

Global Policy Forum on Development Meeting Brussels, Belgium



20-22 March 2018

More than **90 representatives** of civil society organisations, local authorities, the private sector, EU Member States and EU institutions gathered in Brussels (Belgium) from 20 and 22 March 2018 for the 6th Global Meeting of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD).

Welcome speeches

Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development opened the meeting by outlining the recent achievements of the EU in international cooperation: the adoption of the revised European Consensus on Development, which emphasises the important role of local authorities and civil society organisations: "Without your knowledge, experience and resources, none of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is within reach." He also underlined that we should move from a "whole-of-government to an all-of-society approach" and that all partners need to uphold their principles of good governance, democracy and the rule of law, and efforts on accountability and transparency need to be improved.



Maria Theresa Lauron, Chair of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness and PFD Civil Society Organisations Co-Chair, stressed the importance of the work of activists and human rights defenders in the context of both a shrinking civil society and deepening inequalities. She called for PFD members to engage in

discussions, addressing the systemic problems contributing to poverty to move towards a future where "no one is left behind." **Donatus Njong Fonyuy**, Mayor of Kumbo, Cameroon and PFD Local Authorities Co-Chair, underlined the importance of localising development: "We must build the capacities of Local

Authorities to grow development from the bottom-up.” Building links between civil society organisations, local and central governments and actively involving them in decision making processes and in policy implementation is the only way to make the SDGs truly sustainable. He also praised the role of the EU in strengthening an enabling environment through its financial support to local authorities.

Enabling Environment

During this session, the panel exchanged views on the conditions under which civil society organisations and local authorities operate and discussed how to encourage an enabling environment.

Nazrene Mannie, Board Member, Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), spoke about the role of business organisations as social actors, co-responsible for the quality of civil society space in a country. She mentioned the BUSA ethics charter which includes the eradication of corruption and enhancement of transparency in the private sector. According to her: “prosperity for all is not about the 1%, but it is about moving people out of poverty.”



Govind Kelkar, Director, Landesa Rural Development Institute and Senior Advisor, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, outlined the major barriers women and other marginalised groups are facing in the Asia-Pacific region. She also stressed that despite being a challenge, the shrinking space has led to a more active civil society in the region.



Claire Frost, Programme Manager at the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, called for a decentralisation that allows LAs to deliver their responsibilities and reminded the audience of the necessary financial and human resources that are needed in this process. More importantly, she stressed that LAs should no longer be considered “agents of enforcement but development actors that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.”

Rosário Bento Pais, Head of Unit for Civil Society Organisations and Foundations at the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) of the European Commission (EC), lamented the increasingly shrinking space available to non-state actors, but noted that civil society had never been as vibrant as today. “While the EU does not have the silver bullet to solve the issue of shrinking space, we have multiple programmes and tools to implement programmes promoting civil society organisations/local authorities activities which encourage an enabling environment,” she stressed.

Migration

Louise Arbour, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on International Migration delivered a keynote speech outlining the ongoing preparations of the Global Compact for Migration which aims to address all humanitarian, developmental and human rights-related issues. “Migration calls for policy interventions and responses that are inclusive, people-centred and sustainable,” Ms Arbour said. While the final document will not be legally binding, it represents an efficient

policy framework on migration and may encourage more powerful legal instruments in the future.



Policy coherence for development

During this session, the panel examined how the implementation of the **EU aid for trade strategy** can help generate sustainable development impacts, alongside the **EU trade (Trade For All) strategy**.

Marita Gonzalez of the Confederación General de Trabajadores de Argentina, stressed the fact that implementing the concept of “leaving no one behind” is not just an ethical obligation but the only way aid for trade can be made to work. She argued that trade is not a goal in itself but a tool for development, stressing the importance of keeping social protection policies at the centre of the development agenda. In addition, “civil society needs to be involved in the discussions, for example in the current EU-Mercosur negotiations.”

Isabelle Brachet, EU Advocacy Advisor at ActionAid, spoke about the need to rebalance the economic, environmental and social elements of globalisation to ensure a fairer trade policy. She criticised that “insufficiently regulated trade and liberalisation has created more inequalities, in particular gender inequalities.” Further, she called for placing the goal of poverty reduction at the heart of any trade policies.

Fatoumata Niang Niox, of the Conseil National du Patronat du Sénégal, agreed that any prosperity resulting from trade be equally distributed, in particular among the local workforce. She regretted that in the context of many infrastructural development projects, the implementing

companies provide their own workforce rather than investing in the skills and economic development of the local communities.

Greg Munro, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, underlined the role of cities as creators of enabling environments for SMEs. They also lay the foundations for coherence in trade. Local authorities contribute to the generation of employment, local development and growth as well as long term sustainability and in the end “it is about people, not goods.”

Axel de la Maisonneuve, Deputy Head of Unit for Private Sector and Trade at DG DEVCO of the EC, presented the updated EU’s aid for trade strategy. He shared some good practice examples of the ongoing 3,000 aid for trade operations. In Mozambique, for example, the construction of a tarred road in the North East of the country has considerably increased access to healthcare and education and has opened new trade opportunities for the local population. He also underlined that we “need to know where goods and services come from and how they are produced. They should always be produced in line with our values.”

Innovative Development Assistance

This session focused on new financial instruments like the European External Investment Plan (EIP) and the question of how the blending of Official Development Assistance (ODA) with private and public loans can contribute to achieving the SDGs.

Francesca Raimondi, of the Secretariat for the EIP at DG DEVCO of the EC presented the objectives of the EIP, which combines blending with financial guarantees to encourage business actors to invest in fragile contexts. The tool is designed to leverage additional investment and to create employment, especially for women and young people. The thematic priorities of the EIP are sustainable energy and connectivity; SMEs; sustainable cities; sustainable agriculture; and digital for development.

Patrick Develtere, Principal Adviser for European Social Policy, European Political Strategy Centre, stressed the importance of a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, both in the EU and Southern countries, in order to achieve the SDGs. He further encouraged academia, trade unions and employers’ associations to

engage in North-South-cooperation activities to ensure the exchange of know-how and good practices.

Hanna Saarinen, EU Policy Advisor at Oxfam gave a civil society perspective on the EIP and questioned whether it was the best way to reduce poverty. She also raised doubts as to whether the EIP is suitable in fragile countries: "Private finance blending must go to countries in which private investors want to invest with respect to the rule of law, functioning public institutions, existing infrastructure and security." She called for greater civil society involvement in the design of the EIP and for its scope not to be expanded until its positive impact on most marginalised groups has been demonstrated.

Peter Knip, Director, International Cooperation Agency of the Association of The Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International), stated that while the private sector had an important role to play in reaching sustainable development, it would not be able to do this without working with local authorities. He called on the EU not to focus the EIP exclusively on mega cities, but to also consider small and medium-sized cities, which is where most of urban growth is happening nowadays.

local level as the main challenge faced by his municipality. The identification of new sources of funding is, however, complicated by the fact that the private sector lacks trust in the governance system, including at local level. To activate better resource mobilisation, actors from the entire spectrum of civil society need to be engaged.

Charlie Martial Ngounou, President of Afroleadership, stressed the importance of local ownership to mobilise resources ("tax citizenship" and increased citizen trust in the use of their monies), once again underlining the key role that local authorities play in sustainable development. He added that to ensure sustainability and face the challenges of urbanisation, investments in cities have to go beyond the horizons of short-term calls for proposals and grants, to look at the medium- and long-term.

Justine Palermo, Investment Officer at Inpulse, stressed the role of the private sector in promoting a social and solidary economy. This can only be achieved when financing is designed with a social impact in mind and when projects are developed and implemented in partnership with a wide range of civil society actors.

Stefan Agne, Head of Sector for Domestic Revenue Mobilisation, Budget Support, Public Finance Management, Domestic Revenue Mobilisation at DG DEVCO of the EC, stressed the importance of the findings of the **EC's Staff Working Document 'Collect More, Spend Better'**. The paper focuses on the role of taxation, public finance management, good spending of available resources and the better delivery of services. He stressed that taxes and business development can be mutually reinforcing.



Domestic Resource Mobilisation

In this session, the panellists exchanged good practices on how to create the conditions of an enabling environment for the sustainable mobilisation of domestic resources.

Fritz Ntoné Ntoné, Government Delegate to the Douala City Council, Cameroon outlined the continuously shrinking transfers of resources from the central to the

Working groups

The PFD participants broke out into working groups to discuss aid for trade, blending/the European External Investment Plan and domestic resource mobilisation in more detail. They shared the main results and presented recommendations to the EU at the end of the second day (the conclusions from the working groups can be downloaded on [capacity4dev](https://capacity4dev.org))



Migration: A local approach

During this session, the panel focused on different migration related challenges and discussed how European policies can support locally-based solutions to tackle irregular migration and enhance the socioeconomic and local integration of migrants.

Stefano Signore, Head of Unit for Migration, Employment of DG DEVCO in the EC, talked about the policy mismatch resulting from the fact that migration responses are developed at national level while the consequences of migration are most directly felt at local and municipal level. "Local authorities have a double-role, they are policy-makers and service-providers." Innovative solutions and partnerships are needed at the local level to tackle the management of migration challenges.

Ramon Bultron, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, stated that while migration is the right of every individual, we are currently seeing a rise in forced migration due to a lack of means to survive and growing inequalities. He pointed out that remittances are an integral part of many country's economies, for example in India, China and the Philippines and that "migration has become an industry" in this respect.

Deniz Şenol Sert, Migration Consultant at the World Academy for Local Governments and Democracy, stressed that the governance of migration takes place at the local level; however, municipalities lack access to international funds and donors, which hampers their ability to adapt their service provision and can have negative implications for host communities. She called for the EU and other international donors to prioritise a human rights-based

approach to migration and have local authorities access funding in this context.

Mohamed Saadieh, Co-President, United Cities and Local Governments – Middle East and West Asia and President, Union of Dannieh Municipalities, Lebanon, spoke of the tensions within local communities resulting from the significant influx of refugees and migrants in his country. He echoed the call for greater availability of funding for local authorities to enable them to continue delivering essential services and for greater coordination between international donors, national authorities, local authorities and civil society organisations.

The post-Cotonou Partnership

During this session, the panel discussed how to build on the lessons learned of the EU-ACP Cotonou Partnership Agreement and how to increase the involvement of numerous stakeholders in the future agreement.

Kristin de Peyron, Head of Division for Pan-African Affairs at the European External Action Service (EEAS), spoke of the need for the post-Cotonou agreement to reflect the new global challenges, such as climate change, as well as the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda, the New European Consensus on Development, the EU's Global Strategy and the Agenda 2063 for Africa. She highlighted, however, that the basic values of the current Cotonou agreement, such as the commitment to democracy, human rights, the rule of law, poverty eradication, the environment, peace and security and jobs creation, will remain central to the new text.

Rigo Belpair, Team Leader of the Cotonou Task Force at DG DEVCO of the EC, added that the new agreement aims to go beyond aid and development cooperation, by setting up a genuine partnership between the EU and ACP countries and providing space for civil society: "The current agreement did not recognise the role of civil society organisations sufficiently. We should learn from that and allow input from civil society organisations in the process."

Fatimetou Abdel Malick, Mayor of Tevrag-Zeina, Nouakchott, Mauritania and Vice-President, network of women elected officials in Africa, stressed that local authorities must be included as partners, legitimate actors in the Post-Cotonou development and

implementation process, since in the past the recognition of their importance was often “cosmetic.”

Katarzyna Lemanska, Policy Officer, Global Health Advocates called for the key values held by the EU to be a compass in the development of the Post-Cotonou agreement and not to allow them to be compromised by economic or other interests. “We need the political will and the right financial resources,” she stressed. To achieve this, there is a need to place aid effectiveness high up on the agenda. She underlined the role of EU delegations in providing space for civil society participation throughout the process.



Multi-annual Financial Framework

This session presented an opportunity for the EC and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to provide an update on the future Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) and to receive feedback from the PFD members.

Marie-Laure De Bergh, Deputy Head of Division, of the Development Cooperation Coordination at the EEAS and **Bernard San Emeterio**, Team Leader, Coordination and Programming of External Financing Instruments at DG DEVCO of the EC presented the planned revision of the structure of the EU’s funding for external action in the post-2020 MFF, which aims to streamline and simplify EU funding in this area. The general proposal for the next MFF is to be presented on 2 May 2018, with the budget for EU global action to remain at least at its current levels.

Conclusions

Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments, praised the importance of the PFD and the inclusion of local authorities, in particular also small and medium-sized cities. She stressed that the territorial and decentralised approach needs to be reinforced to achieve the SDGs, also in south-south cooperation. She therefore called for new ways of funding and working which would allow for greater local impact and also stated that “local authorities are ready to partner with civil society organisations in a new way.”

Susana Erostegui, Director of Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social, Bolivia, and representing the civil society organisations PFD Co-chair, stated that the PFD was an excellent opportunity to discuss and reinforce commitments to common goals, as well as put into context different regional experiences. She highlighted in particular the changed perception of the role of the private sector and how it could contribute to development and the reduction of inequalities. She stressed that the 2030 Agenda presents an opportunity to achieve meaningful change, but that this will not happen without active civil society involvement.

Rosário Bento Pais, Head of Unit, Civil Society and Foundations, DG DEVCO, EC, concluded by reminding the audience that the discussions held were being heard by the EU and taken to heart. In this regard, she also encouraged PFD members to continue the debate and submit their views to her unit for further wider dissemination.

