OECD DAC, Interview)

Other development actors, such as the Asian Development Bank, made little distinction between aid and development effectiveness, focusing on ADB’s effective delivery of development assistance. For others, the meaning varied with overlaps in emphasis from narrow organizational effectiveness (how well policies and programs are achieving organizational development goals), to policy coherence (how non-

aid policies affect development), to outcomes from aid (the development outcomes aid projects hope to achieve), to overall development outcomes (holistic measure of outcomes from all development resources). (Kindornay 2011 & Kindornay 2010)

The notion of aid has expanded in recent years with the emergence of South-South cooperation, but it is still largely identified with the DAC criteria for Official Development Assistance (ODA). Aid Effectiveness then is commonly understood as the effective delivery of this ODA resource for development. But the notion of development is still very much contested, ranging from the promotion of economic growth to the strengthening capacities to realize human rights by poor and marginalized populations. Given no shared understanding for the meaning of development, it is not surprising that “development effectiveness” was also contested in the Working Party, in the OECD DCD and at HLF4 in Busan.

In October 2010, the BACG encouraged the OECD DCD to sponsor a workshop on development effectiveness on the side of the WP-EFF meeting. This workshop did not bring harmony to the notion of development effectiveness among the stakeholders in the WP-EFF. But it did allow for a good exchange of views. It found some common ground in a limited number of areas that were ultimately reflected in Busan. [Working Party, 2010]

- Development effectiveness should not be an excuse to dilute existing Paris/Accra commitments on aid effectiveness. Full realization of the latter would go a long way in achieving development effectiveness.
- Reaffirm that aid effectiveness is a political agenda. It must “focus on building systematic and sustainable capacities for inclusive and accountable ownership and partnerships for development with a multi-stakeholder context at the country and global levels.” (Working Party, 2010)
- Put a stronger focus on measuring development results achieved through aid and demonstrating aid’s value for money.
- Identify the ‘catalytic’ and ‘multiplier’ role of aid to leverage other resources and factors.
- Assess the applicability and relevance of the aid effectiveness principles for other development cooperation tools, financing instruments and different country / regional contexts, including fragile states;
- Take a more holistic view of the various factors that contribute to development, taking into account not only the microeconomic indicators and figures, but also the level of improvement of the quality of life of citizens.

These areas of agreement reflect more the donors' perspective that seeks to limit the scope of development effectiveness rather than the vision of BACG. On the other hand, important areas of the BPd reflect aspects of BACG's notion of development effectiveness (with some references to human rights norms). Nevertheless, civil society was not successful in framing the BPd as commitments to development effectiveness. From the outset in Busan, for example, CSOs resisted the title of the new Partnership for "Effective Development Cooperation", not BACG's preference for "Development Effectiveness". The BPd has a section entitled "From effective aid to cooperation for effective development," but each paragraph in this section, in all of the various draft versions, was highly contested by civil society.

Most controversially, §28 situates "effective development" within a framework in which "development is driven by strong, sustainable and inclusive growth" [§28a]. It points to the role of government resources in development, the importance of mutually accountable reform processes, and regional integration for economies of scale. Various paragraphs then address the importance of effective institutions for development, South-South Cooperation, the private sector and development, corruption, and climate finance.

For CSOs, this section fails to provide a rights-based framework for understanding the contributions of various resources to development outcomes. It reverts back to focus solely on aid. Paragraph §28 ends with the notion that "we will rethink what aid should be spent on and how, in ways that are consistent with agreed international rights, norms and standards, so that aid catalyses development." From the BACG's point of view, the emphasis on "inclusive growth" as the framework for "effective development" is incapable of addressing challenges such as climate change or inequality and will undoubtedly fail to deliver development outcomes that would reach all segments of society (BetterAid, 2012). This is seen as an essential flaw in the agreement. This failure is manifest in the BPd's approach to the private sector as a development actor.

e) The Private Sector as a Development Actor

In January 2011, Andrew Mitchell, the UK Secretary of State for International Development, wrote to Ministers in Canada, Sweden, the United States, Denmark and Germany enjoining them to work together for a "Common Agenda for Development Results" in Busan. "Partnering with the private sector" is one of four areas proposed for this common agenda. As the paper suggests,

"Encouraging business to thrive in the poorest countries – creating a stronger economy – is one of the surest paths out of poverty. It is the private sector that generates jobs, builds skills and generates the goods, services and wealth that the world's poorest people so desperately need." (Common Agenda, p.5)

Partnering with the private sector for these donors includes support for the private sector in their own countries to engage in development, support for enabling conditions for the private sector in the poorest countries, development of socially responsible business practices, and the promotion of private-public partnerships in service delivery. Partnering with the private sector was the focus of a working group on the Private Sector and Effective Aid within the WP-EFF. This working group seemed to have been formed sometime in 2010, but was not initially transparent to the BACG, which also had difficulty obtaining recognition of CSOs' right to participate.

"[The] building block on public-private cooperation was extremely challenging. The governments, OECD officials and the private sector engaged in the process were very closed to our participation. I think the assumption was that civil society didn't belong to this building block, and that our presence would simply be disruptive to something that donors were desperately trying to move forward... Once those running the building block actually read the CSO submission [on the private sector], they got over their prejudices and saw that civil society was making a useful contribution." (Fraser Reilly-King, CCIC, Canada, Survey Response)

The private sector as an actor in development was increasingly becoming more prominent in the agenda for Busan during 2011. The BACG responded by discussing and developing its own perspective on these issues. In doing so, the BACG worked closely with the ITUC, which brought to the BACG its experience of labour's tripartite relationship with the private sector and governments within the ILO. The BACG and the ITUC acknowledged the actual and potential positive contribution of the private sector in development cooperation in terms of job creation, living wages and technology transfer. But civil society also insisted that the private sector's roles in development be grounded within the framework of a rights-based approach to development effectiveness [BetterAid 2011c & ITUC 2011c].

"We have never had a discussion with the private sector, even though they have significantly influenced the outcome for the text. The private sector itself did not appear at the forefront; it was not part of the Sherpa process. But the private sector is the winner. So we should think along the lines of tripartite negotiations as in the ILO. We must integrate the private sector in our negotiations; otherwise they would work around everybody and use their influence in an untransparent manner." (Daniel Verger, Coordination Sud, France, Interview)

The private sector is diverse and complex, and includes a large part of the social economy such as cooperatives, as well as transnational corporations, domestic companies, and small and medium enterprises. Each may offer different contributions to development outcomes for poor and marginalized populations and may require very different enabling regulatory and policy environments. BetterAid promoted an approach based on social dialogue and tripartism that brought together the different components of the private sector with key social actors, including trade unions and government, within a comprehensive approach to development.

According to a BACG policy brief, the private sector as a development actor should adhere to development effectiveness principles based on:

- Internationally agreed standards and norms on human rights, gender equality, labour rights and decent work, disability and environmental sustainability;
- Policy coherence among social, employment, economic, trade, financial and environmental policies;
- Country ownership using country systems by default, including local public procurement;
- Democratic and inclusive ownership supporting social integration and participation. The role of social partners (workers and employers associations) and social dialogue are essential in ensuring ownership and effectiveness in elaborating and implementing economic and social development strategies; and
- Adherence to international transparency and accountability standards in development cooperation [BetterAid 2011c & ITUC 2011c]

These principles were not recognized in the BPD, which assumed that the private sector would contribute to poverty reduction and equitable development based solely on its innovation, wealth creation, mobilization of domestic resources and creation of jobs [§32]. The BPD does not specify any guiding principles derived from internationally agreed standards to assure effective contribution to development outcomes for poor and marginalized populations. BetterAid's *Road to Busan* called for aid funds directed to the private sector to prioritize livelihood and productive economic development through cooperatives and smaller-scale enterprises, rather than large for-profit initiatives.

f) Development Cooperation Architecture and Global Norms

Creating an equitable and just architecture for international development cooperation has been a long-standing goal for CSOs working through BetterAid. Development cooperation architecture refers to the established institutions and systems of global governance for development cooperation that play a role in setting and monitoring norms and standards for actors in development. These currently include the OECD DAC and its 24 donors, the UN Development Cooperation Forum within ECOSOC, the World Bank and regional Development Banks, and the UN Human Rights Council.

The Working Party emerged in 2005 with the *Paris Declaration* as an important informal policy space within this architecture. It did so alongside other existing

voluntary groupings of countries such as the recently formed G20 or the long-standing G77 within the UN system. The BPD launched post-Busan discussions to replace the Working Party by June 2012 with a new inclusive Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation that will ensure accountability for the implementation of the BPD at the political ministerial level [§36a]. The interest to create a ministerial forum (inclusive of other stakeholders) may begin to address the informal and voluntary nature of Working Party commitments to date.

“It is a bit strange to see CSOs among those wanting more formal organization [of the Working Party]. I have always wondered why. CSOs who are by their nature not formal... have often been attracted by more sophistication and more formality in the process... Maybe they think that what is written offers more protection (for instance of the right to be represented). But the experience we gained from the Working party process is that informality finally works well, and CSOs have been well treated in this approach.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

In December 2010, the Government of Korea hosted an international three-day event on reforming aid and development cooperation architecture. BetterAid submitted its proposals for the reform of development cooperation architecture [BetterAid 2010d]. Revised in March 2011, this BACG paper details the perceived flaws in the informal mechanisms of the Working Party and its weak relationship to a UN system, that is more legitimate among governments but has its own weaknesses in terms of inclusion and accountability.

The paper sets out twelve principles that should guide the evolution of a more just global governance of development cooperation norms and practices, that are based on international human rights norms, that assure political accountability, and that are equitable, horizontal, democratic and inclusive [see BetterAid 2010d, p 5]. It proposes an inter-institutional arrangement between the UN and the Working Party that is fully inclusive of all countries and builds on the practices of multi-stakeholder inclusion. Within the BACG, there were a number of open-ended discussions about the practical role of UN bodies in this architecture, about a possible UN Convention on Development Cooperation, and about the relevance of commitments made in informal processes, such as the Working Party, in realizing actual change in development cooperation.

In a July 2011 response to a draft Busan Outcome Document, the BACG summarized its approach, calling for

“[A]n equitable and fully inclusive developing country-led multilateral forum. It should provide a clear mandate for policy dialogue and standard-setting on development effectiveness and take into account the important role of the United Nations in these areas. It should be based on sovereignty and policy coherence, and necessarily rooted in a multilateral body that

ensures legitimacy through membership of all development actors, with full representation of all developing country perspectives. In the preparations for Busan, an inter-institutional agreed division of labour between the WP-Eff and United Nations mechanisms, particularly the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), is essential”.

BetterAid continues to press for these norms in shaping the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

5. The Busan Global Civil Society Forum: Projecting CSO messages to HLF4

The Busan Global Civil Society Forum (BGCSF) was organized in the three days preceding the High Level Forum. It would be the final opportunity for civil society to focus their key messages for HLF4 and to coordinate advocacy strategies among the 300 CSO delegates to the HLF. The BGCSF was organized in the spirit of Härnösand through a joint working group from the BetterAid Secretariat, the Open Forum Secretariat and KoFID, the host Korean civil society platform.

Up to 600 civil society representatives attended the Forum, along with several HLF government and donor delegates as observers. CSO participants came from country-level processes on implementing the AAA from across the world (*see Chapter Six*), from Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and Middle East, Latin America, North America, Europe, the Pacific Region, South Asia, Central Asia and Eurasia, East and Southeast Asia. Sectors and themes from trade unions, women, rights organizations, agriculture and rural development were also substantially represented.

The Forum was a space for many self-organized workshops, thematic sessions, sectoral and regional caucuses, out of which delegates agreed on a final *CSO Statement for HLF4* [BetterAid 2011d]. Among the 600 delegates were 300 CSOs who were accredited to attend the HLF in the following days.⁸ The Forum had a carefully designed agenda that enabled systematic discussion of the HLF4 agenda as well as real-time responses to reports from the Sherpa negotiating process taking place simultaneously, where BetterAid was represented by its CSO Sherpa and co-chair, Tony Tujan (*see Chapter Four*).

The Opening Plenary was addressed by Tae-yul Cho, Ambassador for Development Cooperation in the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He spoke to the Korean Government’s goals for HLF4 to deepen a Global Partnership devoted to furthering development effectiveness, which must also “catalyze and amplify the role of aid” for locally owned and locally led initiatives. He reiterated the full endorsement by the Government of Korea of the *Istanbul Principles* and the *International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness* in its relationships with CSOs.

The Busan Global Civil Society Forum took inspiration from the words of Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, and keynote speaker for the BGCSE. He reminded civil society delegates that development is a holistic concept that emphasizes democratic rights and freedoms. The Accra commitments to CSOs have been repeatedly broken in many countries through intimidation, restricted political freedoms, arrests, and legal regulatory restrictions. While this illustrates the urgency of respect for minimum standards for CSO enabling conditions, of equal importance is CSO adherence to rights-based approaches, transparency and inclusion in its own work. Maina Kiai was an influential presence throughout HLF4, speaking in several key multi-stakeholder sessions on these same themes.

The Forum reviewed in detail the current draft of the *Busan Outcome Document* and heard regular updates on the negotiating process. The CSO Sherpa highlighted the distinctiveness of his role in these negotiations. While others only represent their respective governments, the CSO Sherpa was accountable to hundreds of CSOs coming from all regions and sectors. This context posed unique challenges in consolidating CSO messages, often with a normative emphasis, and in taking advantage of the actual opportunities for compromise language in the negotiating process (*see Chapter Four*).

“CSOs were well prepared – they had their preparatory meeting before Busan, you could see how BetterAid was conducting a very open process to collect different messages for the High Level Forum itself, messages to the Sherpa. This was my perception of what was happening.” (Eduardo Gonzales, OECD DCD, Interview)

The BACG negotiating team proposed to the Civil Society Forum four critical negotiating points for BetterAid in the negotiations:

- An agreement that focused on development effectiveness not “effective development cooperation”;
- An agreement with a comprehensive rights-based approach;
- An agreement in which development is founded on fulfilling the needs and rights of citizens, not limited to inclusive economic growth; and
- An agreement that specifies fundamental rights as the minimum standards for an enabling environment for CSOs.

In the final session of the BGCSE, Emele Duituturaga, co-chair of the Open Forum, led delegates in a debate that concluded with the full endorsement of a civil society *Statement*, representing thousands of CSOs speaking as one voice to HLF4. The

Statement reaffirmed BetterAid's consensus positions on 1) Completing the unfinished business of Paris HLF2 and Accra HLF3; 2) Underscoring that development is not only about economic growth, but about fulfilling the rights and needs of people through human rights approaches; 3) Insisting that engagement of the private sector as development actors be premised on advancing development effectiveness; 4) Ensuring minimum standards for enabling CSOs as actors in development, in law and in practice, consistent with international human rights agreements; and 5) Creating a Global Partnership that is inclusive, legitimate, democratic and transparent (BetterAid 2011d]. These messages were brought effectively to the many official sessions of HLF4 and the side events over the next three days of HLF4.

Chapter Four

At the Table: Perspectives on negotiating the outcomes of Busan

1. CSOs at HLF4

At the conclusion of the Busan Global Civil Society Forum (BGCSF), more than 300 CSO representatives from across the world joined the 2,000 plus delegates at the High Level Forum in Busan's BEXCO Convention Center. The 300 CSO representatives were selected in a BACG/Open Forum coordinated regional selection process from all regions and sectors and they were joined by other CSOs who were part of some country delegations. Together they were a very strong, well-coordinated and discernible presence in BEXCO. They brought into the three-day HLF4 a shared civil society political agenda from the BGCSF, well-supported by diverse CSO expertise and experience.

The presence of civil society leadership in both the opening (BetterAid) and closing (Open Forum) ceremonies for the High Level Forum sent a strong symbolic message of the great distance traveled since Accra. At Busan, CSOs also worked closely with donor and country delegations to co-organized two official thematic sessions on human rights-based approaches (with the DAC Govnet Task Team on Human Rights) and on ownership and accountability (with Cluster A).

“Perhaps even more important than the negotiations or the text itself, was the presence of Tony and Emele at the opening and closing ceremony. That was great... Having CSO representatives talking between a President and Hillary Clinton was the best recognition CSOs can have. They did not speak because it was charity to invite CSOs, but because they had the right to be there and it looked normal to everybody...” (Hubert de Milly OECD DCD)

“A lot of people were concerned about having China and Brazil on board, but perhaps they don't realize the importance of having the CSOs on board. This is also a success for Busan.” (Eduardo Gonzales, OECD DCD, Interview)

On the other hand, CSOs could only be found on a few panels for sessions reporting on progress in Building Blocks (discussing the forward agenda beyond

Busan). BetterAid expressed frustration about the lack of access to several important plenary and parallel sessions where CSO perspectives remained absent. Unable to fully integrate some issues within the official agenda, various constituencies within BetterAid and Open Forum organized a number of side events and debates on themes relating to key messages for civil society – on the CSO enabling environment (with the TT-CSO), on CSO accountability (with INGOs), on the Arab Spring (with Oxfam and Arab NGOs), and on development effectiveness in least developed countries (with LDC Watch).

Nevertheless, CSOs had high profile positions in the agenda from which BetterAid and Open Forum could convey important messages. Vitalice Meja, Reality of Aid Africa, spoke in the opening plenary session of the Forum while Mayra-Mora Coco, Association of Women's Rights in Development, spoke in the closing plenary. Meja reminded delegates that donors and governments had come up short in implementing their commitments in Paris and Accra. Busan represented for civil society a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to garner the necessary political will to make good on previous commitments and to forge an inclusive partnership for new ones. Mayra reiterated the CSO vision of development effectiveness and human rights, including women's rights and gender equality, for the future of international cooperation post-Busan.

Tony Tujan, co-chair of BetterAid, joined President Lee Myung-bak of Korea, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Queen Rania of Jordan, in addressing the opening ceremony for the high level ministerial portion of the Forum on the second day. It was an important peak moment for civil society in full recognition of civil society's place among development actors. Tony reminded ministers and delegates that development effectiveness, as a theme in HLF4, was about the people and communities that governments are supposed to represent. He called attention to the outcomes of civil society's BGCSF on upholding human rights, democracy and the enabling environment for CSOs, as the basis for achieving the priorities of developing countries and their people.

Emele Duituturaga, co-chair of the Open Forum, spoke on behalf of civil society in the closing ceremony for HLF4. She acknowledged civil society's appreciation of the inclusive and positive advances in the BPD. But she also drew attention to the duty of governments to respect international commitments, in both law and practice, especially those guaranteeing fundamental rights. In this regard, she welcomed the BPD endorsement of the *Istanbul Principles* and the *International Framework*, through which CSOs have committed to strengthen their own development effectiveness.

Throughout the three days, CSOs were a constant presence lobbying and caucusing in the corridors of BEXCO. BetterAid organized daily briefings for the 300 delegates, updating progress in the negotiations for the BPD and facilitating the

planning of CSO strategies for the day. In the end, BetterAid, representing hundreds of CSOs, “join other development actors in welcoming the Busan partnership agreement on an inclusive new global partnership.”

“The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation is an advancement from Accra in many areas crucial to civil society. For the first time since the Paris Declaration, democratic ownership has been acknowledged as fundamental principle of development cooperation implemented through inclusive partnerships. The new partnership shifts the focus from a technical aid effectiveness agenda towards a new development effectiveness agenda that is more inclusive, more political, and focused on results as rights based development outcomes rather than aid delivery.” (BetterAid Statement on the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, December 1, 2011)

At the same time, BetterAid was also critical of this outcome. Its *Statement* identifies five areas where the BPD did not address key issues for civil society – no explicit commitments to human rights-based approaches; few specific time-bound commitments on the unfinished business of Paris and Accra; common principles as mere voluntary reference for BRICS development partners in South-South Cooperation; no comprehensive vision and policy framework to hold the private sector accountable to development effectiveness principles; and no agreement on monitoring implementation with strong citizen participation in the process (see also Chapter Two).

“The fact that CSOs trusted one person to represent them at the level of negotiations was excellent. Of course, I do understand that many CSOs thought that much more was possible, but the maturity of the CSO representation was to understand what was really at stake. The future of CSOs was not at stake in Busan. But it was important to be there, to be recognized as a key part of the group, to be part of an important Declaration.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

“You did extremely well... I know there were tensions in BetterAid – perhaps to leave the table and start demonstrating. I would have personally felt bad about it, because if you start a journey, you have to conclude it with the others... Once it is over, then everyone has the liberty to take stock and draw conclusions.” (Philippe Besson, Swiss Chair, WP-EFF Cluster A, Interview)

“Civil society to participate in negotiations must be open and willing, not necessarily to compromise, but certainly to find consensus with other actors on areas that are essential for progress... We need to take all stakeholders into account if we want the partnership to be effective. It makes discussions more complex, because when you have that many people around the table, you cannot agree on everything, but at least we need to agree on... the balance among all the issues.” (Modibo Makalou, Government of Mali, Sherpa)

2. Negotiating the Busan Outcome Document

A BetterAid Sherpa, negotiating with 17 government and donor Sherpas the text of the Busan Outcome Document, was the unique and defining experience of HLF4 for civil society. This was not a token representation. All stakeholders acknowledged that the BOD was shaped by constructive proposals and negotiations by civil society for key BetterAid issues. Since its first draft in July 2011, the BACG and Open Forum prepared systematic responses for alternative text based on its *Key Messages and Proposals*. These responses build upon the CSO Härnösand consensus on core proposals, an analysis of the current text, and the identification by CSOs of their four BGCSF “bottom lines.” BetterAid and Open Forum advanced their issues in the final Working Party meeting in October 2011, in dialogue with officials in the DCD preparing drafts, in the Sherpa meetings, and in the country-level advocacy, particularly where these countries were part of the Sherpa process.

Nevertheless, direct BetterAid participation in these negotiations posed real dilemmas for civil society. While CSOs were united in support of its Sherpa, being directly part of the negotiations was also difficult and somewhat contentious for some CSOs. These same CSOs still identified closely with the BetterAid agenda and with the decision for civil society to participate and take advantage of opportunities to advance this agenda in the Busan process.

“[Participation in negotiations] can be a paradox in some ways. CSOs are and must be a civic actor that is all the time disputing political space in society so that its views can be introduced into the public agenda and decision making. This is our duty in my opinion.” (Ruben Fernandez, ALOP, Colombia, Interview)

What are some of these dilemmas and issues?

1) Representation of civil society in inter-governmental negotiations. How does civil society represent its constituency within inter-governmental negotiations? BetterAid was certainly accepted as a legitimate member of the Sherpa group negotiating the text. However, a CSO Sherpa’s ability to engage collectively on behalf of civil society in such negotiations is challenged by the fact that he or she brings a very different constituency to the negotiating table. The CSO Sherpa in Busan was there not only to represent and push for CSO issues (enabling environment etc.), but to address the full negotiations agenda, sometimes from a normative point of view. But as a CSO Sherpa, he was sometimes undermined by other Sherpas as various issues came to the table that were not considered “CSO issues”.

“The good thing is that Tony was really accepted as a legitimate member of the [Sherpa] group, as a proposer of good ideas and good formulations for the group. He was a strong pillar of the group. The other side of the coin is that he could not fight for everything.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

“Being a CSO Sherpa was really quite different. It was like a novelty, not really respected, I think. The only reason I am respected as a CSO Sherpa is that I don’t act as a CSO, which means to say, what I am suppose to say in the CSO normative sense, I know that politically I shouldn’t be saying it this way, or I should reserve it for another time. I would take this approach, because my concern is not so much that I should adjust what I say, but to say things in their proper context with the proper impact. That said, it was very easy for the chairs of the Sherpa process to shut me down. They actually said to me there is a consensus that I object to. The question would be – should I walk out ...” (Tony Tujan, co-chair, BetterAid, Interview)

2) Focus within the context of CSO diversity. The logic of negotiations must be to focus on a few issues and to find common ground with other stakeholders around the table. BetterAid was well prepared with four or five key asks and “bottom lines” coming into HLF4. But among the 300 CSOs present in Busan, there was still a diversity of perspective on these issues and on a range of other issues highly relevant to different country contexts. BetterAid “speaking as one voice” was certainly an effective political strategy for negotiations, but it inevitably remained in tension with the democratic and diverse nature of civil society and its role in contesting political space with often highly political systemic issues. CSO consensus is not just achieved at a meeting, but must be actively political shaped and sustained through engagement at all times. Some of these tensions were apparent among some CSOs at Busan in their reflections on the outcomes of the negotiations.

“There were many traps. The worst thing would have been to fight on each and every point. The good strategy was to select a couple of points and be very tough on them, being constructive in the group dynamic on other points. I think this is basically the approach Tony [the CSO Sherpa] adopted, and I think CSOs will really get credit for this approach.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD, DCD, Interview)

“To some extent, governments and donors have benefited from our [CSO] participation and yielded little. Busan has been, at most, a repetition of Accra. We have not advanced, nor do they want to go further.” (Coordinadora Civil, Nicaragua, Survey)

“It may be a lot easier for governments [at the negotiating table]... On the one hand, we are saying CSOs are extremely diverse and this is a positive feature of society. On the other hand, we expect you to be at the table with one voice. This could be misinterpreted by other stakeholders, when following the negotiations, CSOs assert the principle of diversity...” (Jacqueline Wood, CIDA, Interview)

“It is a very challenging kind of role we have taken upon ourselves to be critical and independent, but still [be] part of the process.... Many governments in the past have found it difficult to accept that when you (CSOs) participate in a meeting, you can criticize it at the same time.” (Emmanuel Akwetey, GAEEF, Ghana, Interview)

3) Sustaining CSO engagement with the process. Communications and transparency with the 300 CSOs present in Busan was both essential and sometimes problematic. It was essential to sustain engagement between the Sherpa and the CSO constituency particularly as the negotiations reached their conclusion. The Sherpa was supported by a small team from BetterAid in negotiation strategies and in maintaining ongoing dialogue with the Busan 300. Daily briefings and informal gatherings at urgent moments were very important. But as the course of negotiations changed rapidly in its final stage, and as other stakeholders spun information, decision-making was not always clear to some CSOs in these final stages. Language issues also compromised inclusive communications among CSOs from Latin America and French-speaking countries.

“We got spun a lot by various governments about what was going on inside [the negotiating room]... to try to break some of our common positions. We need to be much more effective in the future about constantly relaying information to the outside, so that we can dispel some of the spin that governments were putting on the negotiations.” (Fraser Reilly-King, CCIC, Canada, Survey Response)

“Although it was a unique opportunity, I think at times the procedures limited the ability of CSO representatives to develop common positions, especially for last minute negotiations.” (Gloria Esperanza Vela Mantilla, SYNERGIA, Colombia, Survey Response)

“At the last moment [in negotiations], a lot of complicated and unexpected deals can be made to keep everybody happy. And those deals can be pushed through very quickly before anyone has a chance to react... The fact that we were in the room while those deals were being done and using that dynamic as leverage for trying to get some final elements of our agenda on the table, I think is really important. If we hadn’t been there, the process would have been tied up much more quickly ...” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UKAN, Interview)

“If you want to be taken seriously, there is no doubt about it, you have to be at the table, and make the decisions based on your constituency’s views.. What impressed me was the quickness with which those negotiating on behalf of civil society were going back to their constituency, sharing what was happening, getting views, and that was being fed back into the process. From an outside perspective, it looked like a real genuine effort.” (Paul Sherlock, Irish Aid, Interview)

4) Transforming the rules of the game for multi-stakeholder negotiations. Were CSOs captured by rules of negotiation established through previous inter-governmental Working Party negotiations in Paris and Accra? These rules were built around informality, often untransparent modalities working with the most influential, and with the role of the chairperson to create (and sometimes force) consensus. While stakeholders are not asked to sign a formal agreement, they are asked to identify with

this consensus (i.e. the BPd) in the closing session. The Busan negotiation modalities were also along these lines, with the additional dynamic of several key countries, China and India, strongly influencing the Sherpa process until the last moments from outside the Forum. These negotiating modalities may be appropriate for country delegations working with instructions from their governments, but are not conducive for the inclusion of CSOs through a responsible Sherpa.

“So civil society has learned to be extremely good in putting forward positions in ways that they are not easily dismissed, where sometimes the implications are not always clear to the others, who are placed in a position to say yes or no. We are not really part of the game, which is good because we are not supposed to be.” (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

“We’ve entered a place, but we have not really transformed the rules of the game, the terms of the game. We have not. We went in, we took a seat. We said things that they listened to; many they didn’t... Do we want to embark on another process of transforming the regime and say what sort of rules will now come about, which is what we were trying to do with the international development cooperation architecture.” (Emmanuel Akwetey, GAEE, Ghana, Interview)

“In terms of our engagement with governments, we need to reflect on the fact that we are not states and that our diversity is what gives us strength, and so we need to change the rules of negotiation to meaningfully engage within it.” (Mayra Moro-Coco, AWID, Survey Response)

Alternatives do exist. ITUC representatives point to the experience of the ILO in tripartite negotiations. In these sessions parties meet together to identify the common ground and outstanding issues, then they meet as a stakeholder group to consider positions, and then again as a negotiating session to seek agreement.

“There is a process of preparing discussion positions and listening to other constituencies through a presence in meetings that bring the constituencies together to broker deals and compromise. If you want to have a real multi-stakeholder negotiation, then you have to organize the negotiations process in a different way... At the table, we need to be more clear that we need a break because we have to consult with our constituency.” (Jan Dereymaeker, ITUC, Interview)

Some CSOs reflected that CSOs did not take maximum advantage of the social rootedness of civil society. Could BetterAid have created more momentum for its agenda in the negotiations through the deliberate encouragement of an outsider strategy to accompany the inside game of negotiations?

“As CSOs, we should have had social movements that kept reminding the private sector, donors and governments on the need to put people first before profits, through organizing peaceful actions. Being in the hall in Busan made me feel that I was not part of civil society.” (Tafadzwa Muropa, Gender and Economic Alternative Trust, Zimbabwe, Survey Response)

“Inside/outside strategies work... I don’t think we had an outsider strategy. I think we would have been stronger if we had more evident pressure from poor people, from the global women’s movement, the global farmers’ movement...” (Robert Fox, Oxfam Canada, Interview)

5) The risk of being captured into a donor agenda through multi-stakeholder politics. Some CSOs present in Busan were concerned that the politics of the process undermined the firm lobbying of donors and country governments on their failures to live up to previous commitments and make new ones. Did we become too compromised in participating with a collective responsibility for the outcome of Busan? This concern was sometimes combined with the sense among some CSOs that the actual negotiations on development policies affecting the lives of people in their countries may be happening elsewhere, such as the G20 or within particular donor agencies.

“Did we become too compromised in our responsibility for the outcome of Busan? This is one of the main questions we have to assess. For sure, as civil society we couldn’t push fully our agenda, as consensus building there were trade-offs along the way. So what it means is that our voice was not as strong and progressive as it could have been from the outside. But the question is, do we know what would have changed in the Outcome Document if we were outside?... We need to think a lot about this question and be clear... where we draw the line. These lines are both process and policy bottom lines. Are we ok with an outcome that pushes an open economy, but ignores civil society’s strong demands on human rights?” (Anne Schoenstein, AWID, Interview)

“When I talk with government officials, I think they sincerely took the CSOs seriously. ... Of course they don’t accept everything the CSOs were demanding, but they took what CSOs had been demanding very seriously. And they have to think over how to respond to these demands. And sometimes, out of their own interests, they accept our agenda. So this is a kind of high-level advocacy that we have been doing. But with what impact is the question. My point is that it remains to be seen.” (Anselmo Lee, KoFID, Korea, Interview)

“This is a kind of symbolic power [in Busan], which is important. But the spaces for real power, determining the amount of assistance, deciding priorities and regions, these discussions are not in these spaces. We should not have false illusions about the spaces in which we are participating or we will become deeply frustrated because international development

cooperation is still working in the way that it was working..” (Ruben Fernandez, ALOP, Colombia, Interview)

“I am not sure about the ultimate benefits of negotiating at a high level. It gives one or two colleagues a profile sitting with highly placed government officials... For us in civil society, sitting in such a group could be useful in so far as getting our voice heard, but if you look at the larger picture where aid discourse is being downplayed (looking at the G20 or the Presidents of Europe staking out global positions), we need to question where we are present. We cannot do a lot about this, but it may weaken our influence in the global debate.” (Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Forum, Interview)

On the other hand, many others among the CSOs present, appreciated the paradigm shift in the opportunities presented in Busan for the CSO agenda. As a development actor, CSO presence at the table did not take away the integrity of the CSO agenda nor preclude pursuing unfinished business in other fora or at other times. While it had its risks, the negotiations made advances for CSO agenda that were not easily predictable.

“We choose to engage and we had an agenda... So it wasn’t participating for the sake of it; we were there to pursue our agenda for development effectiveness within a framework of what we thought effectiveness should be about... So I don’t think cooptation comes into it, because we had our agenda, we pursued it and we can measure how far we got.” (Vitalice Meja, RoA Africa, Interview)

“I think that I achieved a lot being a CSO Sherpa... The point is that in the Sherpa process you cannot predict what can happen and how it evolves. So there has to be a lot of leeway if you are to be an effective Sherpa. Some CSOs may not understand that this is important. It is not their way of working.” (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

“We are in the room and we have to think about how to make use of this space... Some traditional NGOs thought they were in a UN setting where you had to influence governments and make them change their positions, because it is governments alone that decide. Yes, we have to influence governments, but we were sitting in the same room as civil society. On the other hand, we were in an institutional process that obliged us [civil society] to speak to five or six basic issues, leaving the details outside of the room... All sides in Busan had to compromise. The fact that we have to compromise doesn’t mean you can’t start negotiating on something else with the same proposals... We didn’t stop after Accra thinking about how we could improve on the AAA and we should not stop after Busan with our positions.” (Jan Dereymaeker, ITUC, Interview)

For most CSOs present in Busan, participation in the negotiations as equal development actors was the logical extension of the recognition achieved in Accra. But it is also a learning experience that requires reflection and an ongoing confirmation of

its relevance to CSO policy goals. By the time CSOs arrived in Busan, suggesting that CSOs remain outside the BPD might have only confirmed long-standing perceptions by donors and governments that civil society are not really part of the actual processes of development cooperation and their views need not seriously be taken into account.

“If we were to stay outside the process, to some degree, we are weakening the argument that we are legitimate development actors who need to be part of any debate around aid if it is to cover the totality of the aid community and the approaches to delivering aid.” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UKAN, Interview)

But having participated as development actors, donors and governments are going to insist upon the same levels of responsibility and accountability from civil society. Can civil society live up to the possible expectations that arise from its commitments to development effectiveness in the Open Forum process?

“So, if we are not careful, we will ‘mis-perform’ or ‘under-perform,’ and they will use that to begin excluding us again – ‘Ah, you are wasting our time. You came here, but what did you do?’” (Emmanuel Akwetey, GAEEF, Ghana, Interview)

Chapter Five

The Open Forum: Determining the principles and guidance for CSO development effectiveness

“The agreements reached by CSOs around the Istanbul Principles and the Siem Reap Consensus for the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness, are the most important outcome of the process. ... The International Framework is the product of a global process of thousands of CSOs, which constitutes the first civil society statement on the effectiveness of our work through self-reflection on the role of CSOs in the world.”
(Ruben Fernandez & Rosa Inés Ospina, ALOP, Synthesis of Interviews with Latin American CSOs)

The recognition by donors’ and developing country governments of CSOs as “development actors in their own right” in the 2008 Accra HLF3 was a highly significant event for civil society. This was the outcome of not only the deep engagement of CSOs with the Working Party process prior to Accra, but also the long-standing assertion by civil society that they are unique actors for development change. Their roles and contributions to development are not only distinct, but are also bound up with those of official donors, multilateral agencies and developing country governments.

By definition, civil society organizations are voluntary expressions of people’s commitment to organize and pursue a wide range of non-market initiatives in the public sphere. These initiatives include both service and mobilization to enable people to claim their rights to improve conditions of their lives. The diversity of CSOs and their actions for development are essential features of democratic governance. These aspects of civil society are the basis for CSO legitimacy and credibility as development actors. This expression of ‘citizenship’ and development initiatives through CSOs do not displace the accountability and obligations of governments to respect, protect and fulfill human rights within their jurisdiction. CSOs are not merely “implementors” of development programs but also protagonists in the development process itself. This is the meaning of the phrase, “actors in their own right.”

CSOs have often faced challenges from other development actors regarding the quality of civic engagement in development and social solidarity relationships. How accountable are CSOs to the normative values and development goals that shape their mandate and their roles? How accountable are CSOs to the constituencies with whom they work for common goals?

CSOs have reflected on their own practices and recognize the importance of continuously reforming these practices to strengthen their roles as effective development actors. Prior to the Accra HLF, CSOs responded to these internal and external challenges through collective leadership with the launch of the *Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness* (Open Forum) in July 2008. The Open Forum has been a unique global process, designed and led by CSOs at all levels. Its overarching objective was to articulate the principles that would guide CSO efforts to improve their accountability as development actors.

“It was important because we hadn’t done it before and we needed to address our own issues and challenges ... But I also think it has generated a lot of pride in the sector. You don’t often get a chance to reflect: why do I exist? The Open Forum process has also allowed civil society to take a step back and take some pride in what they are doing, knowing that it is important, that our work can and should be changing the lives of people around us.” (Amy Bartlett, Coordinator, Open Forum, Interview)

Through the two years of intensive consultations and dialogue at all levels, thousands of CSOs engaged in the Open Forum, reaching global consensus on an *International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness*, based on the eight *Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness*. These *Principles* and *Framework* were recognized in Busan by the governments, donors and CSOs as the foundation for CSO practices that can strengthen accountability and their contribution to development effectiveness.

How did the Open Forum achieve this consensus among a highly diversified CSO community over a relatively short timeframe? How will these *Principles* shape CSOs as actors in development in their different roles and unique country and organizational contexts? In what ways do governments and donors facilitate CSO capacities to realize their potential in development? This chapter will describe the Open Forum as a process as well as its challenges and accomplishments.

1. Building Consensus for the *Istanbul Principles*: Organizing consultations for a CSO Open Forum

The Open Forum’s national, regional and sectoral consultations involving thousands of CSOs in all parts of the world were the foundation for a holistic

and inclusive approach in defining principles and guidance for CSO development effectiveness. In the Open Forum, CSOs realized that the strength and legitimacy of these principles can be established by reaching out to all types of CSOs in the global South and the global North, regardless of their size, approaches to development or organizational culture. The consultations had to consider all the views of many CSOs and their diverse roles. It was essential to engage with those who are primarily regarded as service delivery channels: organizations that focus on advocacy and policy dialogue, organizations that mobilize people in their communities or sectoral interest, and organizations that bridge civil society research and public policy proposals.

“Platforms like the Open Forum and BetterAid opened opportunities for us to link our work to another level, to bring out our experiences, successes and failures, and to build new support for our work through the Istanbul Principles and the Framework for CSO Effectiveness...” (Alianza ONG, Dominican Republic, Interview)

“This was a unique initiative where large numbers of voluntary organizations, participated in national, regional and global consultations.” (Harsh Jaiti, VANI, India, Survey)

Between 2009 and 2011, the Open Forum reached out to more than 4,500 CSOs around the world by organizing and facilitating more than 70 consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues at country, regional, thematic or sectoral and international levels. The mandate and overall direction of these consultations came from a 25-member Global Facilitation Group (GFG) which represents the networks and platforms of CSOs from all parts of the world (*see Annex C*). The day-to-day work was coordinated by a global Secretariat based in CONCORD, the European CSO platform and fiscal agent for the Open Forum.

The Secretariat was supported by a Consortium of five regionally based CSOs that were responsible for ensuring robust engagement of CSOs in their regions and for providing direction to the overall process. Outreach Officers, based in the five Consortium members, were responsible for facilitating consultations in the regions of 1) Asia & the Middle East and North Africa; 2) Sub-Saharan Africa; 3) Latin America and the Caribbean; 4) North America and the Pacific; and 5) Europe.¹ The Outreach Officer in each Consortium member organization worked closely with national platforms and networks to coordinate the widest outreach to CSOs in the countries concerned.

“National platforms of organizations (confederations, associations, networks) as well as international organizations (ALOP, Mesa de Articulación) are an indispensable tools to address these tasks.” (Rosa Ines Ospina and Ruben Fernandez, “A Synthesis of Lessons Learned and Conclusions from Latin America” (Based on Regional Survey Questions in Spanish))

The Open Forum goals were highly ambitious, requiring a broad scope for understanding issues that affected the contributions of CSOs to development. A standardized global outreach methodology was developed for the consultation process. A three-day consultation plan was designed to provide a learning space for CSOs to discuss and identify key elements in their effectiveness as development actors in their own contexts. But these consultations also had to serve as a platform for making specific proposals for principles for CSO development effectiveness, indicators and implementation guidelines to realize these principles. Therefore, participants at all consultation events were asked to point to good practices for accountability mechanisms and to identify minimum standards in government policies and regulations and donor modalities of support for enabling their contributions to development.

In addition, the country consultations were designed to catalyze multi-stakeholder dialogues on development effectiveness issues, particularly on enabling conditions. These dialogues contributed to an emerging discourse on “development effectiveness” for Busan, as well as the long-term aim of fostering multi-stakeholder engagement on development at the national level.

“We managed to reflect critically on our own practices in a climate of growing trust and expanding partnerships [among us]. Today we have a broader base of organizations that forms the network that discuss these issues.” (Red Encuentro, Argentina, Interview)

Given the ambition of this undertaking, the Secretariat, with the Outreach Officers, took a very deliberate approach to preparations in the first six months of the process. An *Outreach Toolkit* (Open Forum 2010c) was developed that included basic information for national platforms and sectoral organizations to assist in organizing a consultation and multi-stakeholder dialogue. The Outreach Officers invited national CSO focal points to a regional workshop to socialize the goals of the Forum and to coordinate regional consultations strategies. The *Toolkit* also provided some basic definitions of key terms in the discourse and some questions to stimulate thinking and debate. While each consultation was unique, these preparations were critical for ensuring some consistency in content from all the consultations for the next stage in the global process. This next stage was to consolidate the discussions and inputs globally to identify the common principles and and formulate an overarching framework for CSO development effectiveness.

Many CSOs “on the ground” were largely unfamiliar with the Working Party and HLF discourses on aid and development effectiveness. Simple and short resources were essential to initiate a shared understanding of the Open Forum’s purpose and goals. For example, IBON Foundation in the Philippines, which was playing a leadership role in BetterAid, developed a series of primers for this purpose. A *Primer on the Development Effectiveness of Civil Society Organizations* (IBON International, 2010) establishes social solidarity as a shared framework for CSOs irrespective of their

different roles. It answers some basic questions about CSOs as enablers of poor and marginalized communities. It also identifies some key principles for discussion in the consultations and provides an introduction to several issues regarding the enabling environment for development effectiveness.

Through the Open Forum, a series of *Outreach Toolkit Issue Papers* provided basic understanding of the important concepts such as: 1.) “CSOs as development actors in their own right;” 2.) “development effectiveness;” and 3.) “principles for CSO development effectiveness.” This *Toolkit* gave direction on how these ideas and goals can be grounded in the actual experience of CSOs participating in the consultations. For example, participants were asked, “What are the values and principles underpinning the work of your organization?” “How are these values translated down into the organization in terms of its day-to-day operations and relationships?” These questions in turn shaped the process for the consultations as they unfolded in each country context.

The *Toolkit* established some basic ideas for “Guidelines” and “Mechanisms” for implementing the globally-agreed principles and values, as well as the strengthening of CSO accountability. It was essential, for example, for the Open Forum not duplicate existing CSO processes nor burden CSOs with more reporting tasks. Realization of the principles should build on the existing country or sector-specific tools and mechanisms whenever possible.

A common CSO refrain with donors and governments was that the Open Forum was not about creating a universally applicable set of commitments in a “Paris Declaration for CSOs” – or a “Paris Declaration for slow learners” as one CSO leader glibly remarked. Given the diversity of CSO participants, it was essential that a globally-agreed CSO development effectiveness principles be locally interpreted and applied as commitments. CSOs should do so in ways that respond to local CSO situations, contexts and mechanisms. Consequently, the relevant question was always, “What are the appropriate guidelines to implement the principles for your organization or in your CSO country context?” and not “How are you implementing a specific measurable, globally-determined commitment in your organization or country?”

Each country or sector consultation had its own process and particular focus based on national or sectoral CSO conditions. Nevertheless, to enable a convergence of views on the core goals of the Open Forum, each consultation was strongly urged to ensure:

- Preparatory work on the rationale and purposes of the Open Forum;
- Outreach to all types of CSOs, with a balanced selection process to determine participants, where resources for consultations were limited;

- All consultations at the very least, address proposals for key principles for CSO development effectiveness, suggest ways to realize these principles in practice, and formulate minimal standards for donors and governments for an enabling environment for CSOs; and
- Where possible, that the other stakeholders (donors, governments, private sector, etc.) were to be invited to a multi-stakeholder dialogue on the themes of the consultation.

a) Carrying our country and sector consultations

More than 70 consultations were held between March 2010 and June 2011, with some countries holding more than one consultation during this period. All the reports from these consultations were published on the Open Forum website (www.cso-effectiveness.org). A breakdown of the regional distribution of consultations can be found in Annex G:

Sub-Saharan Africa – 18 consultations
 Asia and Middle East and North Africa – 21 consultations
 Latin America and Caribbean – 20 consultations
 North America and Pacific – 10 consultations
 Europe – 21 consultations

National platforms in each country often took the lead in organizing national consultations; and many of these same platforms were also engaged in the wider BetterAid agenda at the country level. Some of the issues discussed included: a.) roles for CSOs in development; b.) strengths and weakness in current CSO practice; c.) development effectiveness principles; d.) relationships between CSOs; e.) enabling conditions and CSO regulations; f.) lessons in self-regulation and quality assurance mechanisms; and g.) strategies on ways to influence dialogue with government on CSO development effectiveness issues at the country and regional level.

“In Latin America, the momentum generated by the Open Forum was a unique experience that marked a turning point in the process of strengthening civil society as a key player in development in the region ... strengthening its legitimacy and effectiveness.” (Rosa Ines Ospina, Initiva Regional Rendir Curestas, Argentina, Survey)

The reports from the national consultations (depending on their timing) contributed directly to the preparations for creating a consensus for the *Istanbul Principles* and the *International Framework* (see below). But also in many countries, the Open Forum opened up debate on these issues. ALOP in Latin America reported that the consultations (often in several rounds) provided opportunities for a comprehensive

debate on CSO development effectiveness issues with diverse CSO participants (academics, trade unions, social movements, women's organizations), often for the first time.

“Global processes for reflection by CSOs on their own development effectiveness has led Peruvian organizations to identify minimum standards arising out of a shared concept of development. This exercise pointed to aspects that strengthen or limit development effectiveness in terms of accountability, rights, gender equality and environmental risk management...” (Grupo Propuesta Ciudadana, Peru, Interview)

Multi-stakeholder components for the national consultations varied according to enabling conditions in the countries concerned. Some countries, such as the Philippines or Canada, reported a multi-stakeholder component where government officials participated, but with limited dialogue on issues for the enabling environment. In others, such as Cambodia and the Republic of Korea, there was a sustained dialogue, sometimes addressing controversial issues such as the draft NGO law in Cambodia, but also positively led to the recognition of the Istanbul Principles by these governments.

In other countries, political opportunities were opened for CSOs by the Open Forum consultation process and the Open Forum's outcomes. In Mongolia and Zambia, CSOs could be directly involved in the development of CSO law, with the CSO *International Framework* accepted as an important reference point for these laws. In Laos, the Open Forum organized a special consultation with local CSOs on how to work with local governments to achieve recognition of local CSO development efforts. In the Pacific Region, the regional platform, PIANGO, was able to use the Open Forum process to substantially re-engage with a regional inter-governmental structure. In Europe, a parallel Structured CSO Dialogue with the European Commission was informed by the European consultations and the outcomes of the Open Forum process, facilitated by CONCORD and other CSOs participants.

“The strengthening of CSOs should be a central purpose in all development processes and in international development cooperation as a whole. It is crucial to have a good understanding that any project or action with development purposes carried out in a given territory must include the strengthening of the organizational civic culture in that territory as part of its success indicators.” . (ALOP, Final Open Forum Narrative Report, 2012)

“The Consultation in the Pacific was very effective with an area so vast, and with few resources. Open Forum had a huge effect in enabling them to get their governments to pay attention to them again... A former NGO person, now an advisory to the Prime Minister of Tonga, came to speak at the consultation. That, coupled with excellent media skills in PIANGO, got this situation out into the public media. And in a matter of weeks, the leadership of the [inter-governmental] Pacific Island Forum were responding that they would engage again...” (Carolyn Long, InterAction, USA)

Regions held regional workshops to consolidate the main messages from the national processes tailored to their regional context. In some regions – Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, for example – a second set of regional workshops deliberately brought together the Open Forum and BetterAid agendas in their region in the months leading up to HLF4 in 2011. The Africa Regional Consultation engaged 70 diverse CSOs from across Africa to produce an African CSO approach to HLF4, including key messages relating to Open Forum. A merger of BetterAid and Open Forum agendas also occurred in countries such as Bangladesh, Philippines, South Korea and Vietnam in Asia. A Middle East and North Africa MENA regional consultation ahead of Busan mobilized CSO leaders from the region, who had not been able to engage actively at the national level, to produce a regional statement for HLF4.

Thematic consultations were also organized between 2010 and 2011 for such thematics as CSOs and gender or trade unions as development actors, with varied outcomes for the Open Forum. These were global consultation processes that involved a mix of regional workshops, research initiatives and surveys to gather and consolidate a sectoral perspective for the emerging *International Framework*. The trade unions, for example, working through the ITUC, set out “Trade Union Principles and Guidelines for Development Effectiveness” (ITUC 2011a). While unique to the trade unions, these principles are highly consistent with the *Istanbul Principles*.

“The recognition of the Istanbul Principles is an achievement. The ITUC has strongly supported and actively collaborated in their realization. It was an important process that went in parallel with our own internal process on trade union principles and guidelines on development effectiveness. It helped us move forward with our process... Unfortunately, not many organizations in Open Forum understood the ITUC initiative... I found it hard to explain that this internal process paralleled and matched the external [Open Forum] one and these two processes were feeding each other.” (Paola Simonetti, ITUC, Interview)

“In the UK what has been relevant is less the Open Forum process, and more the independent work in the UK on CSO effectiveness. It has probably been inspired by the international Open Forum agenda, but it has actually been a separate program of work by BOND [the UK CSO platform]. That process has been fundamental in strengthening our legitimacy here in the UK...” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UKAN, Interview)

International CSOs (ICSOs) working with the Berlin Civil Society Centre in 2011, came together and drafted a joint statement on “Accountability, Transparency and Verification Towards HLF4,” which was signed at the CEO level of these organizations. In 2010 an Advisory Group of six ICSOs guided the research and outreach to produce the “ICSO Effectiveness Report 2010.”

For gender equality, networks for women’s rights organizations took the lead in organizing regional workshops in all regions and produced a consolidated report

CASE STUDY:
**Developing Principles and Guidelines for Trade Union
Development Effectiveness**

Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (ITUC)

Since 2007, the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN) as an initiative of ITUC has been working to bring the trade union perspective into the international development policy debates and to improve the coordination and effectiveness of trade union development cooperation activities. TUDCN brings together affiliated trade union organizations, the solidarity support organizations, the representatives of the ITUC regional organizations and the Global Union Federations.

ITUC development cooperation strategy is based on the principle of the democratic ownership. The TUDCN firmly believes that people should be in charge of their development policies.

There is a growing recognition in and outside the trade union movement of the important role that trade unions play in development worldwide. As the scope of trade union development activities increases, the need to improve the quality and effectiveness of the work arises. TUDCN responded to this need through a dialogue with affiliated organizations around the world.

From this dialogue came the *Trade Union Principles and Guidelines on Development Effectiveness*, published in May 2011 [ITUC, 2011a]. These *Principles* were designed to serve as a common reference for development cooperation initiatives, strengthening working methodologies and ultimately contributing to enhance the impact of trade union cooperation programmes. The *Operational Guidelines* identify possible actions, tools and mechanisms to translate the *Principles* into practice. Finally, the *Principles* and *Guidelines* also raised awareness among external players about the identity, dynamics and role of trade unions as actors in development.

To accompany the *Principles* and *Guidelines*, TUDCN created a *Trade Union Development Effectiveness Profile Tool* [ITUC, 2012]. This *Tool* was intended to help trade union partners reflect on their practice as well as the principles and values that underpin their work. It also helps to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the progress in the use of the *Principles and Guidelines* for trade union development effectiveness in an on-going process of learning and improvement.

While *Development Effectiveness Profile Tool* was elaborated by and for trade unions, other development actors draw inspiration and practical applications from

the *Tool*. Both the *Principles and Guidelines* and the *Tool* have been created within the framework of the Open Forum process on CSO Development Effectiveness.

on CSO effectiveness and gender issues. In Latin America, the regional consultation on gender equality was an important activity for the sector. It resulted in significant rebuilding of networks between women’s organizations and other CSOs, which substantially created consensus on the centrality of women’s rights to development effectiveness for CSOs.

CIVICUS coordinated three thematic consultations in relation to CSOs working in fragile or conflict-affected countries – the Balkans, the Philippines and Zimbabwe—accompanied by a global survey to collect inputs and data from CSOs working in similar situations. There are challenges in applying common CSO development effectiveness principles in these contexts. Conflict-affected situations are often chaotic and urgent, where space is often narrow for CSOs, and security is always an issue. CSOs working in these situations can feel pressure from donor priorities, which may not be in harmony with their experience of peoples’ priorities.

The work to coalesce perspectives from CSOs working with marginalized populations was coordinated by the People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS). These consultations raised concerns that the *Istanbul Principles and Framework* do not adequately reflect and address the realities and experience of CSOs working with marginalized populations. Similar concerns about the enabling conditions in situations of conflict came out of this thematic consultation. In this regard, CSOs should understand these principles and guidance as a “living document” that will continue to be informed by the experience of CSOs working in the most difficult situations.

b) What were the outcomes of the consultations?

In preparation for an unprecedented Global Assembly of the Open Forum, planned for September 2010, the Secretariat commissioned a *Synthesis* of the outcomes of the national and sector consultations (Open Forum, 2010b). This *Synthesis* found substantial similarities in the various consultations, from which eight principles for CSO development effectiveness were proposed for discussion at this Global Assembly.

The *Synthesis* found that most CSOs shared a comprehensive vision of development. CSOs understand development as a human and social process of sustainable positive change, focusing on the empowerment of people to address the causes of poverty, inequality and marginalization. Development options for people are

affected by unequal social, economic and political power in their countries. Effective development action by CSOs therefore often involves CSOs making choices and taking sides. This vision was informed by CSOs diverse roles not only as aid actors but also as development actors. Many CSOs act in development with little or no connections to the aid system.

Across many consultations, participants equated a “development effectiveness framework” with the application of human rights standards and approaches to development. While the depth of understanding of human rights approaches varied considerably, the consultations in many different countries revealed that human rights standards had gained increasing currency among CSOs. Human rights are seen as core values in a normative approach to development, which in turn, informs CSO programmatic priorities and organizational practices for development effectiveness.

Participants were often frank and critical in reflecting on the many internal challenges for CSOs acting in development. CSOs can have weaknesses in a lack of clarity about their mission and goals; they often work with weak management, strategic planning and limited learning capacities as organizations. CSO capacities may be weak in understanding and respecting local ownership of the goals and the implementation of development programs by populations directly affected. And some consultations point to tensions with international CSOs who were sometimes reluctant to permit local control over development initiatives. In other cases national CSOs prioritize programmatic relationships with these organizations to the detriment of local relationships with small and community-based organizations. Other issues highlighted CSOs lack of transparency and accountability, weak institutional infrastructure, retention of skilled staff, lack of long-term sustainable financing, and program duplications.

While consultations set out many ideas for CSO development effectiveness principles, they also stressed that principles will only be meaningful if they address the realities of CSO practices. As such, many of the principles proposed are not new. CSOs have a long history of reflecting on issues of multiple accountability, equitable partnerships, and southern and local ownership of development processes. References were made to numerous accountability frameworks, increasingly managed by national CSO platforms. These are codes of conduct or ethics that reflect CSO values and good practice. There is evidence that CSOs have been changing their practices accordingly. Yet, there is also a strong acknowledgement from all the consultations that much more action is needed if CSOs are to be effective development actors. All of the consultations understood the importance of creating a shared global framework as a reference for tackling CSO development effectiveness issues.

CSOs already demonstrate their accountability in various ways depending on their roles and context through oversight of boards of directors, accessible external

CASE STUDY:
A CSO Success for Busan:
Creating Attention for a CSO Enabling Environment

Carolyn Long, InterAction

Through a series of dialogues in the six months preceding Busan, U.S. CSOs engaged their government on the enabling environment for CSOs and *democratic* country ownership at the Fourth High Level Forum (HLF4). In May 2011, U.S. CSOs, working through InterAction, the national CSO platform, proposed a series of roundtables to the U.S. government to discuss several key issues to be taken up at the HLF4. The five topics were:

- 1) The enabling environment for CSO development work,
- 2) Country ownership,
- 3) Transparency, accountability and results,
- 4) Conflict and fragile states, and
- 5) The role of the private sector in development

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the lead U.S. government agency for the Busan HLF, agreed to the roundtables. A senior official co-chaired each meeting together with Sam Worthington, InterAction's President and CEO. Each roundtable involved approximately twelve government representatives from USAID, the Department of State, the Treasury Department, the Millennium Challenge Corporation and an equivalent number of CSO representatives.

The CSO goal for these roundtables was to inform and promote civil society perspectives and proposals related to the five topics to these government agencies and to persuade them to advocate for these objectives at Busan. For each roundtable, InterAction and its members prepared a short paper on the topic that provided background, CSO proposals for Busan, as well as CSO proposals to U.S. government agencies for their own development work. All roundtable discussions were informal and without attribution.

The first roundtable focused on the enabling environment for CSOs around the world. CSO roundtable participants noted the alarming number of countries where governments were denying CSOs space to operate, and where, in some cases, individuals working for CSOs were suffering harassment, injury and even death. CSOs cited research indicating that governments were justifying their actions by invoking the *Paris Declaration* principle of country ownership, interpreted by many donor and recipient governments as state ownership.

CASE STUDY (continued)

U.S. senior government representatives were deeply concerned by this information. Although USAID had pre-existing programs to promote an enabling environment for CSOs through which assistance was being provided to CSOs for legal and regulatory issues in many countries, the agency's leadership was not aware of the scope of this problem and appreciated being alerted to it.

As a result of this roundtable, USAID instructed that a message be sent to all U.S. embassies and USAID missions requesting a status of the enabling environment in that country for CSOs. It also requested that InterAction ask its members for a list of countries where CSOs were having most difficulty in operating freely. After querying its members, InterAction provided a list of twenty-five countries with data from each as to particular problems. USAID circulated this information internally so that its mission employees in these countries could investigate these problems.

The U.S. government went on to advocate for an enabling environment for CSOs at Busan and, as one of the sherpas, did so in the negotiation group for the Outcome Document. The U.S. government also promoted the concept of *democratic* country ownership, as a result of the roundtable on that topic. Lastly, these roundtables enabled InterAction to call repeatedly for the U.S. to endorse the *Istanbul Principles* and promote them at the HLF. As a result, in her keynote address at the opening ceremony in Busan, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called for endorsement of the *Istanbul Principles*, together with the *Siem Reap CSO Consensus on the International Framework*, in the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*.

financial audits, and ongoing dialogue with counterparts. But it is also widely accepted that not much progress has been made in practical approaches to greater accountability to populations directly affected by development action. The wide diversity of CSOs, their voluntary basis, and their use of public funds, both privately raised and official donor funds, creates unique challenges for accountability. The consultations identified these issues and established some directions for strengthening accountability mechanisms for CSOs that are country and sector specific and relevant (Open Forum 2010b, pages 40 – 44).

While defending their independence and autonomy as actors, CSOs were well aware that they did not and should not work in isolation from other development actors. Clearly development goals are achieved when such actors share common purposes and efforts. But what is equally important is the effect of policies and practices of other actors (governments and donors) on the capacities of CSOs to work in ways that are consistent with the principles determined to be relevant by CSOs. The outcomes of these discussions in the consultations on the enabling conditions were essential in shaping an intensified dialogue with donors and governments. This

dialogue took place mainly but not exclusively within the Working Party process to determine minimum standards for the enabling conditions (*see Chapter Seven*). The *Synthesis* of the consultations in 2010, combined with parallel CSO research by Civicus, Act Alliance, ITUC and the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law, established a comprehensive picture of a deteriorating environment for CSOs in many of the countries where consultations were held.

The Open Forum process also opened up some interesting dialogue and issues for ICSOs. The roles of ICSOs as both collaborators and competitors of national CSOs were sometimes raised in country consultations. For example, in Asia, CSOs sought greater clarity with regard to the role of ICSOs in relation to national CSOs, especially in countries where government is hostile to national CSOs.

c) What were some of the challenges facing country consultations?

The consultations were innovative and far-reaching in creating a protected space for CSO discussion of critical issues. While some of these were new issues, many were already being debated inside CSOs, networks and constituencies. CSO participants saw the importance of globally-agreed norms that would permit a deepening of these discussions at the country and organizational level in the future.

But the consultations were not without challenges. While the consultations clearly succeeded in putting normative issues at the centre of the debate, challenging conceptual issues remained. How meaningful are principles for development effectiveness, where the practical means and resources to translate these principles into CSO practice may be lacking? Almost unavoidable tensions exist between support for universal principles, and related universal guidelines for their implementation, and specific country realities with highly diverse CSO actors and enabling environments. CSOs had to constantly remind other development actors that universal principles for CSOs could not automatically be translated into specific binding global commitments that CSOs at the country level would just implement. From the other side, some CSOs challenged the relevance of universal values based on human rights standards, where in some countries, such values are seen as derivative of a northern liberal democratic culture that is largely absent in the global South.

The Open Forum's regional processes invested significant resources to ensure engagement with CSOs across many countries. But national platforms were often limited by the resources needed to bring these issues first to local grassroots constituencies of CSOs then to the national consultations. While there were large investments in translation, language issues were raised repeatedly as a challenge for effectively engaging with a global process that takes place mostly in English. The

Latin American consultations acknowledged the inherent difficulties in reaching out to social movements and overcoming years of mistrust between social movements and CSOs in a relatively short timeframe. Also, the multi-stakeholder segments of the consultations sometimes brought together CSOs with quite different approaches to political engagement, without enough time to find common ground for dialogue with donor and government officials. And in many consultations, government participation in the dialogues was very limited.

“The ability for a diverse set of civil society actors to be able to formulate and agree to the Istanbul Principles and the Framework are a tremendous joint achievement... Country consultations could have been more participatory... Smaller organizations have, in some cases, mentioned that it was difficult to make their voices heard. Yet, overall, I think the process has been extremely smooth and efficient.” (Mia Haglund Heelas, Plan International, Survey)

“We must say loud and clear that there is not enough space for CSOs in French. For example, in Africa, if you do not speak the same language, English speakers will dominate the space and will not leave room for French. The dynamics of CSOs will be undermined. It is therefore vital that English speakers who have more developed structures and probably funding systems... make concessions... We feel that if we do not speak English, we can hardly be heard...” (Blanche Simonny Abegue, OSCAF, Gabon, Interview)

We couldn't engage sufficiently with the trade union movement. In some ways they were present ... But in most cases this was only formal. (Ruben Fernandez, ALOP, Interview)

“The challenge remains in the awareness-raising among marginalized groups on the significance of the aid process to the primary issues they are facing in their communities.” (Roy Anunciacion, People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty, Survey)

“I don't know if they [INGOs] really know what it is about to engage with people on the ground. I fail to see how they can know ... because I, as an educated woman in my country, did not see the entire depth of misery. It took me many years working with people on the ground...” (Azra Sayeed (Pakistan), Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Interview)

Nevertheless, the consultations were highly productive and created a foundation that was both credible and legitimate. The global process was able to synthesize their outcomes into eight main principles, some core ideas about how these principles could be put into practice, along with proposals for strengthening CSO accountability and key requirements for an enabling environment. About 190 participants from over 70 countries gathered in Istanbul, Turkey, in September 2010, for the Open Forum's first Global Assembly to review this *Synthesis*. True to a multi-stakeholder approach,

participants included not only representative country and sectoral CSOs, but also donor and government representatives who observed and joined the debates. The core purpose of this first Global Assembly was to consider principles that would shape a final holistic framework for CSO development effectiveness.

2. The first Global Assembly: Achieving global endorsement of the *Istanbul Principles*

At any point it might have been possible for the Open Forum's Global Facilitating Group to draft an International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness "on behalf of civil society". But given the numbers and diversity of CSO actors, an iterative process was essential if the framework was to be not only credible with other development actors, but more importantly, accepted by CSOs worldwide as a relevant framework for improving their effectiveness as development actors.

The resulting *Framework* therefore was not only strongly rooted in the two years of consultations, but was also deliberately constructed and launched in two stages at the two representative Global Assemblies. The first in Istanbul, Turkey in September 2010, participants worked with the consultations' *Synthesis* and grappled with the principles of CSO development effectiveness as the base for the *Framework*. Participants of the first Global Assembly were asked to focus on the wording of the eight *Istanbul Principles*. The *Istanbul Principles* were the product of an intense debate in this first Global Assembly, but with a level of agreement among the participants that was profound.

It was also clear that the relevance of the *Principles* would only be apparent if CSOs were able to deepen this consensus with a framework that guided their implementation, alongside progress on standards for an enabling environment with donors and governments. Guidance for their implementation was to be the work of the Second Global Assembly in Siem Reap, held nine months later in June 2011. This Assembly finalized the *International Framework* as a whole.

Nevertheless, all of these agendas were present at the first Global Assembly in Istanbul. CSO representatives came from 78 countries, bringing together 134 nationally-based CSOs and 31 ICSOs. An additional 27 participants came from donor agencies, partner governments and the OECD DAC. Participants absorbed the outcomes of more than 50 country consultations that had been reported by that point in time. They explored different perspectives on CSO development effectiveness, including the rights, roles and responsibilities of CSOs as development actors. They initiated a dialogue with donors and government representatives present regarding the enabling environment for CSOs. And finally they renewed the mandate of the Global Facilitating Group to take these efforts forward in further consultations and in the preparations for Busan.

A detailed examination of the proposed principles in the Istanbul Global Assembly brought forward several important points:

- There was unanimity that human rights standards and approaches should be the first principle while, at the same time, cautioning that ‘human rights’ are sensitive in many countries and a human rights approach must be developed in context and with clear purposes.
- While there was some debate on language, there was unanimity that gender equality and equity is so fundamental to development progress that it must be highlighted in a distinct principle for CSO development effectiveness.
- The Global Assembly directed the Open Forum to develop a distinct principle on the promotion of environmental sustainability for present and future generations. In a number of consultations the discussion of sustainability had been focused more on issues of organizational sustainability.
- The Global Assembly was unanimous in putting CSO accountability and transparency as a distinct and crucial principle for its effectiveness as a development actor. Approaches to strengthening CSO accountability must form a significant aspect of the *Framework*. At the same time, some participants raised important issues with respect to CSO transparency in countries where CSOs live under unfavorable conditions for CSOs, i.e. repressive regimes and armed conflict situations.

CSOs in this Global Assembly were working with a shared understanding that development effectiveness is about the impact of the actions of all development actors on improving the lives of the poor and marginalized. While the creation of norms is hugely challenging, participants were reminded that these norms have been informing the trajectory of CSO roles in development for several decades, as they work to achieve social change for equitable development.

Rajesh Tandon, the keynote speaker, challenged participants to situate development effectiveness principles with reference to three crucial lessons for development from the past decades: a.) the fundamental importance of locally-determined citizen-led priorities as the driver of development; b.) the centrality of rights and entitlements of poor and marginalized populations; and c.) the unprecedented importance of participatory democratic institutions. In many respects these lessons also informed the policy framework for BetterAid for Busan. In light of globalizations, Rajesh asked how could citizens make markets more accountable to citizens in the interest of development? In this context, civil society is also challenged to demonstrate its accountability.

“CSO accountability is now ‘multi-polar’ and not just bilateral, which heightens the importance of accountability across the sector. Accountability may be anchored in a global context or framework, not just in a local context, but accountability to those who are distant and remote and who are most likely to suffer the consequences of ‘bad development’ is often crucially missing in practice.” (Rajesh Tandon, Keynote Address, first Global Assembly)

In the Global Assembly’s concluding session, a statement of the *Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness* was fully endorsed by all 170 CSO participants, representing a global diversity of development actors. The Open Forum GFG and Secretariat were directed to elaborate on the meaning of each principle in a draft *International Framework*, thus capturing the nuances of the Global Assembly discussions. All participants committed to bring the *Istanbul Principles* home and to hold further consultations on a draft *International Framework*. How might CSOs strengthen CSO accountability to these principles in their country and organizational context? This draft *Framework* would inform the work of Open Forum over the next year.

Clearly if the *Istanbul Principles* were to have traction in country contexts, the policies, laws and regulations of governments and donors affecting CSOs in their development roles were essential considerations. At the first Global Assembly, regional caucuses were organized with the donors and government officials present to discuss enabling issues that were particularly important in their region. CSOs working in many varied context are increasingly concerned that the legal, financial and political space that define the scope of their work is shrinking. While there may be differences in emphasis, most issues on the enabling conditions raised in the consultations and summarized in the *Synthesis* strongly resonated across all regions. Addressing these disabling conditions also became a key priority for the Open Forum for the year leading to the second Global Assembly in June 2011.

“I think the gap between international discussions [such as the Global Assembly in Istanbul] and what happens locally is very large and should be a priority in any such process to develop specific actions to reduce this gap.” (ANONG, Uruguay, Interview)

“In Indonesia, the debate on accountability and transparency was quite tense. ... [We were] challenged by CSOs as they said, ‘Why should we have our own charter [as a CSO community] when we already have direct accountability to the people. We don’t need a special accountability charter.’ Then after some quite strong debate, they finally agreed. We saw it reflected in one of the principles that was brought to Istanbul.” (Don Marut, INFID, Interview)

3. The second Global Assembly: launching the Siem Reap Consensus for the *International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness*

In the words of Justin Kilcullen, Executive Director of Trocaire and keynote speaker for the second Global Assembly held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in June 2011,

“The Istanbul Principles are deeply subversive. ... But they cannot simply be declared. Support for them and capacity to implement them needs to be built from the ground up. ... We have achieved a declaration for how civil society should act in the 21st century. This has created a renewed sense of common purpose and energy to deliver on it.” (Justin Kilcullen, Keynote Address)

The second Global Assembly was animated by this energy and vision to deliver on the *Istanbul Principles*. The goal of the Assembly was to endorse and launch an *International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness* (Open Forum, 2011a) that would define the ways in which CSOs would shape its practices and engagement as protagonists for development in the coming years.

“It is all very well to have a certain principle or to recognize those objectives as important, but unless you can identify concrete action, practical efforts that can be undertaken, and then be able to hold actors accountable for taking those actions, I do worry about how far this is actually going to take us in reality.” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UKAN, Interview)

The *International Framework* is the consolidated outcome of a three-year mandate of the Open Forum. The global consensus achieved in the *Framework* is unique and inspirational for civil society as an agreement among thousands of different CSOs on standards that are a legitimate benchmark to guide their work. It served as a key component for a BetterAid political statement to the Busan HLF4 on development effectiveness for all development actors. But it also serves as a long-term reference for CSOs around the world who are working to improve the impact and effectiveness of their own development efforts.

The *International Framework* is an affirmation of CSO commitments to take action to improve their effectiveness as development actors and to be fully accountable for their development practices. The *Framework* focuses on the impact of CSO actions for development, which directly involves and empowers people living in poverty, including discriminated and marginalized populations. It highlights the importance of the diversity of CSOs as a measure of democratic and inclusive development.

The *Framework* then elaborates each of the eight *Istanbul Principles* creating a short interpretation that fleshes out the statement of principle, followed by areas of guidance to be taken into account in its implementation. These are necessarily very generic

guidance that came through the consultative process, meant to inform context-specific implementation. In order to deepen its relevance, the *Framework* is accompanied by an *Implementation Toolkit* (Open Forum, 2011b). This *Toolkit* provides a process for contextualizing the application of the principles in each organization. It also provides specific examples and references, mechanisms and indicators for each principle that CSOs can draw upon as they consider the *Istanbul Principles* in their local realities.

The *Framework* establishes some parameters for approaches that could strengthen CSO accountability mechanisms. CSOs take seriously the obligation to be fully accountable with their primary and most-affected constituencies, and this is shared by all development actors. The *Framework* acknowledges the current accountability and transparency practices of CSOs and the challenges of taking into account the multi-directional nature of their accountabilities. They are also sometimes constrained by working in difficult political environments where governments fail to protect fundamental human rights.

While admitting to these challenges for CSO accountability mechanisms, the *Framework* establishes several important approaches, consistent with the *Istanbul Principles*. They aim to strengthen the voluntary basis of accountability, not government or CSO-imposed “policing regulations” (see *Annex I*). A voluntary approach to accountability is essential to CSO autonomy and independence, yet these mechanisms must also assure multiple stakeholders that they have credible compliance practices.

Finally, the *International Framework* addresses critical conditions in an enabling environment for CSOs in laws, policies and practices by government (including donor governments). Again, an *Advocacy Toolkit* accompanies the *Framework* with the means for CSOs to assess the enabling environment where they work. This *Toolkit* shares some existing resources for CSOs working to advocate for a more enabling environment [Open Forum, 2011c].

The *Framework* acknowledges that the *Istanbul Principles* can be seen to deepen an understanding and commitment to the *Paris Principles for Aid Effectiveness*, particularly in relation to broad-based, inclusive and democratic ownership of development. It resonates the call in the *Accra Agenda for Action* that all governments work in partnership to create an enabling environment for CSOs to reach their full potential as development actors. Structured inclusive institutions for policy engagement are essential for both democratic ownership, now recognized in the BPD, and for the CSO enabling environment.

The *Framework* calls on all governments to fulfill their obligations to human rights that enable people to organize and participate in development. It identifies four essential areas of partner government and donor policies and practices: 1) Recognition of CSOs as development actors in their own right in laws, regulations

and practices; 2) Structuring democratic political and policy dialogue to improve development effectiveness; 3) Being accountable for transparent and consistent policies for development, and 4) Creating enabling financing for CSO development effectiveness. In all of these areas, the *Framework* then recognizes the progress made by the multi-stakeholder Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment is setting standards that can be a benchmark for assessing an enabling environment for CSOs (see Chapter Seven).

“The Open Forum has undertaken an extra-ordinary global CSO journey of self-reflection about the identity, roles and principles for CSOs as effective development actors...

“All actors for development – CSOs, government and donors – are inter-dependent and must collaborate to effectively realize development outcomes for people living in poverty and marginalized populations. They have a shared interest in a dynamic CSO sector..”

“All development actors must make vigorous efforts to strengthen their accountability to internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs, in line with international human rights standards. There is no exception for CSOs, who acknowledge their responsibility to improve their development practices...”

“All development actors must continue to work together to advance human rights, gender equality and social justice through reforms in development cooperation. This International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness, with its principles, norms and guidance, is a significant CSO contribution to these reforms.” (Concluding Section, International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness)

At the end of three days of deliberations in Siem Reap, more than 250 CSO participants at this second Global Assembly unanimously adopted the *International Framework*. Emele Duituturaga, co-chair of the Open Forum, proclaimed the *International Framework* to be the “Siem Reap Consensus”. This Consensus would form a key ingredient for CSO priorities, advocacy and outreach in the six months leading to Busan.

“The International Framework [was a key success]; as a product of a global process involving thousands of CSOs, it constitutes the first civil society statement on the effectiveness of our work for development, and a legitimate reference point for all CSOs in the world.” (Grupo Propuesta Ciudadana, Peru)

“Sharing information and experiences, and agreeing on minimum standards for enabling environment for CSOs, were also important... At the national level in Japan we were able to seriously discuss how the Istanbul Principles and the Framework could be applied in our context.” (Akio Takayangi, JANIC, Japan, Survey)

4. Political promotion of the *International Framework* and its implementation

The second Global Assembly set in motion a concerted effort by CSOs to create political endorsement of the *Principles* and the *Framework*, with some remarkable success in the months lead up to Busan. BetterAid and Open Forum put forward the *Framework* for full endorsement by all development actors in Busan. The *Framework* was launched in October 2011 at the final Paris meeting of the Working Party before the Busan HLF. Burmese human rights activist, Aung San Suu Kyi, in a special video recorded address to the event highlighted the right and duty of people to participate. At the launch, the government of South Korea, the host of HLF4, endorsed the *Istanbul Principles*, acknowledged the *International Framework*, and called on all governments to do likewise. The Chairperson of the OECD DAC, Brian Atwood, addressed the launch and called on “all those who care deeply about development” to ensure “synergy between governments and civil society organization”.

“So BetterAid and Open Forum provided civil society with the kind of tools where they are truly empowered in dealing with the government. A specific outcome is that KOICA [Korean aid agency] is now more focused on capacity building of CSOs ... The reason behind this is the endorsement by the Korean Government of the Siem Reap Consensus. They now have an official reason to spend more on building the capacity of Korean CSOs.” (Hyuksang Sohn, KOFID, Interview)

The calls for more active engagement by governments and donors were picked up in bilateral engagements prior to Busan and in Busan itself. As hosts of the Second Global Assembly, the Cambodia Coordination Committee successfully invited the Royal Government of Cambodia to the event where they endorsed the *Istanbul Principles* in their opening address to the Assembly. In September 2011, the European Union, in its official message for Busan, called “on civil society organizations and local authorities from donor and partner countries to continue their ongoing efforts to enhance accountability, transparency and integrity of their operations based on self-regulatory mechanisms such as the Istanbul CSO development effectiveness principles.” In Busan, U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, congratulated civil society on developing the *Istanbul Principles*. In the end, CSOs were wholly successful in achieving their goal for Busan, with all development stakeholders acknowledging the *Principles* and the *Framework* as the guide to CSO development effectiveness in the Busan Outcome Document [paragraph 22].

“The fact that civil society was looking at its own effectiveness absolutely had an impact on our role in Busan, which generated a lot of useful ideas and contributed to a Busan consensus around the question of what the role of civil society was in development.” (Modibo Makalou, Office of the President of Mali, Interview)

In the processes leading to Busan, CSOs were also engaged in various thematic streams such as results and accountability, situations of conflict and fragility, south-south cooperation, democratic ownership. To varying degrees, the *Principles* and *Framework* had an influence on CSO advocacy and multi-stakeholder processes in these areas going forward to Busan.

How does this recognition translate into action on the ground? Only months after HLF4, CSO networks in Bolivia, Georgia and Zambia have been working closely with government officials in their respective countries on appropriate laws and regulatory frameworks for CSOs. The *Istanbul Principles* is an explicit reference point for these discussions. CSOs in diverse countries such as Canada, Cameroon, Japan, and Luxembourg are engaging national and local CSOs, familiarizing them with the *Principles* and opening up discussions regarding their implementation in various forums. Through ITUC, trade unions continue to reflect upon their *Trade Union Development Effectiveness Principles* with a learning Tool to facilitate improved trade union practices for development.²

Capitalizing on the momentum generated by three years of intensive CSO consultation and reflection will be key to the success of this foundational work by the Open Forum. With some early and strong implementation activity occurring only months after HLF4, it is a good sign that CSOs will continue to be actively engaged with the *International Framework* for years to come.

“The formulation of the Istanbul Principles and the CSO Framework were very important steps. The challenge now is to keep them alive – by discussing what processes are foreseen to promote them in various fora, and establish them with official donors and others, as reference for future programming and action.” (Bernard Steimann and Melchior Lengsfeld, HELVETAS, Switzerland, Survey)

Chapter Six

Changing Conditions on the Ground: Engaging developing country governments and donors in the Busan process

How have the commitments of Paris and Accra been translated into structures for participation, reforms in aid practices, and behaviour change among development actors within developing countries? How transparent are the actual resources for development cooperation and budgets on the ground? What impact has there been on poverty reduction, decent work, women's rights, or the rights of disabled populations and excluded minorities? The answers to these questions shaped the agenda and outcomes for Busan. CSOs understood the advantage of their diversity and their organized presence at all levels by bringing country-level evidence to the global Working Party processes. They could also potentially collaborate and influence the positions of various governments coming to Busan, where they shared common goals.

Independent CSO monitoring and engagement at the country level on the implementation of Paris and Accra commitments was therefore a crucial dimension of the CSO Busan strategy. These activities took many forms. Under the BetterAid umbrella, IBON International implemented a broad Country Outreach Program, involving hundreds of CSOs in 52 countries across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America working through the global Reality of Aid Network. This program carried out seven regional workshops, 64 country-level consultations and information dissemination activities and four thematic sector workshops. Multi-stakeholder consultations had a global reach:

- 26 African country consultations and 5 regional consultations;
- 27 Asia-Pacific country consultations and 4 regional consultations; and
- 9 Latin American country consultations and 2 regional consultations. (*See Annex F*)

While also identifying with BetterAid, social sector organizations such as trade unions (ITUC), women's organizations (AWID), faith-based organizations (e.g. CIDSE and ACT Alliance) or rural organizations (e.g. People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty) organized independent consultations and performed country-level

research.¹ All of these processes contributed to strong preparations for and influential CSO country delegations at Busan.

“As CSOs we keep saying we are enablers of people in claiming their rights. Therefore, CSOs from outside should not really be the ones doing the work. We should really be raising awareness at the country level among people directly affected, mobilize them and empower them so they can claim their rights.” (Lyn Pano, Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN), Interview)

“The work of country outreach was very much under-estimated... [I]n many countries, the drive and commitments of governments to embark, or their executive to lead the aid effectiveness process at the country level, was pushed by civil society... Many government officials I talked to in the Working Party actually confirmed that they had been engaged at the country level, and that engagement is reshaping their attitudes to civil society... Furthermore the participation of CSOs for Busan could not have been mobilized globally; it was actually mediated and mobilized by the country outreach.” (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

“We were able to organize ourselves collectively and successfully over a period of three years, recognizing the diversity of civil society and being able to do much more together. Clearly that was a big achievement. Within this process, we made new networks, built new partnerships. We actually were able to get quite a number of institutions to think about how we can network post-Busan. This is an important achievement, which we will be able to continue to act upon aid issues locally.” (Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Forum, Interview)

1. The different dimensions of CSO engagement at the country level

Following Accra, the OECD DCD for the Working Party (WP-EFF) organized a final country-level *Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey* to collect evidence of progress, constraints and opportunities in implementing the Paris and Accra commitments. This evidence was to guide the WP-EFF in identifying issues and priorities for the final Busan preparations. A total of 78 countries worldwide, both donor and developing countries, participated in the Survey. In countries where the CSO Country Outreach consultations were being developed, CSOs asserted their right to be informed and to participate in the country Survey process. While the Survey provided an important focus, CSOs also sought out opportunities to engage their government and donors to discuss implementation of existing commitments and the need for ambitious but measurable outcomes for Busan. Finally, official country delegations for Busan were encouraged to include CSOs in their delegation, respecting their role as recognized development actors.

Where CSOs were well organized and very persistent, they had some success in participating in the Survey process. The CSOs in Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, East Timor, Zambia, Ghana, Uganda and Cameroon were some examples with varying degrees of meaningful access. Often these were countries with a strong network of CSOs that facilitated dialogue with the government regarding their inclusion in the Survey's National Reference Group. However, more often than not, the experience of inclusion proved to be tokenism. The government in its final report for the Survey often ignored joint CSO submissions and commentary on draft documents. CSO capacities were sometimes an issue. But on many occasions, CSOs reported that they faced a lack of timely information that might have allowed them to make effective contributions when they were included. In other countries, such as Tanzania and Togo, CSOs failed to organize themselves sufficiently to take advantage of opportunities to participate. [IBON International & COURT, 2011b, pages 10 – 13]

In many countries, decision-making processes on development priorities and the allocation of resources for these priorities remain the exclusive prerogative of the executive of government. Evidence collected through the Outreach Program and the 2011 global *Reality of Aid Report* point out few substantial efforts to include CSOs and citizens in “country ownership” along the inclusive lines agreed in the AAA [Reality of Aid 2011, 16-18]. For example in Peru, CSOs reported that they were never fully consulted and national development strategies were discussed superficially with some civil society sectors. While in Kenya governance reforms recognized the importance of inclusion requiring women's participation in decision-making, yet in practice there were no structural mechanisms for realizing this inclusion.

On the other hand, in Indonesia CSO country outreach resulted in the government's 2011 invitation of CSOs to engage directly with its planning offices and technical ministries. UNITAS, the CSO platform in Bolivia reported that they were able to deepen their engagement with the Bolivian government providing input and critique on the Second Phase of the Country-level Evaluation report on the implementation of the Paris Declaration (PD). In Cameroon, COSADER, the national platform facilitated the creation of the Aid Group in late 2009, composed of ten diverse national CSO networks. These networks worked together to strengthen capacities of local CSOs to participate in monitoring the implementation of the Paris Declaration and AAA at the country level. They have conducted gender-budget tracking and they have worked with the Finance Ministry on public finance reform. With donors and government officials, the Aid Group was directly involved in the DCD Monitoring Survey for Cameroon [IBON International 2011a].

In donor countries, CSOs also had significant engagements with government ministries involved in implementing Paris and Accra and in the preparations for Busan. In the United States, for example, InterAction organized a series of informal briefings

with officials on various themes – on country ownership, private sector development, aid effectiveness in fragile states, accountability and results, and CSO enabling environment (see the InterAction Case Study Box in Chapter Seven). InterAction brought to the table knowledge of the process that officials were unaware. These sessions deepened the relationships with officials preparing the US government's priorities for Busan and demonstrated CSO competence in key areas for the Busan agenda. This was also the case in a number of other donor countries.

In the UK, the UK Aid Network (UKAN) focused on the commitments that had been made by the UK government and the leadership role it had played in Paris and Accra. UKAN stressed the importance of preserving the government's credibility going into Busan with an ambitious agenda. They forged strong links with European platforms in several countries and in the EU and promoted implementation along similar themes. However, in other donor countries such as Canada, the strained relationships between CSOs and the government made the effective engagement on the Paris/Accra commitments difficult. In some donor countries national platforms arrived very late in the discussion reflecting the consequent limited impact on their government's priorities for Busan.

“In the end our impact on the official Swiss position was limited, as the Swiss NGO network did not manage to rally behind the topic of development effectiveness and to formulate clear tasks towards the Swiss government.” (Bernd Steimann and Melchior Lengsfeld, Helvetas Swiss Inter-cooperation, Survey)

“Sometimes there were difficulties in defining mutual priorities of CSOs' advocacy work, at least partly due to the diversity of CSOs...At the national level interaction with government was active and fruitful... On the regional level, European CSOs interacted quite actively with the EU, conducting active lobbying also towards different government groupings such as the Nordic+.” (Pauliina Saares, KEPA [Finland], Survey)

“We were hearing from our own civil society in Ireland. They were engaging with us around what they thought the Irish position should be for Busan. Their positions certainly complemented the global positions of BetterAid. I would go to the international meetings [Working Party] and hear civil society views, and then it was quiet useful to have our own engagement with civil society in Ireland about these issues and see that connectedness.” (Paul Sherlock, Irish Aid, Interview)

“From the UK perspective, we recognized quite early on that we needed evidence to back up the case for why the Paris and Accra agreements should be re-affirmed and those commitments continue to be pursued...We had hoped that the official evaluation and survey of progress since Paris would help gather that evidence and help us make those arguments. But actually when these [documents] were released quite far along the process, we realized that they didn't go far enough in actually making the case. We were left without the evidence

to really back up [our case on key issues such why use of country systems was important to UK taxpayers]... We cannot rely on the formal process to deliver the evidence that we need; we need to be very clear about what evidence we need, and we need to go and find it.” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UK Aid Network, Interview)

A number of CSOs were successful in finding a place in their country’s national delegation to Busan (for example, France, Belgium, the United States, Senegal, Guinea, Benin, Cameroon, Peru were mentioned). In some instances, this participation enabled CSOs to influence government positions, particularly where the country respected CSOs’ role in the process and/or where the country was a member of the final negotiations process for the outcome document. It solidified relationships, creating the potential for more sustained in-country dialogue in the longer term. In other situations, country delegations were so poorly organized and CSO membership was more symbolic than practical. And in one example, it may have been the case that the government used the CSO delegate to transmit misinformation about the final stages of negotiations, creating a degree of confusion among the wider CSO delegation at Busan.

“In Busan, our delegation included CSO recommendations in their official document and accepted the principle of ownership, including the integration of a representative of civil society in the official delegation. It was a great precedent, one that allowed us to make more effective civil society’s participation from Cameroon in Busan. The five civil society representatives were very active and well coordinated... They sent a joint report daily to Yaounde... Back in Cameroon, we made a post-Busan report-back with CSOs, to which we invited government representatives. They then invited us to do the same report-back with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Land Management and donors.” (Christine Andela COSADER, Cameroon, Interview)

“There was also hard-ball politics [in the final negotiations] from some of the donors and partner countries claiming that our Sherpa was not representing us well.” (Carolyn Long, InterAction, USA, Interview)

2. What were some characteristics and issues shaping CSO engagement at the country level?

a) CSO and government capacities and solid understanding of global aid and development effectiveness commitments are a pre-condition for effective engagement

An important lesson from pre-Accra CSO consultations was the necessity to strengthen capacities and deepen understanding of the implications of global commitments to aid and development effectiveness among CSO actors at the country

level. However, aid effectiveness issues and discourse remains a very specialized and technical terrain for many CSOs.

The sustainability of country-level policy processes on these issues requires a major investment of resources in transmitting knowledge and skills for local monitoring and advocacy. Initial workshops were supported across many countries in order to socialize a foundation of information and possible avenues for country-level work.² The global IBON/RoA Country Outreach Team (CORT) was designed to be responsive, not pro-active in any specific country. The initiative first came from a country-level CSO platform or network, but then consultations to sensitize local CSOs were facilitated to varying degrees by the global IBON-based CORT. While mostly the case, CORT was more active in some countries stimulating interest and initiating early dialogue on aid and development effectiveness issues.

“It was difficult at first, especially for rural and marginalized groups to engage in the aid process. But the CSO consultations and the multi-stakeholder forum that we have conducted has helped a lot in developing the capacity of the sector to engage with other actors on development effectiveness.” (Roy Anunciacion, People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty, Survey)

Capacity issues were not just with CSOs, but also within government. Oftentimes, there were only a few staff members in ministries of Finance or Planning knowledgeable on aid effectiveness. These individuals were over-burdened with too many responsibilities. Information dissemination would sometimes gravitate towards a few CSOs with good relationships with the government. Government officials are focused more on producing the required reports and less on consultations with stakeholders.

Basic knowledge and capacity building required significant investment of human and financial resources. This investment by BetterAid was crucial in moving country CSO and multi-stakeholder processes forward. To enable this work, the Country Outreach Program received about one-third of the total BetterAid budget of US\$3 million over three years. They were able to contribute to the processes in 64 countries. IBON International complemented this work with the publication of very useful basic “primers” for CSOs designed to familiarize non-specialist CSOs with the aid and development effectiveness discourse and with the issues in the preparations for Busan.³

Much was expected of CSOs at the country level coming out of Accra, as there is now coming out of Busan. Much was achieved, which was reflected in the strong CSO country delegations for Busan. But to some degree, there were also unrealistic expectations of CSO-readiness for such country processes: the time needed for such tasks like mobilizing resources, organizing country-level CSO leadership and plans,

and deepening capacities were natural barriers to quick effective CSO engagement in many countries.

“One of the things we have observed at the country level is that where space has been created for local civil society to engage in policy processes, it is not always used effectively. Sometimes civil society arguments are not evidence-based and are thus easier to dismiss. Having policy discussions based on evidence, sometimes across several pieces of work, can be useful and give credibility.” (Paul Sherlock, Irish Aid, Interview)

“Overall, [it is important] that CSOs have become more aware [of aid and development effectiveness issues]. Three years ago, a CSO survey revealed that knowledge of these processes was minimal. Today the situation has improved and has even become part of the agenda of these organizations.” (DESCO, Peru, Interview Survey)

“So for the donors as well as the developing country governments... who were like-minded and more friendly to civil society... there was this assumption that we had the capacity, we were ready, our structures existed, we could just engage – just open the door. And then when we went, we realized that we needed a bit more support to strengthen our organizations, inform our people, just do policy literacy, to coordinate better, determine how we will do our monitoring and research. We were not ready; we did not have the resources... We have to pause to build capacity... And if the national doesn't get support, the national will crumble very quickly. Already the signs are there that civil society groups are not able to take all the spaces and perform. Very few people are carrying the load...” (Emmanuel Akwetey, GAFF, Ghana, Interview)

b) Country context matters

In reflecting upon civil society/government engagement in Africa, Modibo Makalou, the representative of the Malian government to the Working Party, emphasizes the fundamental importance of the country context. Clearly this context is very dynamic, as recent events in Mali demonstrate. Governments have different policies and relationships with civil society. As regimes change, these policies and relationships also change. Civil society also has different interests, capacities and expectations. In the short term these attitudes and policies are difficult to adjust; yet at the same time, there is some evidence that experiences of working through issues together iteratively can create new openness and new behaviour among all actors over the medium term. For many CSOs coming from fragile country situations, they found it necessary to tailor global CSO messages to country situations to improve the chances that they might at least be heard.

The dynamics among civil society at the country level can also preclude easy collaboration on aid and development effectiveness issues. Different orientations can hinder CSOs working harmoniously together. Some CSOs compete with each other to

get donors or government sponsors. A common complaint of several smaller and rural CSOs from some countries was they feel excluded from consultations dominated by CSOs from capital cities with greater capacity and stronger donor connections.

“It is ok if there is not always agreement. Civil society has its role, but political society also has its role. They don’t always need to have the same point of view. It is important to work together to have common goals. This is what is desirable. It is important for governments to hear the point of view of citizens in their country. Whatever needs to be done at country-level needs to have all stakeholders, including civil society.” (Modibo Makalou, Office of the President, Government of Mali, Interview)

“In the context of fragile states or derailed democracy, as we call Cambodia now, we’re talking about changing the messaging [from BetterAid]. Those messages are too blunt; they are not receptive enough to our local environment. So there’s a need to have an entry point to begin to talk, and a CSO enabling environment is one of them, talking about our own principles is another, and linking to the broader picture where the world is going and therefore where we should be going... [W]e have ways in our country to bring those messages directly and indirectly to the media, the government and the donor community.” (Borithy Lun, CCC, Cambodia, Interview)

“There is no lack of words... Our national governments are full of words and documents. But in the end it is about politics. Whether it is neo-liberal politics or people’s politics. It is what kind of politics we play in the end.” (Azra Sayeed [Pakistan], Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Interview)

c) Policy engagement is often affected by the absence of multi-stakeholder policy spaces for sustained and inclusive dialogue

Multi-stakeholder processes at the country level involving CSOs were clearly uneven. CSO capacities were certainly a factor. But CSO country-level policy effectiveness was very much influenced by the history of CSO relationships with the government and the donors in each country. Opportunities for CSO engagement were affected by limited consultative spaces available for dialogue. They were also affected by the degree of openness of development actors to listen and seek areas of common interests, while also respecting the diversity of CSO views.

CSOs have stressed the absence of progress in putting in place structures for democratic ownership (for dialogue and accountability) since Accra. This lack of space to include and take into account the views of all development stakeholders has undermined the potential for both the Paris / Accra agreements to contribute on the ground to poverty reduction, gender equality, decent work and environmental sustainability. Progress in democratic ownership can be measured by both formal

bodies for broad consultations on development priorities and policies and by the existence of an enabling environment for CSOs. CSO post-Accra experience with a deteriorating enabling environment in many countries is explored more fully in the next chapter.

There was evidence of progress in some areas of inclusive and democratic practice in some countries. Nevertheless CSOs in almost all countries reported significant challenges in their relationships with both governments and donors. There is little evidence that CSO recognition in Accra as development actors, with a right to participate and be heard, had much practical expression in most countries. Where consultations did occur, donor and government representation is often quite limited, particularly in meetings initiated by CSOs, and the outcomes seldom lead to future policy reforms.

“While the situation on the ground in terms of democratic ownership is very far from ideal, there have been significant improvements, despite in uneven levels across countries. For one, civil society and communities have taken the vital first step of coming together to discuss their priorities... Second the relentless engagement with donors and governments have led to varying results – genuine dialogue that influenced policy makers at some level, creation or starting the process of creating established multi-stakeholder dialogue mechanisms, and in rare cases, further open up such existing spaces..” (IBON International, CSO Country-level Engagement Report, 2011, p. 14)

The Reality of Aid Network (RoA) produced a special 2011 *Global Report: Democratic Ownership and Development Effectiveness: Civil society perspectives on progress since Paris* (see Reality of Aid, 2011). The conclusions of this *Report* were derived from the work of the Country Outreach Program in more than 30 countries.

The country authors of the RoA *Report* found some evidence of improved political space for policy dialogue since Accra, but only in few countries. The *Report* first notes the conclusion of the donor-sponsored Independent Evaluation, which found that consultations and participation of citizens grew moderately in only three of the countries taking part in the Evaluation. Two-thirds of the country authors for the RoA *Report* indicated that there were either no consultations or they were perfunctory meetings with a few chosen stakeholders, often for information purposes only (p. 16–17). A similar conclusion on policy space was reached by the faith-based ACT Alliance’s independent research with their partners in 10 countries (ACT Alliance, 2011).

RoA authors reported that consultations were most often with selected stakeholders, usually avoiding alternative CSO perspectives to already determined government priorities. There was very little opportunity for multi-stakeholder engagement with government bodies for development planning, with only a handful of positive exceptions (i.e., Ghana, Indonesia and Senegal). CSOs often found similar issues with many donor representations at the country level. A weak willingness to fully participate in multi-

stakeholder processes was often compounded by limited understanding of the Paris/Accra commitments.

Finally, the lack of transparency was a critical factor undermining effective CSO policy engagement. From the RoA *Report* there were consistent accounts of severe limitations in practical access to information, even in countries where access-to-information legislation exists. Information is often random, lacks interpretation, and is sometimes contradictory or highly manipulated by the government. The quality of information is also an issue – no RoA country chapter reported generally accessible gender disaggregated data. CSOs and other stakeholders such as parliament and the media still face huge challenges in holding donors and governments accountable for their commitments in many countries.

“In our countries, donors have their ears blocked. The information [about Paris and Accra commitments] does not descend to their level...” (Aurelien Atidegla, REPAOC [West Africa CSO Network], Survey)

“We still have to contend with the challenges of governments; we still have governments around the table that are clearly not in favour of civil society being part of the process, as we saw in the run up to the negotiations, ... which is a challenge that endures in the work that we continue to do... We tried to engage quite intensively as civil society, but we found ourselves in a position that could not work very well, especially because the government wasn't always willing to play a meaningful part in the processes.” (Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Forum, Interview)

“In Gabon, we met with the representative of the government, but it is very complicated. Those who follow these issues in government are not those who participated in HLF4 in Busan. And those who went to Busan do not report at the national level. However, we had good consultations in Busan, which we will try to continue in Gabon...” (Blanche Simonny Abegue, OSCAF, Gabon, Survey)

“We could remember the meetings of the 2007/2008 multi-stakeholder consultations at the national level – the government was completely unwilling to come in. ... But BetterAid provided the opportunity to meet our officials at the Working Party level and to build a relationship. Going back to the country, we know that the context and bureaucracy is difficult to intervene, but better relationships actually helped us to get appointments, to meet with them. That helps.” (Ahmed Swapan, VOICE, Bangladesh, Interview)

“Engagement at the country level is important... Unfortunately donors were reluctant in participating in multi-stakeholder dialogues. There is a strong indication that the donors, particularly bilateral donors, established their own dialogue forum with private sector actors rather than with CSOs. CSOs did not anticipate this...” (Don Marut, INFID (CSO Network), Indonesia, Interview)

d) A more deliberate CSO strategy to engage governments is required.

CSO relationships with partner country governments in the Busan process were seen by many observers as problematic.

“We saw in Accra a couple of developing country governments not hiding their hostility to CSOs... On some issues, CSOs wanted to be on the partner country side, but partner country governments did not want or feel themselves to be on the same side as CSOs. It challenged the widespread idea that CSOs’ positions in the Working Party is always on the side of partner governments.” (Hubert de Milly, DAC DCD, Interview)

The strengthening of CSO capacities at the country level and encouraging an inclusive dialogue with government were important goals. But these efforts were also sometimes assumed by the BACG to be identical with deliberate CSO advocacy strategy for engaging developing country governments on a mutual agenda for HLF4 in Busan. The consequence was somewhat limited structured engagement with developing country governments on the Busan agenda and its Outcome in the months prior to Busan. Gideon Rabinowitz, from the UK Aid Network, pointed out the need for more traditional lobbying strategies:

“We didn’t systematically reach out to partner country governments effectively;... it should have involved identifying who were the key governments we wanted to target, identifying where we had common interests;... and systematically have a division of labour across BetterAid to develop these relationships.” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UKAN, Interview)

While others agreed, they understood the issue from a country CSO point of view where more investment was required to develop relationships that would then have been important to influence outcomes in Busan among other policy goals at the country level.

“With developing country governments, we should have realized we had more in common with them on the aid agenda. Our biggest difference was around the place of rights in this agenda. But one of the things we were not able to explore meaningfully was how to set up country-level processes that could have brought some influence or lobbying with governments in developing countries.... So we could have done better if we had built much more stronger country processes, with civil society in countries taking much more leadership.” (Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Forum, Interview)

The experience of the past three years revealed some important considerations for future processes at the country level:

- CSOs need to understand much better how national development policies are established and how development assistance is managed at the country level. They must become better in assembling the evidence to challenge governments and donors (Christina Andela, COSADER, Cameroon, Interview).
- There is insufficient “anchorage” between CSO theoretical work on development effectiveness and the strategies required to address the actual practices of government and donors at the country level. The issue here is partly about the capacities of local CSOs to interpret global development discourse into these local realities, and partly about the question of the choice of issues and the use of confrontational language.
- CSO multi-stakeholder dialogues are mostly with middle level officials, who, while being personally amenable to the terms of the dialogue, are not in a position to meaningfully affect policy decisions. In some instance, they may not have direct participation in the formulation of their government’s positions for Busan. For this reason, it is essential that there is a sustained engagement over time with senior officials or government ministers.

Nevertheless, in difficult environments, the personal will of individual officials can sometimes be critical for opening some space for initial dialogue with institutions that are seemingly closed (Ruben Fernandez (Colombia), Interview and Jacqueline Wood (Canada), CIDA, Interview).

- CSOs are not alone in needing to improve their capacities. RoA authors in the *Global Report* pointed out that government officials often had weak consultation and process skills that are required to build an effective dialogue.
- In some cases, the Open Forum process provided an entry point for initial discussions with governments that expanded to dialogue on the whole agenda for Busan. In other instances, the establishment of global norms, with meaningful indicators for commitments that begin to realize these norms, brought new opportunities at the country level.

“Before Accra there was little [partner country] leadership. After Accra governments began to get their act together and were holding donors more accountable. The fact that it is a partnership at the global level also translates to the national level to the extent that people are able to demand transparency. ... So at the global level it is good to set up the principles and establish the indicators, and the indicators need to be as simple and monitorable as possible. And we use them to transform the possibilities at the national level. ... What distinguishes this [Busan] from other processes like the MDGs is that the indicators and monitoring framework is also agreed and there is a possibility of multi-stakeholder approaches to evaluating progress.” (Vitalice Meja, RoA Africa, Interview)

“Southern CSOs often suffer from a lack of training and resources. This is a discussion we need to have. For example, in the case of countries where local organization is not strong, then donors and INGOs establish coordination platforms and may capture the funds available. ... The large NGOs and INGOs should bear in mind that not all CSOs coming to major international meetings have the same capacity, nor the same means or ability to work in different contexts and environments, some of which are openly hostile to the action of civil society.” (Christina Andela, COSADER, Cameroon, Interview)

“Maybe it [engagement with partner governments] could be seen as a failure – maybe we should have systematically taken a few countries to look at best practices and the challenges around engagement between CSOs and government. We really didn’t get to this stage in [the Cluster] on ownership. Somehow it had already been put in this space where people were ready to disagree with one another. A lot of that relates to an uncertainty about what is democratic governance and how should aid money relate to this.” (Brenda Killen, DAC DCD, Interview)

Many observers agree that CSOs were strongly organized in Busan, which had significant impact on the outcomes (*see Chapter Two*). There have been some important shifts in attitude towards CSOs that have been the result of direct engagements with governments and multilateral officials. These officials began to recognize that “civil society has a repository of knowledge” that could help shape the positions of governments. African civil society engagement with officials within NEPAD at the Africa Union (AU) in the final months before Busan is highly instructive example (*see the Uganda Case Study Box*).

Officials and Ministers from African governments had been meeting regularly through NEPAD/AU to develop a credible and strong African common position for Busan. From May 2011 onward, a few key individuals from African civil society were invited to participate in these meetings in Tunis, Pretoria and then Addis Ababa. As officials were struggling with this common agenda, they began to realize that Africa CSO colleagues were well-versed in the issues and language of Busan. At the same time, African CSOs had been meeting in regional forums developing positions that could easily be fed into the development of this common African position. Leaders within the African civil society were able to initiate dialogue with sympathetic officials in Ghana and South Africa, who were also part of the WP-EFF process. By the time they got to the final meeting at the AU in Addis in October, significant trust had been established to such extent that these CSO leaders actively directed and contributed text for the common position that eventually emerged out of that meeting.

“What was significant for the meeting in Addis – I was the main facilitator throughout – we [civil society] agreed amongst ourselves that it was our technical competence that would have an impact. The Ministers, especially the Minister of Planning from Kenya, were quite

critical of CSOs and saw us as being used by donors. By the time we had finished, he had changed his views and felt civil society should be taken seriously... When negotiations were not going well [in Busan], he was one of the people I went to talk with about the challenges we were facing... I think they truly saw that... our common ambition was that the right thing should be done in the interests of Africa.” (Emmanuel Akwetey, Institute for Democratic Governance Ghana, Interview)

“Indeed our governments took [CSO] issues forward and you could see in the document that they did not oppose us as they use to do on these key issues [democratic ownership, human rights based approaches and ‘unfinished business’ from Paris and Accra]. In the building of this African consensus we as Reality of Aid Africa were the ones that drafted the section on unfinished business. That level of partnership, trust-building among stakeholders, in the context of development effectiveness, really brings the partnership to a new level. (Vitalice Meja, RoA Africa, Interview)

“... We were working out a common African platform and we wanted to make sure that everyone was represented and present, including the private sector, parliamentarians along with civil society. A common position paper would bring a stronger African point of view of development issues.” (Modibo Makalou, Office of the President of Mali, Interview)

Aid and Development Effectiveness: A Uganda Case Study

Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Forum

In Uganda, the post-Accra process was received with mixed reactions. The government had participated intensively in the Accra process and worked with the German government to host the Roundtable on Division of Labor where it had co-chaired. A few civil society actors had participated in the civil society forum in Accra. Back in Uganda, after the 3rd High Level Forum, civil society organizations formed the CSO Aid and Development Effectiveness Platform in January 2009 to promote the implementation of the AAA and also build capacity for various CSOs to participate in the aid discussions locally.

The platform started with the publication of a seminal work¹ on aid volumes for Uganda, putting some empirical data in the hands of civil society. This piece of research helped the platform members to understand the amounts of aid that Uganda was receiving and its proportion in the national budget. Although the declared donor funding is 30%, it was clear that Uganda is receiving huge amounts of aid. The study established that the total aid (grants & loans) disbursements for

A Uganda Case Study (continued)

the period 1997-98 to 2008-09 amounted to US\$ 9.6 billion. This became a real concern and many organizations realized that this was not something to be ignored.

In March 2009, Ugandan CSOs attended a meeting organized by the Open Forum for CSOs in Africa. At that meeting CSOs heard about the consultations that were to be conducted across Africa related to aid and development effectiveness. The platform offered to work with the contact organization in Uganda, the Uganda Joint Christian Council, and conduct nation-wide consultations.

In other countries across Africa, civil society held one consultation at the national level. In Uganda we chose to hold consultations at regional as well as national level. In this way we were able to reach over 300 organizations in four regional meetings across the country. This was a very insightful process because the leading CSOs were forced to translate the discourse on aid and development into very simple concepts that were understandable for CSOs that were not interacting with the discussions on aid. The consultations generated feedback on what principles should guide Ugandan CSO effectiveness in development. Across the country CSOs now understood that aid was not just charity, but was a resource that brought with it responsibilities and often had to be paid back one way or another.

When we went to the Open Forum's first Global Assembly in Istanbul, it was clear that there were a lot of things we had in common with other CSOs across the world. Indeed for CSOs in Uganda, the NGO Quality Assurance Certification Mechanism (QuAM) has been developed. This is a voluntary internal self-governance mechanism for NGOs that aims to promote the adherence by NGOs to generally acceptable ethical standards and operational norms. The *Istanbul Principles* reinforced the need for Ugandan CSOs to roll out this process across the country. The *Istanbul Principles* also gave us the ingredients for how to define Ugandan CSOs in relation to other external actors like government and donors.

Within the African region, CSOs held a meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in 2011 as preparation for African CSOs for the Busan High Level Forum. This meeting aimed to bring together the work done under the auspices of various organizations working on the Busan agenda: the Africa Reality of Aid network, BetterAid and Open Forum. All these networks had several commonalities and it was more realistic for them to work together. CSO unity and consensus across the continent would allow us to build synergy and collective advocacy messaging for African governments. At the Nairobi meeting, it was also clear that African CSOs could work together to develop a collective set of messages towards Busan. These messages

A Uganda Case Study (continued)

become the *African CSO Position Paper to Busan*, which CSOs in different Africa countries used to engage with their governments. The paper took the BetterAid's global *Key Messages and Proposals* and customized them to the African context.

At the regional level, the *African Position Paper* was also well received. Representatives of African CSOs were invited to participate in three critical pre-Busan meetings organized under the auspices of the African Union in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. The *CSO Paper* was presented at meetings of the African Platform for Development Effectiveness (APDev), which was launched by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a department of the Africa Union charged by African governments with preparation of an African HLF4 position on development effectiveness.

Under the umbrella of APDev, the African Union established a Continent-wide coordinating and coalition building mechanism aimed at mobilizing and consolidating African participation and representation for HLF4. The aim was to come up with common positions on the inter-related themes of Aid Effectiveness and South-South Cooperation with Capacity Development as a core driver. In 2010, the first and second Africa Regional Meetings of APDev were convened in Pretoria and Tunis. In the third Meeting in Addis Ababa in 2011, participants agreed on the key messages, along the lines of the *CSO Position Paper*.

In the first meeting, African CSO representatives, linked with BetterAid in Africa, worked with the African Platform to develop common messages that would influence the inputs of Africa Partner Countries during the Working Party Meetings in Paris. These representatives also participated in subsequent meetings to develop an African position paper that the Heads of State would endorse. CSOs made sure that the issues raised in the CSO position paper were taken into consideration in the finalization of the paper for the Heads of State.

How well did CSOs engage at the country level? With hindsight and taking into consideration that Uganda had lost its status as a donor darling around 2005–2006, the country's politics had changed as it became very inward-looking, structured around party ideologies and positions. It became apparent that it would be very hard for Uganda to continue to engage in a global and country process that would result in the government moving towards a progressive agenda on development. So as civil society tried to engage quite intensively, they faced processes that could not work very well, especially because the government was not always willing to play a meaningful part in the processes. The absence of serious government interaction

A Uganda Case Study (continued)

with civil society was clearly a challenge for the issues being raised. While CSOs ended up on the government delegation for Busan, it was very disorganized as a delegation. At the country level, what does this experience mean not only for civil society but also for Uganda's development? While Uganda has a government that is not very clear about its understanding of development or its development agenda, yet Uganda still depends quite heavily on aid money.

Coming out of Busan, the vision for the future is mixed. There are many global agendas happening, with parallel important meetings in Durban, the G20 meeting and the UN post-2015 MDGs. It feels as if Busan in some ways has been crowded out. There are many other players at these various tables, including the emerging donors with different positions and agendas. It may be that CSOs should focus on the final years of the MDGs. This should be the rallying point for CSO discussions on aid and development effectiveness; and all government across the world should aim to meaningfully meet these targets. That is the vision CSOs should have globally.

Civil society needs to think carefully about what it wants to do as a sector. Whatever the approach, the focus should be on those processes that are going to progressively eliminate poverty around the world. CSOs will have to choose selectively where to get involved and how to invest its resources and energy. As we go forward, CSOs need to choose its battles carefully and to choose its strategies meaningfully. This will be its rallying points for future engagement.

1. Uganda National NGO Forum (2009) *Aid to Uganda: Financial Years - 1997/98 to 2008/09: Facts and Figures*, UNNGOF, Kampala

Chapter Seven

An Enabling Environment for CSO Development Effectiveness

1. An Enabling Environment for CSOs as Development Actors

In acknowledging CSOs as development actors in their own right in the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), donors and governments committed to “work with CSOs to provide an enabling environment that maximizes their contributions to development” (§20c). Yet despite this commitment, in the years following HLF3, CSOs working in both the North and South experienced and witnessed in many countries a significant deterioration in enabling conditions. These conditions were reflected in changing government policies and donor modalities of support for civil society, draconian laws and regulations, as well as targeted political repression. The Open Forum was clear from the outset that the capacities of CSOs to improve their effectiveness and to live up to the *Istanbul Principles* as development actors will be profoundly affected by the context in which they work.

A CSO enabling environment was an important focus for both the Open Forum and BetterAid in their country consultation processes, in CSO policy statements, and in WP-EFF multi-stakeholder bodies at the global level. The issues are addressed in the final section of the Open Forum’s *International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness* (entitled “Critical Conditions for Enabling CSO Development Effectiveness – Government Policies and Practices”). (See *Chapter Five*) BetterAid’s

An “enabling environment and “enabling standards”...

The “enabling environment” is the political and policy context created by governments, official donors and other development actors that affect the ways CSOs carry out their work. “Enabling standards” are a set of inter-related good practices by donors and governments – in the legal, regulatory, fiscal, informational, political and cultural areas – that support the capacity of CSO development actors to engage in development processes in a sustained and effective manner.

Key Messages and Proposals, with the Open Forum, called for governments to agree on “minimum standards for government and donor policies, laws, regulations and practices that create an enabling environment for CSOs”. Furthermore, these basic minimum standards must be in keeping with “international human rights guarantees, including freedom of association, freedom of expression, the right to operate free from unwarranted state interference, the right to communicate and cooperate, the right to seek and secure funding, and the state’s duty to protect.” (BetterAid 2011a, pages 6-7)

At the global level, the multi-stakeholder Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness (TT-CSO) was at the centre of collective efforts between 2009 and 2011 to establish minimum standards for an enabling environment for CSOs.

2. The Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment

The direct antecedent for the Task Team was the pre-Accra Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS). As noted in Chapter One, the AG-CS was created prior to Accra as a multi-stakeholder body within the WP-EFF to give advice on how to engage with civil society in the preparations for HLF3.¹ Chaired by Canada (CIDA), and unique to the WP-EFF at the time, it was composed of a majority of CSOs – three NCSOs, three SCSOs, two AWID representatives, three donors and three partner country representatives. The AG-CS worked closely with the CSO International Steering Group (ISG) to carve space for direct CSO involvement in HLF3 and directly influence the writing of paragraph 20 in the AAA.

Immediately following Accra, officials from CIDA, Sida and the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) met to discuss the AG-CS and its future. What would be useful was a mechanism that could monitor the implementation of the AAA paragraphs related to CSOs, follow up on the AG-CS recommendations, and support CSOs own efforts with respect to their development effectiveness (Open Forum). An informal meeting of donors, partner governments and CSOs from Open Forum/BetterAid was held in Stockholm in April 2009. From this meeting, the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment (TT-CSO) was proposed and then confirmed during its first meeting in Prague in June 2009. There was broad agreement that the Task Team would be most effective if it was a body inside the WP-EFF under Cluster A, which was subsequently accepted by the co-chairs of Cluster A on inclusive ownership and accountability (Switzerland and Tanzania).

The Task Team exhibited a diverse membership and a strong commitment to influence the Busan process. It built on the multi-stakeholder character of the AG-CS, with eight to ten CSO members drawn from Open Forum/BetterAid, 16 to 18 donor agency representatives (mainly officials from their agency’s CSO section) and three

partner country representatives (Mali, Senegal and Bangladesh). But different from the AG-CS, the TT-CSO was jointly steered by tripartite chairs with representatives from the Open Forum's GFG, from Sida, and from the Office of the President of Mali.

The Task Team saw itself as a platform that would:

- Support and encourage participation in the CSO-led processes (Open Forum and BetterAid) on aid and development effectiveness, including their pooled funding mechanism (See Chapter One);
- Promote multi-stakeholder dialogue, good practice, and peer learning on proposals for minimum standards for enabling conditions and donor modalities of support for CSOs; and
- Document progress and lessons on CSO development effectiveness and on the multi-stakeholder engagement in implementing the AAA commitments.

The Task Team interacted closely with the Busan process in several ways. Inside Cluster A, it ensured that its civil society messages had profile in Cluster initiatives aimed at WP-EFF members. It engaged with an informal Donor Group on CSO Aid and Development Effectiveness. These were donor CSO officials who met alongside the Task Team to share and better coordinate donor modalities of support for CSOs. It followed closely the work of the Open Forum and BetterAid coordinating bodies and their outreach programs. The TT-CSO was also a platform to profile other initiatives on enabling environment to inform and learn. These included the EU Quadriologue Process and Structured Dialogue with CSOs, ACT Alliance investigations of CSO policy space in several African countries, the Community of Democracies Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society, a joint donor DANIDA-led evaluation of CSO policy effectiveness in the South, and a policy survey by the DAC Peer Review secretariat on donor CSO policies and funding modalities, among others.

“If I look at the Task Team, the multi-stakeholder interaction was very good. Of course there was the perennial issue of engaging more partner governments in our work. We had only three representatives on the Task Team. I felt the multi-stakeholder dialogue was good with various characteristics that one looks for, such as mutual respect, people coming from a position that ‘we are all equal here’, receptivity to different ideas, and a recognition of each other’s constraints, which I feel is really important... We had some tense moments, but on the whole a really positive experience – everybody did a good job.” (Jacqueline Wood, CIDA, Interview)

“Looking at the Task Team, we used this opportunity very well. I think looking at the key messages that we produced as a Task Team, they are very supportive and managed to persuade even the most reluctant donor representative – well people did not endorse it per

se – but they backed it in the end. But maybe an area that we actually didn't succeed so well was to change the perceptions of partner governments... Perhaps we did not use all our possibilities or explore sufficiently all other venues for this to happen.” (Charlotta Norrby, Sida, TT-CSO co-chair, Interview)

“In the Task Team we needed to make more communications efforts, contacting countries individually and engaging civil society in these countries... This is why we did not have many partner countries. The people coming to the Working Party were not necessarily in charge of civil society for their government; they have a mandate to come to Paris to speak about other issues, not necessarily civil society. We did not necessarily engage in the right places with the right people.” (Modibo Makalou, Office of the President of Mali, TT-CSO co-chair, Interview)

3. Establishing Enabling Standards for CSOs through the Task Team

In March 2011 the Task Team agreed, as donors, CSOs and partner countries, on a shared (although non-binding) set of *Key Messages for Busan* that addressed substantive core issues in the enabling environment for CSOs. (See Annex J for a summary of its main points.) It produced a report on the evidence of progress and gaps in meeting the civil society-related commitments of the AAA.² The TT-CSO was not successful in putting the issues of CSO development effectiveness and enabling environment as an official thematic session in Busan. But it was able to organize a significant Side Event on these themes, co-sponsored with a number of CSOs present at Busan, including the Open Forum. This Side Event provided momentum out of Busan for further action to implement the commitments of paragraph 22 in the BPD.

Gathering the evidence. The Task Team spent the previous two years gathering and hearing evidence on implementation of paragraphs of the AAA relevant to deepening CSO roles in development. In 2011, the TT-CSO pulled together a review of this evidence that was submitted to the WP-EFF [TT-CSO 2011b]. It indicated a significant closing of legal and policy space for civil society as development actors. This takes into account both their roles in service delivery and in holding governments and other stakeholders, such as the private sector. Cluster A on ownership and accountability also drew attention to this research for the Working Party.³

The evidence for this reversal in enabling conditions since Accra is clear. CIVICUS, the global civil society platform, among other CSOs, has documented cases where governments have deliberately misinterpreted the Paris principles as ‘government ownership’ of aid to prevent aid from reaching independent civil society organizations, particularly those with dissenting views.⁴ The Task Team’s *Review of the Evidence* references the evidence from the Open Forum consultations. They revealed “that CSOs

around the world are increasingly vulnerable in the face of more restrictive financial and regulatory regimes, and that some governments are limiting CSO activities, with particular attention to those of CSOs seeking to influence government policy or to defend human rights” [TT-CSO 2011b, page 10].

In Busan, at the Global Civil Society Forum, civil society activists from different parts of the world spoke about the ways in which governments in both the global North and the global South justify restrictions on the rights and spaces for civil society. These justifications include increased counter-terrorism measures, questioning the legitimacy and accountability of CSOs, and using the vagueness of international norms, such as the Paris Declaration principle of ownership, to limit the independence of CSOs.

“All across the world, governments that are loathe to challenges by their own citizens are placing increasing barriers to the space that CSOs can and have used for their work as service providers and as voices for the voiceless... Governments are not shy to use the law to restrict CSOs or to use excessive policing methods to silence CSOs. This is clearly one of the challenges of our times... Since 2004, seventy countries have put forward or enacted regulations or policies that clearly restrict civil society’s work. These include, for example, restrictions on activities, particularly activities related to public policy and participation, restrictions on access to foreign funding, or bureaucratic hurdles.” (Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, TT-CSO Side Event, Busan 2011)

Establishing minimum standards. In March 2011, the Task Team came together for a two-day session At the Sida’s Centre in Härnösand in March 2011, Task Team members negotiated and agreed upon standards under five headings: 1) CSOs as independent development actors; 2) Enabling environment for CSOs; 3) Donors’ CSO support models; 4) CSO development effectiveness; and 5) Accountability and transparency [TT-CSO 2011a and Annex J]. As part of these TT-CSO multi-stakeholder negotiations, CSOs put forward essential areas for an enabling environment consistent with the *Istanbul Principles* and BetterAid’s *Key Messages and Proposals for Busan*.

CSOs had derived a set of enabling conditions from the contributions of hundreds of CSOs through the Open Forum consultations around the world the previous year. Despite their non-binding character, Open Forum and BetterAid warmly welcomed the Task Team’s *Key Messages* as a consensus involving all Task Team members in the Härnösand meeting. They are highly consistent with the synthesis of civil society minimum standards from the consultations and are directly referenced in the Open Forum’s *International Framework*.

“For the Open Forum, the relationship with the Task Team has been really fascinating and constructive. I have been surprised frankly. The Task Team as the venue for agreeing

on standards was not the usual donor-beneficiary relationship, but rather one of equals, which resulted in joint statements and policy work. That might be a first time ever.” (Amy Bartlett, Open Forum, Interview)

The Task Team’s *Key Messages* highlight agreement on key aspects of the enabling environment – conditions to strengthen transparent and inclusive policy dialogue, proposals for flexible donor support models that are consistent with support for CSOs as effective independent development actors, acknowledgement of existing efforts and progress in demonstrating CSO accountability, and a shared responsibility among all development actors to promote transparency and accountability (*see Annex J*).

Both the Open Forum’s *Framework* and the TT-CSO *Key Messages* agree that international human rights standards that enable people to organize and participate must underlie an enabling environment for civil society as development actors. CSOs participating in the Task Team were instrumental in negotiating this language in the TT-CSO’s *Key Messages*: CSOs maximize their contributions to development, where governments are

“Committing to and promoting an enabling environment for CSOs as independent development actors, both in law and in practice, at minimum in keeping with existing commitments in international and regional instruments that guarantee fundamental rights. These include: freedom of association, freedom of expression, the right to operate free from unwarranted state interference, the right to communicate and cooperate, the right to seek and secure funding, and the state’s duty to protect.” [TT-CSO 2011a]

CSOs from Open Forum and BetterAid came together with selected TT-CSO donor members to directly influence the negotiation in Busan on human rights language for CSO enabling conditions in the BPd (§22). Backed by BetterAid’s *Key Messages*, the Open Forum’s *International Framework* and the TT-CSO *Messages for Busan*, the CSO Sherpa was successful in adding “consistent with agreed international human rights” in direct reference to the enabling environment.

Nonetheless, CSOs remain concerned that they failed to have an explicit accountability framework in §22 that expands upon minimum standards for this enabling environment. The latter would have given further normative tools to CSOs to contest those governments that refuse to recognize CSOs as development actors in their own right, and which substantially abuse freedoms guaranteed by international human rights law. Despite these gaps, the acknowledgement of the Open Forum’s *International Framework* in Busan and the work of the TT-CSO on standards can form the basis for ongoing dialogue and monitoring at both global and country-levels to assess future progress in improving condition for CSOs as development actors.

“Human beings will not stop seeking freedom. They have sought it from the days of slavery; they have sought it in the civil rights movement; they have sought it in the women’s rights movement. It is the one defining thing that moves us all as people. Freedom is the enjoining struggle of humanity. ... I would never underestimate the human spirit to seek freedom...”

Maina Kiai, Busan Civil Society Forum Workshop

4. Future Directions for Engaging on the CSO Enabling Environment

Co-sponsored with a number of CSOs, the Task Team organized a Side Event in Busan focusing on post-Busan initiatives and multi-stakeholder approaches to strengthening the enabling environment for CSOs.⁵ The Side Event set the stage for a continuing multi-stakeholder initiative at the global level on the enabling environment for CSOs. The event highlighted issues and pointed to ways forward.

Maina Kiai, the newly appointed UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, was the keynote speaker for the Side Event. He drew attention to country-specific trends in restrictive CSO environments in both the global North and the global South. The ability to associate freely is critical not only for democracy, but also in his view for the sustainability of social, economic and political development outcomes. Consistent with CSO research, Maina Kiai has been documenting increasing barriers for CSOs in fulfilling their various roles as development actors across the world.

“Let me be clear about one thing. Governments themselves have a legitimate interest in knowing what CSOs in their country are doing... This can help avoid duplication of effort or undermining the responsibility of governments to deliver public good accessible to all... But there are decades of good practice that can be applied to address these issues in a way that strikes a balance and allows a democratic and pluralistic society to flourish, where individuals and organizations are not afraid to stand up, take action and responsibility for a brighter future.... Guidance is needed so that together, we can better understand the line between legitimate efforts to understand the civil society landscape in a country, and efforts that are too far reaching and that hamper civil society’s effectiveness as a force for positive change.” Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, Keynote, TT-CSO Side Event, Busan November 2011.

“In some cases where relationship between civil society and government is difficult, donors on the ground can be a kind of referee, or at least a go-between... A donor perfectly respects sovereignty when it engages sensitively in the debate between government and the civil society, or helps organize that debate.” (Hubert de Milly, DAC Secretariat, Interview)

Netsanet Belay (CIVICUS) in summing up areas for future initiatives at the Side Event called for a Post-Busan initiative on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment. Following Busan, the co-chairs of the TT-CSO invited interested partners from CSOs, donors and partner governments to meet in April 2012 to consider several possible areas of work for such an initiative: 1) The development of appropriate indicators for progress, particularly drawing from norms and standards embedded in international human rights; 2) Support for context-specific implementation of CSO’s own efforts to enhance their development effectiveness, including their transparency and accountability; and 3) Drawing together best practices and norms in relation to enabling environment commitments.

“The one dimension that is still very worrying is the enabling environment. There are things that are said or agreed in international conferences but they seem to have very little concrete influence on the ground. It may be even in certain cases that this sort of rhetoric has counter-productive effects at the national and local level, because expectations are raised that will find no positive response. Nevertheless, we are now entering a new stage in the process and hopefully things will turn to the better based on what we agreed in Busan.” (Philippe Besson, Swiss Chair, WP-EFF Cluster A, Interview)

In some respects, §22 in the *BPd*, as an outcome for Busan, provides a strong global normative framework for moving forward on CSO enabling conditions at the country level. Governments have agreed to “implement fully our respective commitments to enable CSOs to exercise their roles as independent development actors, with a particular focus on an enabling environment, consistent with agreed international rights, that maximizes the contributions of CSOs to development” [§22a]. However, CSOs will find it difficult to be true partners in development in the absence of more explicit commitments to a human rights framework by all development actors, not just from CSOs but, most particularly, from government duty-bearers.

Following Busan, CSOs also emphasized the importance of linking the *BPd* norms on civil society enabling environment with the commitment by all development actors to “deepen, extend and operationalize the democratic ownership of development policies and processes” [§12a]. As with all commitments in the *BPd*, the focus must be on the country-level implementation.

The institutionalization of fully democratic ownership with respect to the planning, implementation and assessment of development priorities could only

strengthen the conditions for CSOs at the country level. Indeed some CSOs argue that enabling environment issues will not improve in isolation of stronger institutional capacities and broader policy frameworks for development effectiveness at the country level.

“These things need to be strategically aligned in that we push both policy, institutional and legal framework changes to reflect the kind of enabling environment that we want... [Governments] must see us as unified in our positioning on development effectiveness or they will isolate us on various parts of this agenda.” (Vitalice Meja, Reality of Aid Africa, Interview)

Improvements in CSO enabling conditions at the country level will require changes to how CSOs are perceived as development actors by governments and donors. Sometimes, these changes can happen as a consequence of CSO collaboration on issues more in harmony with the particular interests of developing country governments. A case in point, perhaps, would be Uganda (*Case Study in Chapter Six*) where they highlighted CSO relationship building with government at the Africa Union in preparatory work for Busan. Several African CSO activists worked closely with government officials and ministers, demonstrating the value-added expertise of civil society. Emmanuel Akwetey cited a Kenyan Minister who came away from this experience with a different understanding of civil society as an example.

“The Ministers [at the meeting in Addis], especially the Minister of Planning for Kenya, was quite critical of CSOs and saw us as being used by donors. By the time we finished, he had changed his views and felt civil society should be taken seriously; the enabling environment issue should be sorted out. He became our friend in Busan... When he spoke, he had come into contact with civil society from Kenya, understood the dynamics, the force on the ground, and was really searching for ways in which some constructive relationship and collaboration could occur.” (Emmanuel Akwetey, Institute for Democratic Governance Ghana, Interview)

Country context, where governments change, is also a strong determinant of progress for enabling conditions. As one government official pointed out in an interview, some governments can collaborate easily and sometimes another government in the same country does not want to hear from their civil society. In some countries, the relationship has deteriorated considerably. But differing contexts may also assist in making progress. Undoubtedly, some governments may respond to the positive changes in CSO relations achieved in neighbouring countries, as long as these changes do seem to pose any threats to the stability of their governments. Again Emmanuel Akwetey makes the point,

“We probably want to see which countries had the potential or actually were engaging constructively and had enabling environments [in Africa], and therefore could be strengthened

further and serve as models. Because I think sometimes the African challenge is that Africans like to learn from themselves and they want to pick things that worked well from amongst themselves, because as soon as they see it coming from the North it is foreign.” (Emmanuel Akwetey, Institute for Democratic Governance Ghana, Interview)

Working through regional institutions like the Africa Union or NEPAD can also create a “neutral forum” to assist in building a positive interaction with civil society among governments with different degrees of enabling conditions.

While ownership and leadership by local civil society in each country is essential, several cases during the Accra to Busan period point to the essential ingredient of international solidarity. This solidarity, working with international development actors at all levels, was a critical factor in freeing civil society activists in Ethiopia, a country that is highly repressive to its human rights defenders and advocate. In Cambodia, civil society development actors faced an impending law that would significantly limit civil society space. Cambodian civil society adeptly amplified their concerns and demonstrated their strength by deliberately bringing the global Open Forum process into the country (hosting the second Open Forum Global Assembly).

“The proposed civil society law in Cambodia implies a significant shrinking of space for civil society in a young democracy such as Cambodia. CSOs seem to be the last force in the country for holding the government accountable. But it [the law] hasn’t happened [yet] because of the incredible power and movement of domestic and international solidarity and the tenacity of Cambodian civil society to resist this threat... We worked to educate our civil society [about the law] and tapped into solidarity from regional and global civil society and the international community.” (Borithy Lun, Cooperation Committee of Cambodia, Busan Civil Society Forum Workshop)

CSOs will be closely monitoring the changing conditions for civil society in many countries around the world, including donor countries, in the coming years. They will be doing so through the official global and country-monitoring processes associated with the Busan Global Partnership. But they will also be independently document conditions on the ground through CSO platforms and initiatives associated with the implementation of the *Istanbul Principles*. A continued multi-stakeholder Task Team will be a global space where donors, partner governments and CSOs can exchange information and views, develop collective actions and ensure that the new post-Busan Global Partnership at the ministerial level is fully informed about trends in enabling conditions and democratic ownership in line with §22 and §12a of the BPD.

Chapter Eight

Reflections on Busan: Shaping Post-Busan actions

Without any doubt, the post-Accra Working Party experience and the Busan HLF4 represented a profound and meaningful shift in civil society inclusion and broke new ground in multi-stakeholder civil society diplomacy. They provided a significant opening for BetterAid and Open Forum to advance a civil society vision and messages for fundamental reforms to development cooperation. Over the three years, CSOs were able to shape the discourse on development effectiveness, to participate in debates, and to advance proposals for specific commitments on the part of donors and governments.

CSO actors drew lessons from this experience as they contributed to the shaping of post-Busan architecture, to be finalized at the final meeting of the Working Party at the end of June 2012. This final chapter profiles some different perspectives on these lessons and on the implications of the Working Party experience for other multilateral processes, such as the UN Development Cooperation Forum.

a) Sustaining CSO engagement as independent actors for development

CSOs have continued a very active participation in the post-Busan global process to implement the Busan Partnership as a member of the Post Busan Interim Group (PBIG). They will be bringing to this process not only their distinct experience as actors in development, but also their commitment as advocates for fundamental and systemic changes for equality and global justice. Key issues and questions remain to be resolved. What will be the mandate, structure and processes associated with the Global Partnership? Will there be agreement and participation in a robust global and country monitoring frameworks to follow up on the commitments in the BPD? Can the BPD deliver the substantial changes required? What should be the relative priority of global processes for civil society intent on seeing implementation at the country level? And how should CSOs structure themselves to sustain their engagement without losing sight of their values and goals?

“To affect change and transform society one must engage with the present society. You don’t run away from it. Your engagement in society must be to challenge it to implement what human society is supposed to be. Therefore you challenge all actors to uphold human rights, to defend them, to fight for the poor, to remove all forms of injustice... For this process on aid effectiveness, it is not about the money or the promotion of aid; it is about how you reform or challenge the system of aid so that you remove the structures of intervention, of colonialism, of oppression and exploitation that comes with the money.” (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

“Given our tendency to wrap ourselves up with process and technical questions, I hope that we will achieve a political shift that really changes the vision of development and development cooperation to one where human rights based approaches are actually used concretely... We must be careful not to be co-opted by this system. It will require a long time, because these are systemic changes and will involve much more than the development effectiveness agenda.” (Anne Schoenstein, AWID, Germany, Interview)

“Civil society can help make the world a better place, but we aren’t the real actors with the power to change the world. That’s the crunch issue. We are depending on those actors [in government]... They have got issues in the effectiveness of their delivery that we have to deal with. How do we change them?... How do we change ourselves, how do we bring the message that we are becoming more effective?” (Borithy Lun, CCC, Cambodia, Interview)

“The CSOs must play their role [in advocacy] since the effectiveness of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation depends above all on a political dimension, not technical solutions, particularly in our countries.” (Metougou Agnes Adelaide, FORCE, Cameroon, Survey)

“Going forward we should acknowledge the diversity of civil society and use that diversity to strengthen our capacities. We should give confidence and a leading role to the many voices of different sectors; it is not one process against another process, but it is very many processes that we should combine. How can we construct a system that is actor-based, but give room for the different actors to come to the table with their own agendas, to support a common agenda, without losing their particular agenda... I hope that this would create another type of dynamic and a basis for a new unity.” (Jan Dereymaeker, ITUC, Interview)

“CSOs have the capacities to follow the debate and be part of it [the new architecture]... It means keeping their capacity to speak as one voice and to sustain their legitimacy by increasing their effectiveness in the field. If CSOs can show that they are really using the Istanbul Principles, that there is some credible monitoring, without complacency, it will help a lot ...” (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

b) Sustaining a focus on country-level implementation

A concerted focus on country-level implementation resonates with all development actors coming out of HLF4 – not too dissimilar from the rhetoric of the immediate post-Accra period. CSOs agree. But many CSOs from both the South and the North strike notes of caution about the extent to which they can contribute to progress at the country level in the absence of significant new resources for this type of work. They point to current gaps in capacities for CSOs, but also for governments. CSOs drew attention to the reality of the limitations of CSO engagements with donors and governments in many countries. Strengthening CSO platforms and sector networks at the country and regional levels will be essential for sustaining an effective CSO engagement with the post-Busan agenda at the country level.

“For us, it’s getting colleagues together at the country level and starting the conversations, with partner governments, civil society, and whoever else wants to be involved. That’s where I see the main engagement for civil society... coming in with the same constructive engagement, negotiating with a multi-stakeholder group on what are the key specifics to implement over what timeline... My biggest fear is that we will get caught up in the process around the global partnership and we engage ourselves in interesting discussions and meetings, but the implementation [won’t] actually happen.” (Paul Sherlock, Irish Aid, Interview)

“It should be about capacitating local and national CSOs to engage in the process of implementing Busan. It should not be about stand-alones. CSOs should engage in relations, interface with others, go for alliances and synergies...” (Philippe Besson, Swiss Chair, WP-EFF Cluster A, Interview)

“CSOs should place a lot of emphasis on national implementation, national socialization of ideas around development effectiveness, monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Principles, developing case studies where civil society is implementing good and/or innovative practice and accountability to strengthen our hand and demonstrate the distinct roles we play as development actors.” (Fraser Reilly-King, CCIC, Canada, Survey)

“So in the end, the work goes to the countries, to the executives, to the CSOs at the country level, but that is not easy because there are a lot of capacity constraints there.” (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

“More work at the country level would be fantastic – but where the money will come from and how to keep building a common understanding of issues and challenges for common positions, there is no blueprint.” (Jacqueline Wood, CIDA, Interview)

“I found the way we worked on the Ghana Aid Effectiveness Forum inexpensive compared to more formal structures. Getting people with such energy and ideas... These were not things paid for... But people did it. And they did it because they believed in the cause, because they thought it worthwhile, and they gave it what they could.”

Emmanuel Akwetey, GAEEF, Ghana, Interview

Strengthening CSO capacities at the country level an essential priority

“At the country level there is still a huge gap. The institutional framework is still not very strong for delivering development effectiveness... I think we [CSOs] need to work on our level of preparedness, particularly people of the South, because we had very few CSO people over-stretching ourselves, and you cannot be an expert on everything... We need to build more capacity to actively participate and we need to build an enabling environment for them to be able to engage with these processes.” (Vitalice Meja, RoA Africa, Interview)

“A lot more is needed to build capacities and structures and develop infrastructure etc. But certainly the volunteerism, the passion, the uncompromising pursuit of the ideal, that we are representing millions who couldn’t speak for themselves, human values and human rights that everyone must have: these are things lacking in the state institutions.” (Emmanuel Akwetey, GAEEF, Ghana, Interview)

“Korean civil society now has the challenge to do it right. Before Busan and the Open Forum process, Korean CSOs are mainly service oriented and charity based – they are doing good on their own terms... But now they realize there is an international standard we have to respect and now they need to develop their capacity and commitment with respect to this standard.” (Hyuksang Sohn, KoFID, Korea, Interview)

“In spaces for dialogue, NGOs should develop their partnerships with organizations of social movements in order to strengthen their position in relation to cooperation authorities. A role NGOs should develop and enhance is its capacity to improve the ability of social actors and movements to design and to manage projects. In this perspective, building alliances with professional associations and universities is also an important factor.” (Peru, Grupo Puesta Ciudadana, Latin America CSO Survey)

“Finally, I believe that these processes [related to Busan and the Open Forum] demonstrate that we must maintain a relationship of dialogue with governments, one that allows us to support good proposals while keeping enough distance to criticize the bad ones. To discuss with governments before hand in order to develop shared positions gives greater strength to

both, but it is also important to know in advance the issues where we disagree. This type of relationship will always put us in a stressful situation (support / criticism), but even so we must maintain it because it is what allows us to preserve our principles with autonomy.” (Red Encuentro, Argentina, Latin America CSO Survey)

Strengthening state actors and an enabling environment is an essential pre-condition

“There are still a lack of capacity for both non-state and state actors to properly monitor the quality and effectiveness of development cooperation (Acción Chile). The capability to do a detailed monitoring of the implementation of Paris and Accra is directly proportional to the creation of spaces for the dialogue, to the existence of feedback opportunities and spaces for civil society collective action. Thus monitoring activities cannot be assumed; they only take place as long as measures toward that end are secured in particular timeframes.” ((La Alianza Colombia 2012) (Rosa Ines Ospina and Ruben Fernandez, “A Synthesis of Lessons Learned and Conclusions from Latin America,” [Based on Regional Survey Questions in Spanish])

“We also need to strengthen the willingness of governments to engage with CSOs, particularly in developing countries... We need to continue to work on enabling environment issues, put all of these new openings into perspective, and give CSOs the right legal framework and institutional framework for structured engagement etc so CSOs can operate as independent development actors.” (Vitalice Meja, RoA Africa, Interview)

Working with donors at the country level

“I think CSOs need to consider using donor relations more effectively at the country level. Most donors are very positive towards issues of civil society, and the right of civil society to act freely and independently. But I think that could be used more by civil society itself, that is, the good will that exists at the country level. And I think also at the global level, CSOs need to push harder for an enabling environment and to work strategically towards that goal – perhaps through the task team if it is to continue.” (Charlotta Norrby, Sida, Interview)

“There are certain risks in the coupling of donors and CSOs at the country level... To balance that risk, we should also try to work with CSO coordination at regional level, to strengthen partnerships between CSOs across countries, with the disabling environment a regional issue that other CSOs are also addressing.” (Karin Fallman, Sida, Interview)

c) Civil Society living up to its commitments

Open Forum and BetterAid worked hard to achieve the BPd recognition of the outcomes from the Open Forum’s process – the *Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness* and the *International Framework*. There are already significant voluntary

efforts in many different countries working to relate these *Principles* to the practices of CSOs on the ground. In line with the BpD §22, donors and governments cannot revert back to using the *Paris Principles* or other aspects of the BpD to limit the legitimate space for CSOs as development actors in their own right. But on the other hand, how will CSOs measure their success in implementing the *Principles* and strengthen their accountability through voluntary mechanisms? Some see the need to strengthen CSO coordination at the regional level to provide capacity development for country processes to socialize the *Principles* and stimulate the country-level initiatives.

At the global level, can the *Istanbul Principles* help inform the future structure and ways of working for BetterAid? How do CSOs conduct diplomacy within the Global Partnership that is a legitimate expression of the diversity of CSO constituencies at many levels and with different points of view on the issues?

“People said before Busan that NGOs have done their homework and we should be vocal about that, but I always turned back and said, if donors came to us and said we have come up with principles, we have done our homework, we would never let them get away with that – great, you got something down on paper. But what are you actually going to do to implement it. We need to use the Istanbul Principles as a springboard for practical action.” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UKAN, Interview)

“There is a need to show evidence on improved CSO effectiveness. With this, the monitoring of the implementation of the Istanbul Principles is critical.” (Pauliina Saares, KEPA, Finland, Interview)

”[The goal of effectiveness] is achieved by encouraging new organizational cultures and new directions for interacting with other actors, leaving behind the perception that it is merely an issue of procedures, which tends toward bureaucratization. In this sense, CSOs must demonstrate their capacity for innovation and adaptation to changing contexts, searching for the best manner to insert themselves in collective action.” (Descro, Peru, Latin America CSO Survey)

“One aspect that was repeated is the need to take advantage of these new opportunities in re-politicizing our relationships with Northern NGOs. As the NGO Federation of Nicaragua said from their discussion with international NGOs, INGO practices are not always consistent with the [Istanbul] Principles when it comes to their relationships with national NGOs and local social movements.” (Rosa Ines Ospina and Ruben Fernandez, “A Synthesis of Lessons Learned and Conclusions from Latin America” [Based on Regional Survey Questions in Spanish])

Influencing future CSO modalities for promoting development effectiveness efforts

“For me it’s very important to have a global perspective for our very local and national discussions. It enriches the process and content of our debates because in many ways CSOs

tend to discuss among ourselves, and this perspective to have a frame of reference from other regions, other countries, other realities, is very good for us. This methodology of multi-stakeholder participatory processes is something very rich and very good for us.” (Ruben Fernandez, ALOP, Interview)

“We are legitimate actors on the global stage, but CSOs have to own this role. And what does that mean, how do we ensure that it is owned by everyone? Those that represent civil society in multilateral fora should be an accountable and legitimate voice for the sector. This will be a key aspect of the process moving forward.” (Amy Bartlett, Open Forum Secretariat, Interview)

“We already traced a successful path. It needs to be built upon... It needs to be more inclusive, not in terms of numbers, but in terms of feedback and diversity. That is an area that BetterAid can improve.” (Borithy Lun, CCC, Cambodia, Interview)

“In the future, I would like to see one of the missing links that was not so much present in this process, which was the region. To overcome the gap between the global and the national or local we need the regional because ... from the national platform to the global is too much.” (Anselmo Lee, KoFID, Korea, Interview)

“Seek ways to continue these cascades of national, regional and global consultations and meetings among the very diverse CSO actors. For us, this has been the key added value of the whole process.” (Bernd Steimann & Melchior Lengsfeld, HELVETAS, Switzerland, Survey)

“All that glitters is not gold... Busan marks a milestone for civil society in international cooperation. But we must organize ourselves to effectively manage the implications of Busan for us. We must demonstrate non-governmental diplomacy. You sit at the table, but things are not simple. We do not agree on everything, far from it.” (Aurélien Atidéglá, REPAOC, Benin, Interview)

d) Implementing reform in the context of dysfunctional global policy processes

The challenges for CSOs in pressing for change come not only from a dysfunctional aid system in which there are few incentives for change towards real and positive impacts for people living in poverty. But the challenges also stem from a broad spectrum of issues and policy initiatives on the global stage: how relevant are the Busan commitments in the context of G20 growth promotion strategies? What do the failures to meet most of the MDG targets and agreements to a new UN post-2015 framework mean for development effectiveness? And what about the expanding South-South Cooperation models, which are largely outside the Busan framework?

“The whole system here is poised to ‘screw up’ once again, but at a higher level of complexity and fuzzyness. So please help us, warn us, expose us.” (Philippe Besson, Swiss Chair, WP-EFF Cluster A, Interview)

“There is a great deal of dysfunctionality in the aid effectiveness agenda. We talk a lot about monitoring, but the problem is that monitoring does not capture the whole picture... Among issues [not addressed] is the question of incentives for behavioural change... The reason why implementation is so slow is not because of country governments, but because of donors at the country level have incentives not to change, and no incentives to change. ... They [other stakeholders in the Working Party] are looking to CSOs to change these incentives. Isn’t that crazy. The truth is that it is only the CSOs! But the problem is that in most countries, donors say they are not accountable to CSOs. The incentives to change should be official and that is why I propose the country review as one possible way forward.” (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

“We are now part of the game. But at the same time, we do not want to lose our identity. Our value lies in our critical thinking and the raising of issues, and so on. How do we continue to play these roles in this arena [Working Party] where there are different rules? As a global coalition, how do we define these answers,... to be proactive, to set the agenda, to influence the agenda? So long as we are able to do that, we will maintain our identity and our autonomy.” (Emmanuel Akwetey, GAEE, Ghana, Interview)

“Here in the UK, we know we have an agreement from Busan that was not as concrete as we would have liked. But what we can do... is effectively strengthen the agreement by making sure we have a strong monitoring framework and an effective governance structure to oversee that framework.” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UKAN, Interview)

Situating the BPD in the context of parallel global policy processes

“So this is our challenge now: [In Indonesia,] we cannot talk about aid effectiveness separately from the agenda of the G20. We cannot talk about financing for development without the financing perspective of the G20, or financing for infrastructure, or financing for growth in the G20. So we have to relate to these [Busan] commitments under the bigger framework that [the Indonesian government] now relates to in its policy priorities.” (Don Marut, INFID, Indonesia, Interview)

“Since Accra, there were hundreds of different things we got involved in, some of them highly technical, and probably not the most useful for civil society. As we go along we need to choose our battles carefully and to choose our strategies meaningfully; these will be our rallying points for future engagement... How can the Global Partnership strengthen our collective position as we move towards the end point of the MDG targets?” (Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Forum, Interview)

“I also believe that Latin American CSOs should make an effort to engage in South-South cooperation, which will require entry points for participation in discussions in regional integration where many of these policies for South-South cooperation will be discussed.”
(Red Encuentro, Argentina, Latin America CSO Survey)

e) Learning from the Working Party: Strengthening CSO inclusion in other multilateral processes

Irrespective of the policy outcomes, the inclusion of CSOs as full and equal participants in the Working Party process, the full transparency of documents, and CSO diplomacy in negotiating the HLF4 outcome have undoubtedly been significant achievements in setting multilateral norms and commitments. Can the lessons from an informal multilateral setting be applied to the more formal UN or regional policy engagements with civil society? Should the Global Partnership be more firmly rooted within the United Nations system?

“The formal inclusion of civil society would be something important to replicate in other processes. We make a lot of noise about how important and legitimate the UN is, but there is also a wide recognition that NGOs don’t have the same access and the same involvement in the UNDCF [Development Cooperation Forum] as they have had in the WP-EFF. Trying to use the example of the WP-EFF to try to leverage access in other processes is really important.” (Gideon Rabinowitz, UKAN, Interview)

“Let’s be modest. We have not changed the whole multilateral system. What we achieved is an informal gathering, a coalition of the willing, and this is why it works... And look: all countries and institutions want to be part of it.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

“The Busan process was a good example of how civil society, as a very engaged legitimate partner, can make an important contribution to development effectiveness. Diplomacy in the 21st century includes many more actors than in the past. Having civil society and the private sector engaged in these discussions is the future. But how to replicate the success of Busan in these other processes is difficult to see. But perhaps the DCF is a good place to start to build further this constructive engagement.” (Paul Sherlock, Irish Aid, Interview)

“I think there are some lessons... I think of the [Working Party] process where we worked on the technical aspects and the politics at the same time, with much of the discussion taking place in the guise of being technical discussions, so that all sorts of opinions can be voiced – nothing ever got thrown up to the political level until it’s pretty certain it’s going to work. We don’t end up with firm international treaties... but it means that you can make a lot of progress.” (Brenda Killen, OECD DCD, Interview)

“CSOs have the perception that making governments officially commit on something is enough to oblige them to implement it. But we know it is not true... Governments will only deliver on their commitments if these commitments are well known, if the monitoring is public, and if we talk about the monitoring results to inform public opinion. That is the only way to do it.” (Hubert de Milly, OECD DCD, Interview)

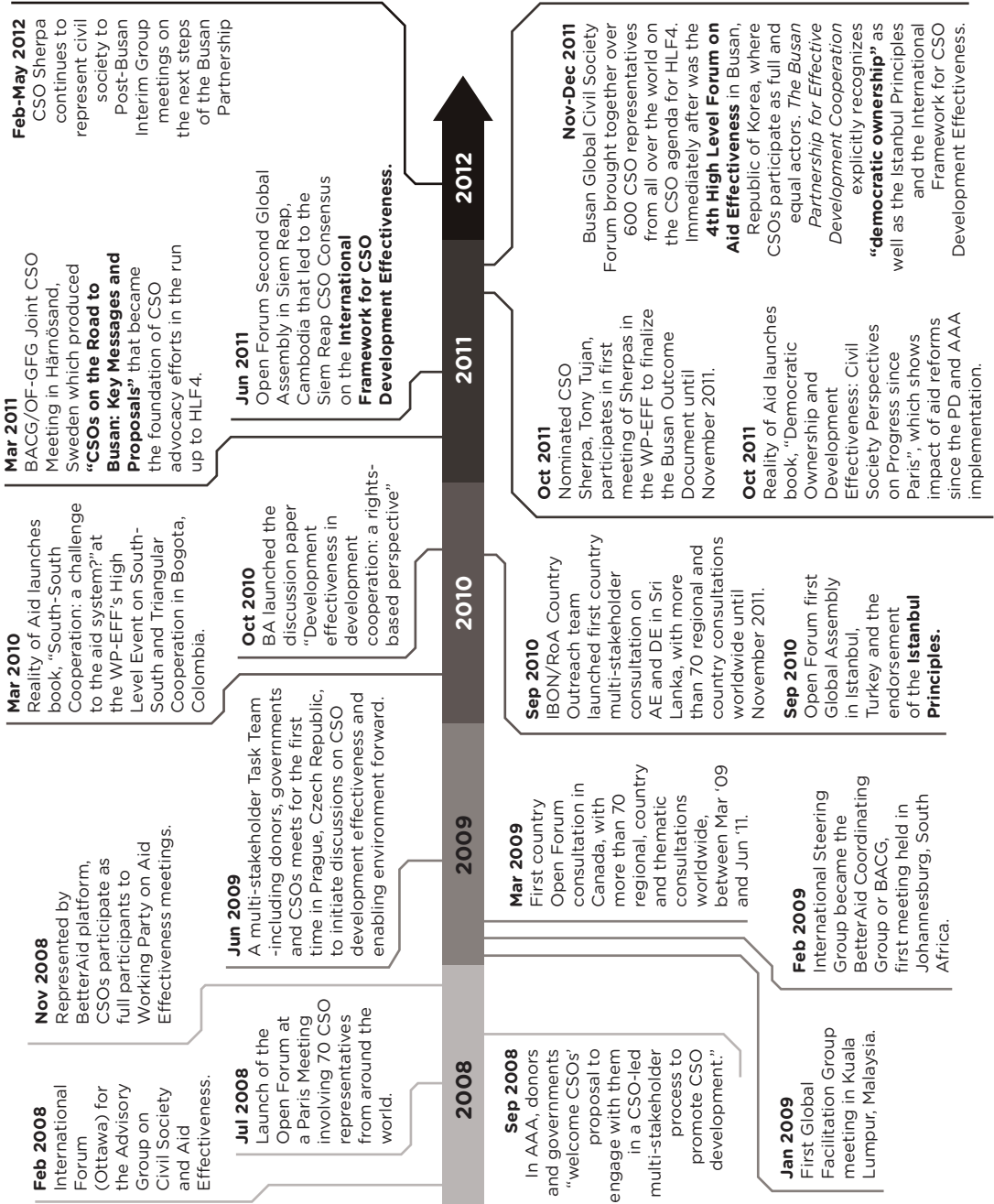
“You can present the UN as the ideal and therefore it is fine to say move [the Working Party or now the BPd] to the UN because at the UN there is some equality. But the reality is that the UN is not that. You are using the UN just to say that the OECD is not representative. But in reality the UN is also controlled by the powers... The UN is also in a flux of conflict between the global powers and the BRICS and the G77, who have achieved some momentum and strength.” (Tony Tujan, BetterAid co-chair, Interview)

Despite deepening cries of global finance, climate change and food insecurity, the response of the international community has been one shaped by profound incoherencies between aid and development policies and those policies that guide trade, investment, debt and climate finance. How might the global community begin to break free from the silos that have led to deadlock? With imagination and political will, the lessons from the “Accra to Busan process” could provide some interesting avenues to pursue. An undeniable lesson is that civil society organizations worldwide, as agents for democratic change, are crucial actors for tackling the crises that affect all humanity.

Given the political space, the enabling conditions and an openness to listen and engage on the part of governments, civil society present new opportunities for dialogue at all levels. Thousands of CSOs have been included in preparations for Busan and in reflections on their own roles as development actors. CSOs are ready to work with the principles and directions for reforms through the *Busan Global Partnership* and are willing join with others to realize change on the ground. Civil society brings a strong commitment to norms alongside a deep practical experience. Human rights standards, gender equality, social justice and environmental sustainability inform their proposals. Their experience lies in putting poverty reduction at the centre of their work, creating conditions for decent work, livelihoods and social services for poor and marginalized populations. But the key question remains: Are the political leaders from all sectors ready and open to continue, deepen and implement the commitments and directions they set in Busan?

Annex A

Timeline of key events and associated resources (2008-2011)



Annex B

BetterAid Coordinating Group Membership

BACG Membership, 2009

Northern CSOs

1. Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC)
2. CONCORD
3. European Network on Debt and Development (EuroDAD)
4. IBIS
5. InterAction
6. Trocaire
7. UK Aid Network (UKAN)
8. Women in Development Europe (WIDE)

Southern CSOs

1. Africa Network on Debt and Development (AfroDAD)
2. Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)
3. Coordinadora de la Mujer
4. African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)
5. Ghana Aid Effectiveness Forum (GAEF)
6. Green Movement- Sri Lanka (GMSL)
7. Least Developed Countries Watch (LDC Watch)
8. Official Development Assistance Watch (ODA Watch)
9. Network of West and Central African NGO platforms (REPAOC)
10. Uganda NGO Forum

Global CSOs

1. Action of Churches Together (ACT)
2. ActionAid
3. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)
4. CARE International
5. CARITAS
6. CIVICUS
7. IBON Foundation
8. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
9. People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)
10. Social Watch
11. Transparency International (TI)

BACG Members, 2011**Northern CSOs**

1. Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC)
2. CONCORD
3. European Network on Debt and Development (EuroDAD)
4. InterAction
5. UK Aid Network (UKAN)
6. Women in Development Europe (WIDE)

Southern CSOs

1. Africa Network on Debt and Development (AfroDAD)
2. Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)
3. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
4. Coordinadora de la Mujer
5. African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)
6. Ghana Aid Effectiveness Forum (GAEF)
7. Green Movement- Sri Lanka (GMSL)
8. Korea Civil Society Forum on International Development Cooperation (KoFID)
9. Least Developed Countries Watch (LDC Watch)
10. Network of West and Central African NGO platforms (REPAOC)
11. Reality of Aid - Africa
12. Uganda NGO Forum
13. Voices for Interactive Choice and Empowerment (VOICEM)
14. Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD)

Global CSOs

1. Action of Churches Together (ACT)
2. ActionAid
3. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)
4. CIVICUS
5. IBON Foundation
6. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
7. People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)
8. Reality of Aid
9. Social Watch
10. Transparency International (TI)

Annex C

Membership of the Open Forum Global Facilitating Group

GFG Membership, 2009

* Co-Chairs

Africa

1. AFRODAD
2. Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
3. Federation of Malian NGO Networks
4. Network of National NGO Platforms in West and Central Africa (REPAOC)

Americas

5. Asociacion Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promocion (ALOP)
6. Coordinadora Civil de Nicaragua
7. UNITAS

Asia

8. Arab NGO Network for Development
9. Asia Pacific Research Network
10. South Asia Network for Social and Agricultural Development

Europe

11. CONCORD
12. Czech Platform of Development NGOs
13. KEPA

North America/Pacific

14. ACFID
15. CCIC
16. InterAction

International CSOs

17. Action by Churches Together (ACT)
18. CARE International *
19. CIDSE
20. CIVICUS
21. IBON Foundation
22. Plan International

Sector/Movements

23. Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development *
24. ITUC
25. Peoples Coalition on Food Sovereignty

GFG Membership, 2011

* Consortium Members

** Co-Chairs

Africa

1. All Africa Conference of Churches *
2. Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
3. Collectif des ONG pour la Securite Alimentaire et le Developpement Rural
4. Network of National NGO Platforms in West and Central Africa (REPAOC)
5. Uganda NGO Forum

Americas

6. Asociacion Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promocion (ALOP) *
7. Confederacion Subdual de Tabajadores y Trabajadoras de las Americas
8. Coordinadora Civil de Nicaragua
9. UNITAS

Asia

10. Asia Pacific Research Network *
11. Arab NGO Network for Development
12. China Association for NGO Cooperation
13. Cooperation Committee of Cambodia
14. Korean NGO Council for Overseas Cooperation
15. NGO Jahon

Europe

16. CONCORD *
17. Civil Society Institute Georgia **
18. Czech Platform of Development NGOs
19. Nordic+

North America/Pacific

20. CCIC
21. Interaction *
22. Pacific Islands Association of NGOs **

International CSOs

23. Action by Churches Together (ACT)
24. CARE International
25. CIVICUS

Sector/Movements

26. Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development
27. ITUC
28. Peoples Coalition on Food Sovereignty

In 2010, UNITAS and the Czech Platform of Development NGOs served as Co-Chairs for the Open Forum GFG.

Annex D

**BetterAid Key Messages and Proposals for Busan
(in cooperation with Open Forum)**

A) Fully evaluate and deepen the Paris and Accra commitments through reforms based on democratic ownership.

1. Redress the failure to make progress on Paris and Accra commitments.
2. Carry forward and strengthen the Paris and Accra commitments through realizing democratic ownership in development cooperation:
 - 2.1 Establish democratic ownership as the core aid and development effectiveness principles.
 - 2.2 Give priority to inclusive multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.
 - 2.3 Use country systems as the first option.
 - 2.4 End policy conditionality.
 - 2.5 Fully untie all forms of aid.
 - 2.6 Implement demand-driven technical assistance.
 - 2.7 Address the unpredictability of aid flows.
 - 2.8 Orient private sector development for self-sustaining livelihoods.
3. Implement full transparency as the basis for strengthened accountability and good governance:
 - 3.1 Create and work with clear inclusive accountability frameworks at country and global levels.
 - 3.2 Adhere to and implement the highest standards of openness and transparency by all aid actors.

B) Strengthen development effectiveness through development cooperation practices that promote human rights standards and focus on the eradication of the causes of poverty and inequality.

4. Commit to and implement rights-based approaches to development.
5. Promote and implement gender equality and women's rights.
6. Implement the Decent Work Agenda as the cornerstone for socially inclusive and sustainable development strategies.

C) Affirm and ensure the participation of the full diversity of CSOs as independent development actors in their own right.

7. Endorse the Istanbul Principles and acknowledge the Open Forum's International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness to put these Principles into practice.
8. Agree on minimum standards for government and donor policies, laws, regulations and practices that create an enabling environment for CSOs.

D) Promote equitable and just development cooperation architecture.

9. Launch an inclusive Busan Compact at HLF4, which brings together specific time-bound commitments and initiates fundamental reforms in the global governance of development cooperation.
10. Create an equitable and inclusive multilateral forum for policy dialogue and standard setting.

Annex E
**Busan Partnership for
Effective Development Cooperation**
Selected Paragraphs (Headings Added)
(www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhlf4/)

South-South Cooperation

2. The nature, modalities and responsibilities that apply to South-South co-operation differ from those that apply to North-South co-operation. At the same time, we recognise that we are all part of a development agenda in which we participate on the basis of common goals and shared principles. In this context, we encourage increased efforts to support effective co-operation based on our specific country situations. The principles, commitments and actions agreed in the outcome document in Busan shall be the reference for South-South partners on a voluntary basis.

Interdependence and coherence of all public policies

9. Sustainable development results are the end goal of our commitments to effective co-operation. While development co-operation is only part of the solution, it plays a catalytic and indispensable role in supporting poverty eradication, social protection, economic growth and sustainable development. We reaffirm our respective commitments to scale up development co-operation. More effective co-operation should not lead to a reduction in resources for development. Over time, we will aim to increase independence from aid, always taking into account the consequences for the poorest people and countries. In this process, it is essential to examine the interdependence and coherence of all public policies, not just development policies, to enable countries to make full use of the opportunities presented by international investment and trade, and to expand their domestic capital markets.

Common principles for effective development

11. As we embrace the diversity that underpins our partnership and the catalytic role of development co-operation, we share common principles, which -- consistent with our agreed international commitments on human rights, decent work, gender equality, environmental sustainability and disability -- form the foundation of our co-operation for effective development:
 - a) Ownership of development priorities by developing countries. Partnerships for development can only succeed if they are led by developing countries, implementing approaches that are tailored to country-specific situations and needs.
 - b) Focus on results. Our investments and efforts must have a lasting impact on eradicating poverty and reducing inequality, on sustainable development, and on enhancing developing countries' capacities, aligned with the policies and priorities set out by

- developing countries themselves.
- c) Inclusive development partnerships. Openness, trust, and mutual respect and learning lie at the core of effective partnerships in support of development goals, recognising the different and complementary roles of all actors.
 - d) Transparency and accountability to each other. Mutual accountability and accountability to the intended beneficiaries of our co-operation, as well as to our respective citizens, organisations, constituents and shareholders, is critical to delivering results. Transparent practices form the basis for enhanced accountability.

Implementing the principles (operationalize democratic ownership)

12. These shared principles will guide our actions to:
- a) Deepen, extend and operationalise the democratic ownership of development policies and processes.
 - b) Strengthen our efforts to achieve concrete and sustainable results. This involves better managing for results, monitoring, evaluating and communicating progress; as well as scaling up our support, strengthening national capacities and leveraging diverse resources and initiatives in support of development results.
 - c) Broaden support for South-South and triangular co-operation, helping to tailor these horizontal partnerships to a greater diversity of country contexts and needs.
 - d) Support developing countries in their efforts to facilitate, leverage and strengthen the impact of diverse forms of development finance and activities, ensuring that these diverse forms of co-operation have a catalytic effect on development.

Civil Society as Development Actors

22. Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a vital role in enabling people to claim their rights, in promoting rights-based approaches, in shaping development policies and partnerships, and in overseeing their implementation. They also provide services in areas that are complementary to those provided by states. Recognising this, we will:
- a) Implement fully our respective commitments to enable CSOs to exercise their roles as independent development actors, with a particular focus on an enabling environment, consistent with agreed international rights, that maximises the contributions of CSOs to development.
 - b) Encourage CSOs to implement practices that strengthen their accountability and their contribution to development effectiveness, guided by the Istanbul Principles and the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness.

Annex F

IBON/Reality of Aid's Country Outreach Location of Multi-stakeholder Consultations

All national consultation reports on aid and development effectiveness can be found at: <http://realityofaid.org/index.php/country-outreach/Where-we-Work>. All regional consultation reports can be found at: <http://realityofaid.org/content/events-and-meetings>.

A. Regional Activities

Africa

Cameroon (7 country representatives), Kenya (8), South Africa (6), Senegal (14), Uganda (4)

Asia-Pacific

Fiji Islands (15), Lebanon (7), Philippines (16), Turkey (8)

Latin America

Colombia (11), El Salvador (10)

B. Country-level Activities

Africa (26)

Benin, Burkina Faso (2 consultations), Burundi, Cameroon (2), Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Niger, Nigeria (2), Mauritania, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Asia-Pacific (27)

Bangladesh (2), Cambodia (3), China (2), Fiji Islands, India (2), Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic (2), Laos, Lebanon, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines (2), Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Vietnam (2)

Latin America (9)

Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru

Annex G

Location of Open Forum Consultations

All national consultation reports can be found at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-open-forum-national-consultations.049-.html#region>. Regional consultation report (regional consolidation of national consultation main messages) can be found at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-regional-reports.051-.html>. Thematic consultation reports can be found at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-thematic-consultations.050-.html>.

Sub-Saharan Africa (18)

Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania (thematic), Uganda, Zambia (2 including thematic), Zimbabwe (thematic)

Asia, Middle East and North Africa (21)

Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan (2), Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, North India, Philippines (2 including thematic), South India, South Korea, Sri Lanka (2 including thematic), Tajikistan, Thailand (thematic), Vietnam

Latin America and Caribbean (20)

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia (3 including a thematic), Dominican Republic/Haiti, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico (2), Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru (2), Uruguay, Venezuela

North America and Pacific (10)

Australia, Canada (2), Fiji (2 including a Pacific regional), New Zealand, Tonga, United States (3)

Europe (18)

Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Georgia, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Macedonia (2 including thematic), Norway, Poland (thematic), Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine

Thematic Consultations (6)

CSOs and Gender, Trade Unions, International Civil Society Organizations, CSOs and the Environment, CSOs working in Situations of Conflict, CSOs working with Marginalized Groups.

Annex H

The Istanbul Development Effectiveness Principles

Civil society organizations are a vibrant and essential feature in the democratic life of countries across the globe. CSOs collaborate with the full diversity of people and promote their rights. The essential characteristics of CSOs as distinct development actors – that they are voluntary, diverse, non-partisan, autonomous, non-violent, working and collaborating for change – are the foundation for the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness. These Principles guide the work and practices of civil society organizations in both peaceful and conflict situations, in different areas of work from grassroots to policy advocacy, and in a continuum from humanitarian emergencies to long-term development.

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 girls' 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.

Guided by these Istanbul Principles, CSOs are committed to take pro-active actions to improve and be fully accountable for their development practices. Equally important will be enabling policies and practices by all actors. Through actions consistent with these principles, donor and partner country governments demonstrate their Accra Agenda for Action pledge that they “share an interest in ensuring that CSO contributions to development reach their full potential”. All governments have an obligation to uphold basic human rights – among others, the right to association, the right to assembly, and the freedom of expression. Together these are pre-conditions for effective development.

**Istanbul, Turkey
September 29, 2010**

Annex I

**Approaches to Strengthen
CSO Accountability Mechanisms
The Siem Reap Consensus on the International
Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness**

1. **The *Istanbul Principles* and the guidance in this Framework are the foundation** for accountability standards, but accountability mechanisms must also address broader questions of organizational governance.
2. **Voluntary mechanisms must be clear about who is accountable, to whom and for what.**
3. **Voluntary self-regulatory accountability mechanisms and their context-specific requirements are best developed with those whose work will be measured.** Primary stakeholders, where feasible, should be consulted. Accountability mechanisms should promote organizational learning and measures to address challenges.
4. **Codes of conduct and accountability mechanisms should be accessible to, and meaningful for, primary stakeholders.** To be fully accountable to primary stakeholders, communications must be clear, accessible, relevant and respectful of local context.
5. **Flexibility and adaptability** are essential for mechanisms to be realistically applied in diverse and often-unpredictable conditions.
6. **Mechanisms must model good practice and not impose principles and results measurements on others that the CSO does not accept for itself.**
7. **Existing mechanisms and lessons learned should be utilized to strengthen accountability at country levels, particularly through associations of CSOs.** In strengthening accountability mechanisms it is important to demonstrate credible compliance, avoid overlap, duplication, and high transaction costs.

Annex J

**Multi-Stakeholder Task Team on CSO Development
Effectiveness and Enabling Environment
Summary of Key Messages for the Busan HLF4***

- 1. Reaffirm CSOs as independent development actors in their own right and the importance of multi-stakeholder policy dialogue by:**
 - Reaffirming the recognition of the full diversity of CSOs as independent development actors in their own right.
 - Acknowledging that principles of aid and development effectiveness may differ between different development actors.
 - Reaffirming the importance of effective, transparent and inclusive multi-stakeholder policy dialogue on development between CSOs, developing and donor country governments.
- 2. Provide, promote and monitor an enabling environment for CSOs that maximizes their contribution to development by:**
 - Committing to and promoting an enabling environment for CSOs as independent development actors, both in law and practice at minimum in keeping with existing commitments in international and regional instruments that guarantee fundamental rights.
 - Building on existing multi-stakeholder dialogue and engagement to strengthen the enabling environment, in donor and developing countries, for enhanced CSO development effectiveness.
 - Assuring that the Paris Declaration principles, including ownership and alignment, are not in any way interpreted or applied to narrow the enabling environment for CSOs.
 - Pursuing collaboration among developing and donor country governments, CSOs and other interested stakeholders to develop indicators of progress on the civil society-related commitments of the AAA and of the HLF-4 Outcome Document, and incorporate these into formal aid effectiveness monitoring mechanisms.
- 3. Implement donor support models that can contribute to CSO effectiveness by:**
 - Strengthening donor aid effectiveness through policies and requirements that are appropriate to promote CSOs' roles as effective independent development actors in their own right.
 - To the degree possible, strengthening donor country CSOs' role to more fully engage the public in building broad-based awareness and action for aid and development issues.

- Inviting the WP-EFF and DAC, in collaboration with representatives of developing and donor country governments, CSOs and other interested stakeholders to identify good practice in donor support to CSOs and develop guidelines for their application.
- 4. Encourage CSOs' efforts to enhance their effectiveness and accountability by:**
- Acknowledging existing efforts and progress in demonstrating CSOs' accountability, including CSOs' recognition of the need for continued progress and commitment to actively strengthening the application of self-managed accountability and transparency mechanisms.
 - Encouraging context-specific adoption and application of principles of CSO aid and development effectiveness, including the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness, and CSOs' own ongoing efforts to implement and monitor these self-regulatory standards and tools.
 - Encouraging CSOs to work together and with other stakeholders to identify ways to better achieve and demonstrate development results and accountability, including through better coordination of efforts and mutual learning.
- 5. Share responsibility for accountability and transparency on aid and development efforts by:**
- Recognizing that all development actors have a responsibility to be accountable for their aid and development efforts, and share responsibility to promote each other's accountability.
 - Encouraging and supporting cost-effective efforts by all stakeholders through dialogue to improve accountability and documentation of CSO development results.
 - Encouraging efforts by all stakeholders to increase transparency and accountability of both official and non-official aid flows.
 - Encouraging efforts by all actors to improve transparency, including through timely and appropriate access to information on policies, budgets, and development initiatives.

* The full document is available from <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-multi-stakeholder-task-team,079-.html>.

Annex K

**Conditions for Successful Multi-Stakeholder Processes
Lessons from the Task Team on CSO Development
Effectiveness and Enabling Environment**

1. **It is important to be open to ways that we can change our practice as civil society advocates.** But it is also important to approach proposed multi-stakeholder processes with skepticism. Not every multi-stakeholder policy process will advance civil society's agenda. It is therefore important to be explicit at the beginning to clarify the purposes and test the degree of shared interests among all involved stakeholders. These purposes may vary among different stakeholders and may not be entirely clear at the beginning, but a shared common purpose is the foundation for the discussions, which will evolve from this purpose.
2. **In constructing the dialogue, acknowledged equality of all stakeholders is essential.** At the same time, it must also be inclusive of those with different interests; otherwise there will be no advancement of the agenda in the outcome. All stakeholders must respect difference and work with the recognition that no stakeholder group is homogeneous in its views or approach to issues.
3. **The process cannot be a closed discussion.** Each stakeholder group needs concrete ways to reach out to its constituencies. This outreach helps clarify priorities for common ground, creates legitimacy for the process itself, and provides the basis for socializing the outcomes. Accountability and transparency on the part of all stakeholders is essential for success.
4. **The process must be adequately resourced** with money to allow for essential engagement, with human resources to provide leadership on the part of each stakeholder group, and with appropriate venues for meeting that allow stakeholder groups to meet.
5. **Along with clarity of purpose, it is equally important to deliberately establish a clear mandate, realistic but ambitious objectives, and a workplan, based on an assessment of what is realistic for each stakeholder group.** The workplan for the process should not just focus on agreed outputs, but also create opportunities to build understanding and trust among the participants. Building trust allows eventually for joint work on possible outcomes that achieve the purpose and objectives for the process.
6. **Be prepared to explore innovation in approach,** particular in critical sessions that will strive for the maximum ambition in the outcomes. All stakeholders need to be prepared to look critically at issues that affect them. For example, the TT-CSO's Key Messages were negotiated among stakeholders, but would not have been possible without a well prepared outside facilitator. The leadership should be constantly reflective of process.
7. **Leadership is key and must be prepared to take risks.** For the best success, leadership should be multi-stakeholder. Leadership needs to be able to rise above stereotypes of stakeholders and understand the constraints that each stakeholder brings to the table. At

the same time, leadership must be prepared to take risks, even those that may alienate their respective constituencies if it results in failure. Success comes from accepting the possibility of failure, but designing process to maximize the chances of success.

8. **It is vital to demonstrate success for all stakeholder groups at the table.** Each of their constituencies needs to see an outcome that is relevant to the wider political interests that they represent. This establishes the sustainability and legitimacy of the outcome. Success in this regard is often driven by the political requirements of a high profile event, such as HLF4.
9. **The challenge is to make linkages with practices of the various stakeholders at the table** since at the global level all processes are by definition voluntary and all agreements are most often normative in character. This condition requires consideration of monitoring or at a minimum the continuous gathering of evidence of conditions shaping the goals and objectives of the process.

Brian Tomlinson

CSO Co-Chair, Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment.
Presentation at the 2011 Civicus World Assembly, Montreal

Annex L

Interviews for the Documentation Project

Civil Society

1. Tony Tujan, IBON / Co-Chair BetterAid
2. Anselmo Lee, KoFID, Korea
3. Hyuksang Sohn, KoFID, Korea
4. Ahmed Swapan Mahmud, VOICE, Bangladesh
5. Azra Sayeed, APWLD, Pakistan
6. Lyn Angelica Pano, APRN
7. Borithy Lun, CCC, Cambodia
8. Don Marut, INID, Indonesia
9. Richard Ssewakiryanga, Uganda National NGO Platform
10. Vitalice Meja, RoA Africa, Kenya
11. Emmanuel Akwetey, Ghana Aid Effectiveness Forum
12. Aurélien Atidéglá, REPAOC, Benin
13. Blanche Simonny Abegue, OSCAF, Gabon
14. Christine Andela, COSADER, Cameroon
15. Ivan Garcia Merenco, Nicaragua
16. Ruben Ferzandez, ALOP, Colombia
17. Peter Lanzet, ACT, Germany
18. Anne Schoenstein, AWID, Germany
19. Carolyn Long, InterAction, USA
20. Gideon Rabinowitz, UKAN, UK
21. Daniel Verger, Coordination Sud, France
22. Oumou Zé, CNCD-11.11.11, Belgium
23. Daniel Daniel Svoboda, Czech Republic
24. Jan Dereymaker, ITUC, Belgium
25. Paula Simonetti, ITUC, Belgium
26. Robert Fox, Oxfam Canada, Canada
27. Maliha Khan, Oxfam America and CARE International, USA
28. Alex Cote, International Disability Alliance, Geneva
29. Amy Bartlett, Open Forum Secretariat
30. Gale Nicodeme, Open Forum Secretariat
31. Roberto Pinauin, BetterAid Secretariat

OECD DAC

32. Hubert de Milly, OECD DAC, Paris
33. Eduardo Gonzales, OECD DAC, Paris
34. Brenda Killen, OECD DAC, Paris

Donor Governments and Developing Country Governments

35. Charlotta Norrby, Sida, Sweden
36. Karin Fallman, Sida, Sweden
37. Philippe Besson, Switzerland
38. Paul Sherlock, Ireland
39. Jacqueline Wood, CIDA, Canada
40. Modibo Makalou, Office of the President, Mali

Interviews in French were conducted by Henri Valot at Civicus. Interviews in Spanish were conducted by Ruben Fernandez and Rosa Ines Ospina from ALOP. A Synthesis was prepared for the 14 interviews / surveys in Spanish and is available in Spanish at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/accra-busan-sintesisaprendizajes-2.pdf>. In addition to the interviews, more than 65 CSO and donor respondents replied to similar questions in Survey Monkey.

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Endnotes

Introduction and Summary

1. An independent evaluation covering BetterAid and Open Forum, funded through a pooled funding mechanism (see Chapter One) is currently underway.

Chapter One

1. For a history of the CSO Steering Group including different stakeholder perceptions and analysis of lessons from CSO engagement with HLF3, see Wood & Valot, 2009.
2. Accessible, April 2012, at <http://staging.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-Initiatives/IDeA/Resources-on-Aid-Effectiveness/Better-Aid-A-Civil-Society-Position-Paper-for-the-2008-Accra-High-Level-Forum-on-Aid-Effectiveness>.
3. Most of the key agreements for structuring CSO post-Accra forward-action were taken at this Paris meeting of the ISG. Decisions were then affirmed, along with a comprehensive workplan, at its next meeting in Johannesburg in February 2009. It was at the Johannesburg meeting that the ISG was transformed to be the BetterAid Coordinating Group (BACG). See the unpublished minutes for each of these two meetings for details.
4. See the section on “CSO Effectiveness” in AG-CS 2009, pages 17 – 19.
5. A synthesis of the AG-CS consultations can be found at ccic.ca/what_we_do/aid_international_forum_e.php (accessed April 2012). Two AG-CS CSO consultation held in 2007 in Brussels with European CSOs and a meeting in Nairobi to bring the results of all the consultations together were particularly important in CSOs addressing issues in their own effectiveness within the Accra preparatory process. These meetings set out some initial issues and principles that might be considered important for strengthening CSO effectiveness as development actors. Other networks such as CIDSE and CCIC had also been discussing important principles that informed the quality of the work of CSOs.
6. See the background documents and the Report from this International Forum on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness: A Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue at http://ccic.ca/what_we_do/aid_international_forum_e.php (accessed April 2012).
7. A north/south selection committee ensured geographic, organizational type, gender balance in the selection of 85 CSOs invited to participate in this meeting.
8. The process and agenda for the Paris meeting was developed by a preliminary Facilitation Group that included APRODEV, ACFID, BOND, CARE International, CCIC, Concord, Coordination Sud, IBON Foundation, and ITUC.
9. See Open Forum, 2008b, for a Progress Report following the Paris meeting, which sets out most of these assumptions and directions. This Report was distributed widely by CSOs at the

Accra High Level Forum. While the AAA recognized the CSO-led process, it is important to realize that the Open Forum's existence does not derive from the AAA, but CSOs own planning and efforts prior to Accra.

Chapter Two

1. In Busan BetterAid and the 300 CSO delegate represented and came out of both the BetterAid and Open Forum processes. BetterAid was seen to be inclusive of both processes in relation to its advocacy for the *Key Messages* in the Busan agenda.
2. The Open Forum also produced some toolkits to assist CSOs in implementing the Istanbul Principles, collecting existing experiences and resources for the various principles, as well as proposing ways to advocate for a more enabling environment. See the Key Documents list for access to these Toolkits.

Chapter Three

1. For more information on IATI see <http://www.aidtransparency.net/>
2. See <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/dcf/index.shtml> for information on the Development Cooperation Forum.
3. Several Building Blocks were profiled during the High Level Forum as areas for multi-stakeholder commitments to specific actions for implementation. These were Transparency, Results and Accountability, Managing Fragmentation, South-South and Triangular Cooperation, Fragile States and Climate Finance, Effective Institutions and Policies, and the Private Sector. Many of these sessions were organized by the relevant active Clusters and Task Teams.
The BACG proposed a number of Building Blocks that were not taken up, including CSO Enabling Environment, Rights Based Approaches, Inclusive Growth, Development Cooperation Architecture, and Gender and Development. The last one, while not adopted as a building block session, became a special session organized by the United States, Korea, UN Women and the World Bank, with the presentation by Hillary Clinton of a Gender Action Plan, which was critiqued by CSOs as limited and misguided. The BACG was more successful in translating their building block proposals as “thematic sessions”, which included an important session on Rights-Based Approaches, but also Ownership and Accountability, and Aid Predictability and Transparency.
A summary of the outcomes of the various sessions at HLF 4 is available at http://www.oecd.org/document/12/0,3746,en_2649_3236398_46057868_1_1_1_1,00.html
4. The Optional Module on Broad-based Ownership was completed by only 13 countries, of which half did not answer all the questions in this Module (17%), and the Optional Module on Gender Equality was completed by 23 countries (30%) out of 78 countries and territories that participated in the Survey.
5. Quotations are from the revised terms of reference for this study.
6. Inasmuch as the Busan Outcome Document explicitly reaffirms the unmet commitments of Paris and Accra, it could be argued that the Accra commitment on conditionality stands.

However the very limited progress to date on this commitment, and even transparency on conditions, and the politics of this Task Team make it evident that these issues are off the table for many donors.

7. The *Bogota Statement on South-South Cooperation* and the Case Studies can be found at http://www.oecd.org/document/51/0,3746,en_2649_3236398_43385523_1_1_1_1,00.html.
8. The selection of the 300 delegates for HLF4 was done through regional nodes linked to the BACG against criteria that balanced regional representation, types of organizations, gender and expertise. The BACG had an oversight group that tried to assure adherence to these criteria for the delegation.

Chapter Five

1. The Consortium members were respectively, the Asia Pacific Research Network, the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Latin American Association of Development Organizations, InterAction (the US platform), CONCORD (the EU platform and fiscal agent for the Open Forum) and Civicus (a global CSO platform). After the first year, because of human resource constraints, Civicus withdrew from the Consortium. Consultations with INGOs were facilitated directly by the Secretariat through the Berlin Civil Society Centre.
2. See the relevant documents for these initiatives at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-csos-activities,201-.html>

Chapter Six

1. See for example, ACT Alliance, 2011, ITUC 2011b and Schoenstein 2011.
2. The outcomes of these workshops can be found at <http://www.realityofaid.org/country-outreach/index/About-the-Country-Outreach-Program>, under “where we work”.
3. See IBON International, 2011b, 2010 and 2009.

Chapter Seven

1. A review of the history of the AG-CS can be found in Wood and Valot, “Strengthening Civil Society’s Role and Voice: Reflections on CSO Engagement with the Accra Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness”, CCIC, Civicus, IBON Foundation. See also AG-CS, “Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness: Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations”, and Wood and Lavergne, “Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness: Exploration of Experience and Good Practice”. All documents accessed April 2012 at http://ccic.ca/what_we_do/aid_dev_effectiveness_e.php.
2. Documents relating to the Task Team, including its “*Key Messages for Busan*” and its “CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment: A Review of the Evidence”, September 2011, can be accessed at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-multi-stakeholder-task-team,079-.html>.
3. Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, Cluster A – Ownership and Accountability, “Strengthening

Ownership and Accountability: A Synthesis of Key Findings and Messages”, produced for the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4), September 2011, page 17, accessed April 2012 at <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/public-pub.sector-reform-decentralisation/document/oecd-2011-strengthening-ownership-and-accountability-synthesis-key-findings-and-messages-pr>.

4. Mandeep Tiwana and Netsanet Belay, *The Clampdown is Real!*, Civicus, December 2010, pages 4 and 7, accessed April 2012 at <https://www.civicus.org/en/news-and-resources/reports-and-publications/234-civil-society-the-clamp-down-is-real>.
5. This Busan Side-Event was coordinated with Action of Churches Together - Alliance, CIVICUS, UNDP Centre of Governance, CIDSE, Alliance 2015, the Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness and the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law.

At the end of November 2011, more than 300 civil society organizations gathered in Busan where they visibly influenced and worked with other stakeholders to shape the outcomes of the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

These efforts were the culmination of three years of significant CSO engagements since Accra to shift the discourse from technical aid effectiveness towards a more holistic goal of development effectiveness.

This book is an attempt to document CSO efforts and contributions towards this important change through the BetterAid platform and the Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness.

It describes not just the events in Busan and in the lead-up to HLF4. It also documents different perceptions of what happened and its impact from the perspective of participants.