

TEMPLATE - LETTER

Letter to EU Ministers in advance of the EU FAC meeting on 19th May

Dear Minister

Our member is a platform of development NGO's in *the member's country*. We are a member of CONCORD, the Confederation representing 2600 Relief and Development NGOs. We work to eradicate poverty and fight inequality, to promote sustainable development and defend people's rights.

On 19 May, at the EU Foreign Affairs Council, you will be discussing the proposal for a new European Consensus on Development and other questions having an impact on the EU's partner countries and those who live in them. This is particularly important in light of the ongoing reflections over EU-Africa relations and the review of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

The Consensus must represent a common European vision and guiding framework for achieving sustainable development, realising people's rights and fulfilling the 2030 Agenda. It is an opportunity for you to show leadership and uphold our continent's integrity by ensuring that European development cooperation serves as a tool to eradicate poverty, fight inequality and ensure people's human rights, and works to preserve our planet for current and future generations. Your decisions during that Council meeting are key to ensuring that the EU does not 'give with one hand and take with the other', thereby undermining its efficacy, its sincerity and its credibility and failing to serve as a model for genuine partnership in the world. The Consensus should reaffirm the TFEU art 208 ensuring coherence of policies affecting developing countries including trade, investment, security and migration policies.

We are extremely concerned that the Consensus and other recent initiatives are strengthening the shift towards conflating support for sustainable development with the promotion of the EU's own commercial and security interests. It has been shown time and again that the two are not always aligned and can even pull in opposite directions. In those instances, EU interests tend to prevail, with potentially negative impacts on the marginalised and excluded people whom EU development cooperation aims to assist. The Consensus, and all other policies and financial decisions that flow from it, must be used solely and exclusively for the objective of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty in all its forms. European perceived self-interest should not be driving decisions regarding development and cooperation policy. It is in Europe's long-term interest to build a world that is sustainable, peaceful and democratic, in which everyone lives in dignity.

Therefore we call on you to ensure that:

Development assistance is allocated to those in need and the promise of leaving no one behind means reaching the poorest and most vulnerable people first. A country's or region's potential to be a source of outward migration or country of transit is not an appropriate criterion by which to determine aid allocations. The focus should be on those countries with the most people in need, especially LDCs and fragile states, and prioritising those who are currently most marginalised and excluded, wherever they may live, in order to leave no one behind.

'Tackling' migration is not turned into an objective of development cooperation. Aid can and should help to eliminate the root causes of forced migration and displacement, but it must not be used as a tool for migration control. We call on you to embrace cooperation with partners to address these challenges and to abstain from imposing any form of conditionality such as making aid

dependent on cooperation over migratory flows. We are especially concerned about the new migration cooperation with the Libyan authorities. The arbitrary arrests, the torture and other ill-treatments in Libyan detention-centres are well-documented and by cooperating with the Libyan authorities, including the coast guards, and seeking to keep people in Libya and the African continent at large, the EU will acquiesce if not directly contribute to these serious human rights violations.

Funding of military actors, or countering violent extremism, in the name of state security, is not made an objective of development cooperation. A human security approach focusing on individuals and society at large is needed as part of a long-term, people-focused and rights-based strategy. Under no circumstances should EU aid be used to directly (financially) support security actors, including military actors, in any actions that are not listed in the applicable reporting directives in the OECD-DAC guidelines.

Investment is focused on inclusive sustainable development that measurably benefits those who are traditionally 'left behind'. Market mechanisms and private sector investments do not typically do this. On the contrary, **unguided economic growth has been shown to increase inequality.** Investments enabled or guaranteed by ODA must reach the most marginalised people, they must focus on sustainable infrastructure, they must be planned, implemented and monitored by those who should benefit and are impacted – including for example, women, young people, the disabled, small scale farmers and entrepreneurs. Investment backed by tax payers' money should have clear development additionality. Investment also needs to translate into increased domestic resource mobilisation in host countries, generated through fair and effective taxation. We call on you to support such measures both with partner countries and internationally.

The EU's development cooperation has to address the **underlying reasons and structures that keep women and girls, half of the world's population, from accessing their rights and benefiting from equal opportunities.** This will require gender responsive budgeting and gender transformative strategies and programmes throughout the cooperation.

Civil society needs to be engaged, fully, innovatively and genuinely in development. People organising to represent, defend and voice the rights and interests of the most marginalised in society is the basis for a democratic and sustainable development, which leaves no one behind. EU development cooperation should prioritise ample support to a broad range of civil society actors and initiatives that promote a pluralistic and vibrant space in society for marginalised people to claim their rights and access to resources and services. Especially considering the accelerating trend of repression of civic rights in many countries, the EU has a major role to play in upholding the values of democracy and human rights, and standing by civil society organisations and activists. The role of European CSOs to engage European citizens for development and global justice has to be acknowledged and supported.

We call on you to uphold our European values in decisions whose primary focus is poverty eradication, safeguarding development cooperation as a privileged tool for global solidarity, sustainable development and the promotion of every person's rights.

Signed