DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE for the LAUNCH of the
2016 CONCORD AidWatch Report

When: 26 October from 17.00-19.00
Where: Mundo J, Rue de l’Industrie 10 Brussels

CONCORD HardTalk: Is this the end of genuine aid?

Background

The EU maintained its position as the world’s largest donor in relative terms providing almost €62.4billion on the official development assistance (ODA) and increased by almost €3 billion from 2014 mainly due to the in donor country refugee costs. However in the year when the EU was supposed to reach its 0.7% target set in 2001, the EU reached only 0.44 % of GNI and missed the target by €36.9billion.

The refugee crises of 2015 heavily influenced the way that EU aid and development policy and practice is shaped and guided by the migration and security agendas. Since the Valletta summit on migration in 2015, where among other things the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa was launched, a number of new policies on migration have been launched, such as the EU-Turkey deal and the new Migration partnership framework launched in July of this year.

In the security and development agenda, the new ODA definition from OECD-DAC has blurred the line between ODA and military involvement, and the EU has been quick to release communications on security sector reform and aid for capacity development of security sector personnel. An increase in the budget of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), and a change in its basic act to allow military involvement under certain circumstances, was also announced during the summer.

All of these changes and developments alongside shifts in the broader development and finance landscape have seemingly seen a new vision of aid proposed - a more instrumental approach, one which is more about leveraging in alternate resources to meet the challenges of Agenda 2030. So the question is, what impact will all of this have on EU aid?

Purpose

The purpose of the CONCORD AidWatch Report launch is to confront the opinion of the diverse development actors on the “new” role of aid and if this is the end of aid as we know it.

Proposed speakers

- Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi, EEAS (confirmed)
- Hubert De Milly, AfD (confirmed)
- Nuria Molina, B&M Gates Foundation (confirmed)
Amy Dodd, CONCORD/UK Aid Network (confirmed)
Petri Gornitzka, OECD DAC chair
Klaus Rudischhauser, DG DEVCO and SC GPEDC

Format

After the presentation of the key findings of the 2016 AidWatch Report, speakers will discuss and exchange views on two areas: main EU aid trends and HLM GPEDC.

1. Setting the scene

Short introduction describing what has happened on the international level:

- FfD Conference (July 2015), SDGs summit (September 2015) and UNFCCC (December 2015).
- Global challenges in 2015 including ongoing conflict and instability in the Middle-East and a number of African countries, increased no. of refugees worldwide, several terrorist attacks on European soil.
- Rise of right-wing populist parties in various European countries.

2. Presentation of the findings of the 2016 CONCORD AidWatch Report

Presentation of the key findings of the AidWatch Report: what has happened with EU aid and its commitments - inflated aid/climate finance, where do we stand with the development effectiveness and where do we go next.

(TBC) Presentation of the outcomes of the EU development effectiveness monitoring report.

3. EU aid at a cross-roads: will the EU choose the right direction?

The past year has seen some dramatic political events across Europe which have also affected official development assistance (ODA). Rising social inequality and a badly managed refugee crisis are fraying Europe’s own social fabric and weakening trust in European institutions. This has contributed to a rise in political leaders and parties that do not value global solidarity for poverty reduction, nor understand how ODA advances their own countries’ own peace and prosperity. Such political leaders disseminate messages that dehumanize and promote conflict with “outsiders,” including immigrants, refugees and people in other countries. This has a direct impact on aid, by creating a false competition between domestic interests and foreign aid budgets.

Questions for speakers:

- Whose interests are the EU development cooperation policies serving?
- Are we using aid to push partner countries to help us manage migration flows?
- Do we trust development partners?
- Will climate finance from OECD donors be fully merged into ODA, or should climate change mitigation be excluded? And will the merging of ODA and climate finance be a new way for EU member states to avoid meeting their financial targets in both areas?
4. Development Effectiveness at risk

In November, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) will convene its second High Level Forum in Nairobi. Effective aid approaches provide “best value for money” for each partner country based on its demands and needs. Most European donors are ramping up public support for development finance mechanisms that blend public and private resources and leverage private, commercial investment. Half of EU member states are increasing ODA allocations to the private, commercial sector. Across Europe, private sector investment with public money is largely non-transparent and unaccountable.

Questions for speakers:

- Does the EU really care about multiplying impact through enhanced effectiveness?
- What do you think we need to do to accelerate progress on implementation of commitments? Or is this just going to always sit in the ‘nice in principle, unlikely in practice’ column?
- Is ODA just another way to subsidize the EU private sector?

5. Closing

The EU now needs to ensure that it stands firm on its principles, commitments and actions and continues to support international solidarity and live up to its responsibilities as a block of most of the wealthiest nations in the world.

What is CONCORD AidWatch?

CONCORD AidWatch has monitored and made recommendations on the quality and quantity of aid provided by EU member states and the European Commission since 2005. CONCORD is the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development. Its 28 national associations, 18 international networks and 2 associate members represent 1,800 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations. At global level, CONCORD is actively involved in the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, Beyond 2015 campaign and the International Forum of NGO platforms.