



## Principles in the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF Programming process

### Briefing Paper on the Programming and Implementation of European Community Aid

The programming of European Community aid to developing countries is underway. This follows the adoption of a new policy towards all developing countries – the European Consensus on Development – and the agreement on new financial instruments including the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI), the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF10).

The challenge is to ensure that the commitments made by Europeans in this new policy and these new financial instruments, alongside the EU's commitment to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals are respected in the programming process and in implementation of European Community aid.

The following three principles are of paramount importance in the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF programming process, and it is these to which we draw your attention and set down our concerns:

- **Ownership:** concerns about imposed priorities and additional conditionalities,
- **Participation:** concerns about the absence of National parliaments and civil society in the process,
- **Prioritising people's needs and rights:** concerns that governance and competitiveness will 'crowd out' the necessary focus on women's rights, health and education.

As the largest donor in the world, the EU has a significant responsibility to ensure that in the design and implementation of its programmes across the developing world, respect for existing policies and agreements underpinning a true partnership in development is maintained and nurtured.

**Whilst supporting ratification of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF, we call for this ratification to be accompanied by a commitment to pursue every effort possible to ensure the principles of ownership, participation and the prioritization of people's needs and rights are respected and upheld in this programming process.**

**Ireland's engagement in the scrutiny of the draft Country Strategy Papers is crucial. We support efforts already made to ensure EU programming of aid is in line with commitments to and agreements with developing countries across the world. We ask that these efforts be strengthened and we call on the Select Committee on European Affairs:**

1. to take note of the spending priorities proposed by the Commission under EDF10,
2. to seek clarity and consistency between the commitments Europe has made to the principles set out above – ownership, participation and the prioritization of people's needs and rights - and the detail within the country strategy papers proposed under EDF10, and
3. to call for concrete measures – including those outlined below - to be put in place in order to address inconsistencies in the process as it moves forward.

Under the three principles set out above, there are a number of issues we would like to draw your attention to:

√ **Ownership:**

- In terms of the consultation undertaken by the Commission in developing countries, there is growing evidence that this process has not facilitated true ownership. According to several ACP ambassadors, regional seminars did not represent true dialogue, but were in some cases more a prescriptive outline by the European Commissioner for Development, Louis Michel of the EU's priorities as a donor. ACP countries have been and are being told that their **priorities should be limited to five areas of importance for the EC** (with a strong emphasis on governance and competitiveness, to the detriment of sectors such as health, education and, in some cases, rural development).
- Part of the money originally earmarked for ACP countries will be allocated only on **condition that the country puts in place governance measures** according to the Commission's identified criteria (governance profile and assessment grid). In addition to what could be viewed as more consensual criteria, for example relating to human rights and democracy, the criteria and subsequent measures include management of migration and readmission of illegal migrants, the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and private sector-friendly policies (linked to the EPAs). This raises the prominence of European economic and geopolitical interest within the programming process and once again undermines the principle of ownership.
- In certain countries (e.g. Jamaica<sup>1</sup>) a draft CSP has been elaborated after a long transparent and participatory process (which included parliament, EC delegation, NAO and civil society). This draft was sent to the EC headquarters in Brussels and **the Commissioner did not accept the outcome of the consultation**. This is inconsistent with the principle of ownership.
- In summer 2006, the European Commission decided **to cut a set of programmes in a number of countries** under the 9th EDF<sup>2</sup>. This decision was made with no consultation or information sharing. Surprisingly, these countries are very low on the Human Development Index and are already experiencing difficulties in implementing programmes. Rather than providing additional support and capacity to the partner governments, development aid is being cut. Most ACP governments are not yet aware of these decisions but will be seriously restricted if the planned and programmed funds do not arrive. The EU cannot claim to promote ownership and partnership on the one hand and act in such a unilateral way on the other.

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<sup>1</sup> Speech by Ambassador Coye, 8th November 2006

<sup>2</sup> Unofficial statistics from the European Commission show that, inter alia, Central African Republic, Burundi, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Angola, Tanzania, Eritrea, Guinea Conakry, Togo, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Benin, Senegal, Madagascar and Jamaica will receive less money than foreseen because some of their programmes will be cut (European Commission, 2006)

## √ Participation

- Information coming from ACP civil society suggests that there has been little real engagement of civil society and national parliaments in the process so far and that, in general, there appears to be even less effective involvement in the current programming phase than in the previous phase for the 9th EDF<sup>3</sup>.
- EC delegations seem to have rarely played a proactive role to involve civil society in a representative and consistent manner.
- The lack of transparency in the process both in country and in Brussels (Commission) has further undermined the ability of civil society and national parliaments to participate.

In order to work towards greater Ownership and Participation, *the EC and national governments should:*

- *establish the necessary mechanisms to allow for a stable and sustainable schedule of consultations for the entire duration of the CSPs, including mid-term and end of term reviews;*
- *provide adequate and appropriate time and resources to engage national parliaments and civil society; facilitating the real engagement of civil society in local and rural areas, far from the capital;*
- *supply the necessary documentation to stakeholders in a timely fashion so that they can prepare their input and;*
- *ensure proper reporting back to stakeholders on the results of the consultations, including the draft documents.*

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<sup>3</sup> Responses from civil society actors, collected by the CONCORD Cotonou Working Group, 2006

√ **Prioritising people's needs and rights**

- Spending on health and education is being identified by most of our ACP colleagues as the main priority. However, based on the EC Issues Papers (which guided the drafting of CSPs), the number of CSPs to focus on education would decrease from 6 per cent under the 9th EDF to 2 per cent under the 10th, and CSPs focused on health would decrease from over 4 per cent under the 9th EDF to 2 per cent under the 10th. The Commission's claim that education and health will be addressed under general budget support (GBS) requires serious investigation and analysis.

*Robust mechanisms and monitoring tools must be put in place to ensure that resources channeled through this aid modality genuinely benefit human and social development.*

- The EC has decided that gender equality cannot be a cooperation sector in itself in the 10th EDF CSPs but that it can only be promoted through mainstreaming. This is problematic as it makes it more difficult to assess the inclusion of gender equality objectives issues and will discourage the inclusion of women-specific actions in CSPs.

*All draft CSPs should be screened to see whether the EC programming guidelines on gender equality have been implemented. Notably, every CSP should contain a gender analysis detailing the problems related to gender inequality identified in consultation with local actors, including parliament, civil society and women's organisations, and the proposed response strategy should contain mechanisms and actions to address the identified problems with indicators and targets. If this is not the case, development interventions will have very limited impact on poverty reduction, gender equality and women's rights*

*Concern Worldwide has worked with civil society actors across the EU and in a range of developing countries to produce a report which provides further evidence and background to the points set out in this briefing...*

*"We decide, you 'own'"...*

*is available on-line and in hard copy.*

*For copies of this report and any further information, please contact:*

*Olive Towey, External Relations, Concern Worldwide*

*T: +353 1 417 8044*

*E: olive.towey@concern.net*