



Africa CSO Platform on Principled Partnership

ACPPP Update

June 28 2011, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Global Civil Society Adopt International Framework to Protect Civil Society

Two hundred Civil Society Platforms and membership Organizations, representing over 10,000 national, international and Global CSOs have endorsed an International Framework that includes five Standards to respect, empower and protect Civil Society around against negative government and Donor actions.

Known as the Siem Reap Consensus, The International Framework for the first time in the history of Civil Society Movement identifies FIVE standards that must be met by governments and Donors to ensure effective development and equitable partnership with CSOs. They include:

1. Fulfillment of obligations to fundamental human rights that enable people to organize and participate in development
2. Recognizing CSOs as development actors in their own right
3. Structuring democratic policy dialogue and public policies to improve development effectiveness
4. Being accountable for transparent and consistent policies for development and
5. Creating enabling financing for CSO development effectiveness.

The Siem Reap Consensus was adopted amidst an increasing oppression of Civil Society around the world, with ACPPP having documented cases of government oppression or control in over 35 countries. Similar concerns were raised in Asia and Middle East, Latin America, and North America. ACPPP, which proposed amendments to the Consensus Document that if adopted will see the Framework extend protection to individual Civil Society actors has identified five major causes for the shrinking space for Civil Society-emphasis of electoral democracy at the expense of the more inclusive and citizen empowering liberal democracy; CSO-Government tensions in post conflict and fragile states; use of Paris Declaration Principles as tools of oppression by Governments, Anti-terrorism rules and blurred relations between development, defense and diplomacy (3D); and the slow pace of CSO Self Regulation and Accountability that has presented governments with entry point for control.

Among the Regional and Global umbrella Platforms that are part of the Open Forum/Better Aid Platform that adopted the Framework are AACC, ACT Alliance, ACPPP, AFRODAD, ALOP, AACC, Asia Pacific Research Network, Berlin Civil Society, Australian Council for International Development, BOND, Canadian Council for International Development, CIVICUS, CONGARD, CSPR, CONCORD, CONGCOOP, Coordination Sud, DOCHAS, Forum SYD, Interaction, Japan NGO Centre, Korean Civil Society, PARTOS, PIANGO and SADC-CNGO. International NGOs included ActionAid, CARE, Oxfam, Save the Children, Terre Des Hommes, Trocaire, World Vision and VSO.

The Siem Reap Consensus Framework defines enabling standards as a set of inter-related conditions – such as legal, bureaucratic, fiscal, informational, political, and cultural – that impact on the capacity of CSO development actors to engage in development processes in a sustained and effective manner.

Among the Specific Siem Reap Consensus Framework requirements that CSOs will table for adoption to donors and governments meeting during the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness later this year are the following:

1. laws, regulations and practices that respect fundamental principles which are pre-conditions for a robust and effective civil society-Freedom of association and assembly; legal recognition facilitating the work of CSOs; the right to freedom of expression; The right to operate free of unwarranted state interference; and the legal space to seek and secure necessary resources in support of legitimate roles in development.

2. Governments in both developing and donor countries must provide the conditions for inclusive and meaningful participation of CSOs in policy dialogue at all levels of development.
3. Governments must put into practice principles of good governance, which include full transparency and accountability for their development priorities and actions.
4. Funding modalities undertaken with a long-term perspective and core institutional support
5. Assure that the Paris Declaration principles, including ownership and alignment, are not in any way interpreted or applied to narrow the enabling environment for CSOs.

The Siem Reap Framework also adopted eight commitments by Civil Society to ensure their own effectiveness, including among others accountability, human rights, gender equity, mutual accountability and social justice.

The Full Framework will be made available by ACPPP by July 30 2011

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For additional information visit the ACPPP website

www.africacsoplatform.org

Or Open Forum website

www.cso-effectiveness.org

You may also contact ACPPP at acppp@africacsoplatform.org, info@africacsoplatform.org