

**Position Paper | HLPF 2016**  
**CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) as part of the *Other Stakeholders*<sup>1</sup>**

A people-centred approach in this year's High Level Political Forum, the first since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, is a welcome development and a key priority in ensuring that no-one gets left behind. Yet challenges still remain before such efforts can truly be translated into much needed results that matter in the lives of people and the planet.

“Nothing about us, without us” CPDE stresses that leaving no-one behind means the inclusion of all in not only development initiatives but also all processes at all levels. Development cooperation that is effective does not remain in the confines of high-level debates but should include the peoples at all levels beginning from the grass-roots who are in all scenarios the most adversely affected by these big decisions.

The value of non-state development actors rests on its direct interaction and exposure to the day-to-day realities of people not just wanting to survive, but to realize their aspirations and full potentials. In order to therefore assure effective implementation of the 2030 agenda that would be meaningful to people and planet, CSOs, the local communities on the ground, and other people-led stakeholders should be integrated in the policy-formulation processes of states.

***Participation***

Alongside the need for inclusiveness is the critical precondition that all Member States and development actors be accountable. Ensuring that no-one is left behind must therefore reflect the highest levels of transparency and accountability in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

CPDE welcomes the inclusion of independent reporting-by the Major Groups and other Stakeholders in their implementation of the 2030 agenda during the HLPF as per Paragraph 89 of the 2030 agenda.

CPDE strongly supports the full realisation of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders' roles in the HLPF to be able to attend all official meetings of the forum; to have access to all official information and documents, to intervene in official meetings, to submit documents and present written and oral contributions, and to make recommendations, and to organise side-events and round tables in cooperation with Member States and the secretariat.

CPDE recognises the contribution of civil society and other stakeholders in the follow-up and review architecture as underscored by the Report of the Secretary-General 'Critical milestones towards coherent, effective, and inclusive, follow-up and review at the global level.'

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<sup>1</sup> *The CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) is an open platform working for better development. It unites more than 4,000 community organisations, trade unions, faith-based organisations, youth groups, feminist movements, indigenous groups and NGOs from around the world.*

***HLPF and the theme “Ensuring no-one is left behind”***

To ensure that no-one will be left behind, it is important to take stock of unfinished business and avoid blindly moving forward.

CPDE strongly affirms that leaving no-one behind should be the main focus of this year’s HLPF. To do this, however, there is a need to truly focus on the ones who are furthest behind, first. The follow-up and review process must be robust and inclusive to ensure that the voices of those in the margins, and the implementation of the goals, be in sync.

***Empowerment***

*“Ensuring no-one is left behind” should bring about universalizing Effective Development Cooperation, most importantly in and through the revitalised Global Partnership.*

- CPDE strongly emphasises that the implementation of the 2030 agenda should go beyond the A2030 document’s mere mentioning of civil society and other people-led organisations as simply partners in inclusive institutions. There is a need to reinvigorate current efforts to further ensure institutionalised spaces at the national, regional, and global levels for civil society and local communities to effectively build and synergise multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- Effective Development Cooperation (EDC) should build from the unfinished business of the MDGs; correct the failures of the MDGs in its reliance over neo-liberal economics; while robustly taking into account the evolving landscape at the present. EDC is designed to address development partnerships and is an agenda predicated on Development Effectiveness principles which is founded on (1) the highest levels of transparency and accountability; (2) Inclusive Development; (3) Democratic Country Ownership; and a (3) Human Rights Based Approach.
- CPDE further stresses that in order to ensure that no-one is left behind in this year’s theme, the agenda therefore needs to adapt to the needs of the times. It is for this reason that to universalise Effective Development Cooperation, the 2030 Agenda should resonate around concurrent issues such as (1) Private Sector as a development partner (2) South-South Cooperation; (3) Militarism and Fragility; (4) CSO Enabling Environment and Development Effectiveness.

*Accountability for all of all should be at the forefront of any efforts to implement the 2030 agenda*

- Monitoring of all development actors and bringing private-sector driven processes in line with development effectiveness principles remains to be the important concern in ensuring the proper implementation of the 2030 agenda.
- CPDE stresses that the central role that private finance is now playing in development and the development cooperation landscape especially in the current context of fiscal restraint on the part of most governments is a critical cause for concern. Such practice which threatens to be the norm does not stay true to democratic country ownership. Private finance is not a substitute or

a replacement for public finance, governments must remain the primary duty-bearers and together with the peoples, be the owners of this agenda.

- Caution over non-state actors, most particularly the private sector, should be stepped-up as these actors are generally not bound by national policies. CPDE therefore strongly urge the international community to ensure that non-state actors, most pressing the Private Sector, are accountable to their development initiatives.
- Recalling past international agreements and guidelines over Private Sector accountability in the outcome document is insufficient. Member States should further their resolve and enmesh the Private Sector into binding legal frameworks.
- The international community must also ensure that the Private Sector holds in high regard the highest standards of human rights, transparency, and accountability consistent with all relevant United Nations and International Labour Organisation (ILO) normative frameworks on human rights, international labour, social, and environment standards while also involving CSOs and Member States in all aspects of Private Sector development engagements.
- CPDE also points out that since voluntary multi-stakeholder partnerships are expected to proliferate with the aim of supporting the attainment of the various SDGs, there will be greater challenges in terms of fragmentation, limited transparency, lack of accountability and weak adherence to human rights and development effectiveness. The highest forms of transparency and accountability for all of all should therefore be at the heart of ensuring no-one is left behind.

*Securing an Enabling Environment for CSOs is vital in ensuring the' future we want'*

- CPDE strongly emphasises that a 'whole of society' approach rather than a 'whole of government approach' be fully realised in the 2030 Agenda. The vital inclusion of civil society and people-led organization is crucial to building democratic country ownership which is an important element to development.
- Keeping in mind the recognition of people-led participatory initiatives in monitoring, evaluation, and implementation in the 2030 agenda, in order to fully engage people and all partners in development, there is a need for Members States to secure an Enabling Environment for CSOs. CSOs and peoples' organisations bring a different perspective to the discussions. Such an endeavour will be able to better capacitate the agenda, most particularly with knowledge of the realities on the ground, thus better collating efforts into cohesive strategies to curtail inequality.
- Institutionalising a space at local, national, regional, and global levels for CSOs will also be able to help build more inclusive multi-stakeholder platforms and help monitoring efforts become more participatory and effective in surveying the SDGs.
- Such an Enabling Environment will be able to remedy the persisting shrinking spaces for CSOs globally. Encouraging more people-led organizations to emerge and help identify, represent, and

contribute to the people's access to information, justice, and services of attaining the SDGs, and to their rights in general

- CPDE also stresses that meaningful cooperation and coordination should also be fostered between the governments of Member States and CSOs on the ground, to ensure efforts can effectively trickle down to the most vulnerable.
- CPDE recommends that the HLPF fully make use of this opportunity to implement a renewed and comprehensive partnership for the SDGs in the implementation process. There must be a more explicit discussion on the incorporation of CSOs in the planning, implementation and follow-up and review processes in the international and national levels. The existence and the sustainability of an institutionalised Enabling Environment for CSOs in the national level should become the attention of this high-level review and global partnership as it brings representatives of all spectrums of society firmly as stakeholders.

*A Human-Rights Based Approach (HRBA) should be upheld if the SDGs are to be meaningful to the people and planet.*

- Putting the people back at the heart of development efforts is essential. Development should no longer be tied to economic progress alone. Incorporating Human Rights as an operating principle through human rights based approaches (HRBA) in such a partnership will equip Member States and other stakeholders with a uniformed platform angled towards empowering the direct beneficiaries of the SDGs, the people on the ground.
- Although respect to Human Rights were identified as an essential facet to the 2030 agenda, there lacks a stringent framework to fully implement such an endeavor.
- CPDE promotes Human-Rights Based Approaches to be a cornerstone of ensuring that no-one is left behind in this year's HLPF. HRBA is a critical mechanism in which to reference development initiatives in order to better capacitate our efforts in vulnerable situations.

*The 2030 Agenda should not leave the environment behind*

- The setting of the long-term goal to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius from the previous target of 2 degrees Celsius is also a welcome development. CPDE most especially recognise the Paris Agreement's efforts to put human rights and developing countries at the heart of combating climate change.
- The theme should also put attention towards a proper balance between mitigation and adaptation while acting on the urgent need for operationalising mechanisms for loss and damage.
- CPDE stresses that despite advances in rhetoric, there is a lack of meaningful ambition and paradigm shift. The Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR), a cornerstone of the Rio

Summit of 1992 that led to the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), needs to be put to fore in the 2030 agenda.

- The review of new forms of development financing, the restructuring of ODA and climate finance must be included in the HLPF. CPDE strongly emphasises that Member States and other development actors must fulfill their obligation to realise responsible and adequate funding based on the principles of equity, transparency and accountability to tackle the world's global challenges, including climate change.

### ***Means of Implementation (MOI), Follow-up, and Review process at the regional and national levels***

#### *Regional level follow-up and review processes*

CPDE strongly supports regional commissions on sustainable development that seek to aid and supplement the global review process of the 2030 agenda.

CPDE also recognises that these regional commissions are not meant to be new processes that will overburden Member States and other development actors. These processes are simply meant to strengthen the follow-up and review process of the 2030 agenda and aid countries that are furthest behind.

In order for the global implementation of the SDG process to be effective, CPDE sees the value of instrumentalising regional commissions that will take forward such an agenda.

#### *National level adaptation*

CPDE strongly emphasises that there is a need for a space where CSOs and other people-led organisations can participate in setting nationally-appropriate targets and indicators to ensure that these are consistent with human rights norms and standards

The 2030 Agenda is correctly described as a universal and aspirational framework. But its ultimate success depends on how it will be implemented at the country level. The strong possibility of selective implementation through governments' ability to set their own specific targets and strategies "in the light of their national circumstances" remains to be a real possible hindrance to genuine Sustainable Development.

Indeed, there is the real possibility that implementation will focus on delivering concrete measurable results such as fulfilling basic needs while setting aside "the idea of development as structural transformation to expand productive capacity, shift power structures and social relations, and ultimately expand human freedoms."

CPDE stresses that the hard reality about Agenda 2030 is that it is ultimately an aspirational agenda with no enforcement mechanism built in. It is for this reason that this year's HLPF should take into account this major gap in the 2030 agenda process.

There have been ongoing efforts to develop policies to contextualize the 2030 development agenda at national level and several countries have already developed their national plans. The level of engagement between the government and other stakeholders and within the government, concerning the integration of communities and CSOs remain a major concern.

CPDE brings to light the increased responsibility in today's development agenda for an independent critical role of CSOs to hold governments to account for delegating their development roles to the private sector.

The HLPF should take stock of the calibration of the 169 targets in national contexts and also on how the nationally prioritized goals and targets align with the globally monitored goals and targets, as well as the question of accountability mechanism for the SDGs.

In the post-HLPF 2016 events there must be scaled-up call for inclusive and participatory mechanisms for Agenda 2030 implementation and monitoring at the national and sub-national levels that affirm the role of civil society organizations as development actors in their own right.

This policy space for civil society should also be conducive for independent monitoring of the 2030 agenda and the freedom to demand accountability of governments, donors, corporations and other non-state actors.

***To leave no-one behind is to ensure that the furthest behind are not just first, but are also involved***

CPDE strongly suggests that any attempt at defining this year's theme to leave no-one behind must be enshrined on development effectiveness, the meaningful inclusion of CSOs and people-led organisations at all processes, accountability for all of all, as well as effective development cooperation in the 2030 Agenda's revitalised global partnership.

As the first HLPF after the adoption of the SDGs, this year must take the first step in the right direction to match the ambition of the 2030 Agenda and to raise the bar high for the next years to come.

CPDE remains committed to engage and contribute meaningfully in the implementation of the agenda at the national, regional, and global levels. We will continue to assert our rightful space and advance a sustainable world for all.