

Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness Advocacy Asks and Political Strategy

Time period:
End of 1st Global Assembly to 2nd Global Assembly, mid-2011

Background

The over-all advocacy goals of the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness are:

- 1) Endorsement without change of the agreed-upon Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness in its entirety by the government participants at, or prior to, the 4th High Level Forum (HLF4) in Busan, South Korea in late 2011 as the primary measurement of CSO development results to be used by donor and recipient governments.
- 2) As many governments as possible publically endorse at, or prior to, the HLF4 all elements of an enabling environment for CSO development effectiveness and commit themselves to putting these elements in place for all CSOs carrying out development work.

At the Global Assembly in Istanbul in September, 2010, CSOs reached consensus on a set of eight global development effectiveness principles (the Istanbul Principles) and had intense discussions on essential elements for the enabling environment in at least two of the three categories of elements.¹ CSOs will finalize these and the remaining parts of the framework (implementation guidelines, performance indicators and accountability mechanisms) in regional consultations to be held between October 2010 and April/May, 2011. These will be presented at the second Global Assembly where CSOs will discuss and reach consensus on them.

Promotion of, and advocacy related to, the partially-agreed Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness should begin as of October 2010, now that the first Global Assembly has been held. In advocacy meetings, CSOs should make clear to their governments that CSOs will work hard to implement the Istanbul Principles in their work AND that they are expecting governments to honor their agreement made in Accra in 2008 to promote an enabling environment for CSO development work (paragraph 20 of the Accra Agenda for Action).

¹ The three categories are: a) fundamental elements provided by a government in any country (industrialized or developing) such as a legal and regulatory framework to CSOs to operate freely, freedom of association, speech, etc.; b) those provided by a donor government to CSOs in the donor country and to CSOs in developing countries such as treating CSOs as strategic partners and providing appropriate funding mechanisms that are not burdensome; and c) those provided by recipient governments arising from government and CSO engagement in development such as engagement of CSOs in the formulation of the country's national development strategy.

Promotion and Advocacy

1. Persuade governments around the world (both donor and recipient) to endorse the set of CSO development effectiveness principles adopted at the Global Assembly (“the Istanbul principles”) as the main measurement to use to evaluate the development work of CSOs. Governments that endorse the principles during the coming months will be asked to advocate on behalf of CSOs to their peers in other countries so that all governments present at the 4th High Level Forum will endorse the Framework.

Development effectiveness principles have been formulated by CSOs in 55 national and regional consultations around the world. The set of eight synthesis principles agreed on by CSOs at the Global Assembly in Istanbul stands as civil society’s own framework that will guide the development work they carry out in the future. **CSOs want bilateral and multilateral donors and recipient governments to endorse these principles without changes and to agree to judge the development work of CSOs primarily by using them and not other measures created by donors and/or recipient governments.** Therefore, a primary promotional activity of CSOs from October 2010 to the second Global Assembly and beyond to the HLF4 in South Korea in late November 2011 will be to discuss these principles with government representatives in both industrialized and developing countries and to seek the agreement of these governments to endorse these principles as the primary measure of CSO development effectiveness.

Starting in October 2010, CSO platforms will be expected to organize meetings in their countries with their governments in order to present the principles, discuss them and gain endorsement of them. As soon as a government has endorsed the principles, this will be reported to the Open Forum secretariat for publication on its website to build momentum to persuade other governments to do the same.

2. Persuade representatives of donor and recipient governments, with which CSOs have contact and relationships, to promote the key elements of an enabling environment for CSO development work. Once a government endorses the elements, it would put them in place for all CSOs carrying out development work. In most cases, this will take quite some time. Like with the principles, as a government agrees to endorse the elements of the enabling environment, this will be reported to the Open Forum secretariat and their endorsement will be used to persuade other donor and recipient governments to do the same.

Targets

Targets for promotion and advocacy work by CSOs are, in order of priority:

- A) Representatives of national governments who will be present at the HLF4 in Busan are the most important targets. CSOs at the national level will work to promote the Open Forum asks with their governments.
- B) Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness: CSO representatives who are members of the Task Team will work with and through donor members of the Task Team to influence Cluster A and the wider Working Party on Aid Effectiveness. CSOs will also urge Task Team members to influence their governments toward Busan and create peer pressure among governments.

- C) Working Party on Aid Effectiveness: As members of the WP-EFF, Open Forum participants, together with Better Aid Coalition members, will work directly to promote the Open Forum asks in the WP-EFF.
- D) OECD/DAC: CSOs in donor countries will urge individual government donor agency representatives to influence the DAC.
- E) The Government of South Korea: By initial engagement through the Korean Civil Society Forum on International Development, the CSO platform.

In meetings with the Better Aid Coalition in Paris in late October, 2010, the Open Forum will discuss and agree on how Open Forum advocacy asks and strategy can be incorporated into the BAC overall advocacy strategy in the run-up to Busan.

Tools and Next Steps Necessary to Carry Out Promotion and Advocacy

This political strategy was endorsed by the Global Facilitation Group (GFG) of the Open Forum, on September 27th 2010 and discussed at a workshop during the Global Assembly. Now, a brief 2-3 page document that contains the Istanbul Principles and the key elements of the enabling environment [by category] – as determined in discussions during the Global Assembly -- will be prepared as the primary promotional/advocacy document for use by CSOs in their work with the Task Team, governments, the WP-EFF, the OECD/DAC and the South Korean Government as the host of the HLF4.

In the weeks following the Global Assembly, a detailed work plan will be prepared regarding targets, actions to be taken and by whom, as well as a timeline.

The first step for CSO representatives who attended the Global Assembly will be to present the Istanbul Principles to the CSO community in their countries for discussion and endorsement before beginning any national advocacy strategy.

Once the CSO community has endorsed the Istanbul Principles at the national level in a particular country, CSOs will prepare a specific advocacy strategy that will take into consideration the particular political and developmental context in that country.

In some instances, advocacy towards regional organizations, such as SADCC, ASEAN, etc. may be undertaken prior to or instead of advocacy to specific governments. If such regional bodies endorse the principles, they could, in turn, apply pressure on individual governments within their purview.

In the same vein, advocacy to certain UN bodies and programs may be useful so that such bodies can apply pressure on individual governments.

The Open Forum will need to develop a media strategy to promote the Istanbul Principles and the adoption of an enabling environment for CSO development work.

Progress on the promotion and advocacy work of CSOs active in the Open Forum will be reviewed at every GFG meeting and in between these meetings, by the Consortium which will send an

advocacy report to the GFG following each of their monthly phone call meetings. A progress report will be written prior to the second Global Assembly for discussion there.

Adjustments to this advocacy strategy and next steps regarding the Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness in the lead-up to the 4th High Level Forum in South Korea will be determined at the second Global Assembly.

Advocacy asks for post-HLF4 will only be developed as we get much closer to the High Level Forum, itself. These will depend on progress made in the interim.