

Brussels, 2 July 2014

Dear Minister,

We, the European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs (CONCORD), are writing to you in advance of your informal meeting that will take place in Florence on 14-15 July, at which you will discuss the post-2015 framework for sustainable development and the role of the private sector in development. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight some key issues in relation to both of these subjects.

The post-2015 sustainable development framework

We urge you to press for a transformative framework that is based on the progressive realisation of human rights and has the ultimate aim of ensuring progress for all people, especially the most marginalised, while respecting planetary boundaries. To this end, it is crucial that you ensure that the future framework is comprehensive and universal integrating all three dimensions of sustainable development. The EU should demonstrate how, in the spirit of universality, it will take on responsibilities at home as well as globally.

In order for the framework to be truly transformative, it will also need to propose far-reaching reforms of the current economic, financial and trade systems in order to deliver goals and targets that are genuinely in the interest of people and the planet. Finally, we would urge you to promote policy coherence for sustainable development as a key tool in enabling the successful implementation of the new framework and ensuring that sustainable development objectives are not undermined.

The role of the Private sector

The stated intention in the recent EC Communication to ensure that the private sector's role in development is guided by clear principles that complement aid effectiveness principles must be acted upon as a priority, through the design of a specific EU framework setting out key principles and benchmarks for the private sector's engagement in development co-operation. This new framework should guide the activities of the private sector, provide benchmarks to assess its developmental impact, and ensure a proper adherence to, and implementation of key social, environmental, fiscal, human rights, and transparency and accountability standards as a precondition for support to private sector actors in development.

We are concerned about the Communication's apparent emphasis on conventional Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and on blending facilities in relation to the provision of infrastructure and services – including social services - in developing countries. We welcome the reference in the Council conclusions of 23 June of the need to strengthen the private sector's engagement for development, including through innovative and soundly framed and managed public-private partnerships, notably with a meaningful role for CSOs and we call on the EU to give greater attention to more innovative and sustainable, multi-stakeholder partnership models appropriate to the context of developing countries. The role of ODA as a public, predictable, counter-cyclical source of finance for developing countries should also be emphasized.

Attached you will find an Annex with a more detailed analysis of these issues. We remain at your disposal for any further discussion you might require.

Yours sincerely,



Seamus Jeffreson
Director, CONCORD