

To the attention of Federica Mogherini
High Representative of the European Union
for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
and Vice-President of the European Commission

NGO messages ahead of the 28 November Foreign Affairs Council on Development

Dear Ms. Mogherini,

Ahead of the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council for Development on 28 November, CONCORD, the European NGO confederation for relief and development, would like to bring to your attention our analyses and recommendations on some of your agenda items. We have also shared these with Member States governments, through our national platforms.

European Civil Society has considerable concerns about the current direction and shape of EU development cooperation. We believe that development cooperation should stay focused on poverty reduction and sustainable development, based on fair and equal relationships with development Partners, and delivered in line with commitments on development effectiveness. It must never be diverted or diluted for any reason, including to manage border control and migrants flows for supposed internal security reasons, or to support European private corporations without sufficient accountability for development results. We are also concerned by the focus on economic growth as a measure of development as the benefits of growth do not necessarily trickle down and are not distributed equally among a population, and can even contribute to increases in inequality.

When the EU is struggling to demonstrate its relevance to its citizens and members and to its global partners, this is an opportune time to re-confirm and set out how to implement the shared objectives, values and principles to which the EU and its Member States have committed in their adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda provides a vision in which human rights, planetary boundaries, leaving no one behind, gender equality, and balancing the four dimensions of sustainable development (social, environment, economic and governance) are interdependent.

Therefore, we urge you to demonstrate political leadership and agree to draw up an **overarching EU strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs**. Such strategy should build on existing initiatives, set priorities and provide guidance for both the EU institutions and the EU Member States in implementation, monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda, covering both domestic and external policies, and shared and exclusive competences. Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development must be a central element of the strategy and mechanisms, to ensure further EU's progress on this.¹

The overarching strategy should set the context for the revision of the **Consensus on Development**. The new Consensus must have at its core poverty reduction and human rights, and needs to reflect the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and the different dimensions of sustainable development, as well as development effectiveness principles. In the context of a globally shrinking civic space, the new EU Consensus on Development must put people's participation and rights at the central stage and include measures to support the fundamental role that civil society organisations play in development processes.²

¹ See further details in CONCORD [recommendations for the implementation of the Agenda 2030](#)

² See further details in CONCORD [political paper on the New EU Consensus for Development](#)

Echoing this, the **new framework for ACP-EU relations after 2020** must contribute to the delivery of Agenda 2030 and thus build on the same vision and principles.

Similarly, with the Nairobi High Level Meeting on **development effectiveness** also taking place at this moment, it is timely to take stock of the EU's efforts in driving the implementation of some development effectiveness principles, including joint programming. But the EU should now recommit to the full implementation of these principles and to apply them to all modalities of development cooperation including investment facilities.³

Beyond commitment, credible and time-bound action plans should be produced to improve both accountability for effectiveness commitments as well create more political energy and will. Alongside commitments on improving aid quality, the EU and its member states were the only actors in the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action to clearly recommit to meeting the historic 0.7% ODA/GNI target. This commitment was a welcome sign of political leadership which could now helpfully supported by greater transparency about how and when countries intend to meet their aid commitment.⁴

We would like to work with you and the EU institutions towards a stronger EU able and willing to deliver on its international commitments and towards a Consensus that reflects European values. To achieve this, civil society should have a strengthened role in EU political debate and dialogue with partner countries, including the ACP group, and at international level, in particular in the GPEDC and the HLPF. An open and transparent public consultation based on the draft Consensus is a constructive way forward towards these objectives.

Within this overall approach and vision, we would like to share with you our analysis and recommendations with regard to migration and the European External Investment Plan that you will be discussing too:

On migration

CONCORD is concerned that migration is increasingly being seen as an internal security issue rather than a human rights issue and a factor that can also generate positive outcomes for societies.

The **New Migration Partnership Framework** does not include sufficient safeguards for human rights, rule of law standards, protection mechanisms, nor positive measures on the linkages between mobility and sustainable development.⁵ Cooperation with non-EU countries on migration and displacement must uphold all human rights, and the return of asylum seekers and migrants must be conducted in safety, dignity and with respect for their human rights, with primacy given to voluntary return with significant reintegration programs.

Besides, we deeply regret that the EU and its Member States continue applying conditions on aid linked to migration management and that the EU Migration Partnership Framework envisages negative consequences for countries who do not cooperate on readmission and return, disregarding the principles of development effectiveness, especially the principle of ownership and alignment.

³ See further details in CONCORD [key messages ahead of the Nairobi High Level Meeting](#)

⁴ See further details in CONCORD [AidWatch Report 2016](#)

⁵ See further details in the [Joint CSO statement on the New Migration Partnership](#) of 27 June 2016

In order to deliver on the EU commitments under the 2030 Agenda, the EU and its Member States need to establish a regulatory framework to ensure safe, regular pathways for asylum seekers and provide regular mobility opportunities for both highly-skilled and low-skilled migrant workers enhancing their capacities and resources for supporting the sustainable development of their countries of origin. We also call on the EU to enhance research and systematic data collection about/along migratory routes to understand the drivers of migration. This will help developing a more positive, evidence-based narrative and policies on migrants and asylum-seekers.

On the European External Investment Plan (EIP) in Africa and European Neighbourhood

CONCORD is concerned about the underlying objectives and rationale of the **European External Investment Plan**, and how these are linked to the EU's migration control policy and trickle down development. We believe it is vital to learn lessons from other investment initiatives at the multilateral and European level; both the positive examples of careful, evidence-led work and negative, long-term damaging examples of hastily established funds. Fundamentally, poverty eradication must be at the core of the EIP's mission and operatives. Therefore, we recommend⁶:

- de-linking the EIP from European migration control policies and short-term foreign and security policy objectives. Development cooperation must be based on the needs and the rights of recipients and not used as foreign policy leverage or be concentrated geographically on the basis of Europe's strategic interests;
- adopting a multi-dimensional approach, in line with the integrated approach of the 2030 Agenda;
- ensuring that financial and, more importantly, development additionality are demonstrable, risks for people and the environment are effectively avoided, women's rights, economic opportunities and decent work creation, especially for vulnerable communities, are effectively promoted, and the public sector is not undermined but rather strengthened.

We hope you will take our views and recommendations in considerations during your deliberations. We wish you a fruitful meeting.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,



Seamus Jeffreson, CONCORD Director

⁶ See further details in the joint CSO letter on the EU External Investment Plan, that CONCORD supports

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