

# **Minutes of the Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Dialogue Platform Constitutive Meeting**

Brussels, 24 October 2023

## **1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting**

The agenda for the Constitutive Meeting of the Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Dialogue Platform was collaboratively developed in partnership with a group of PFD members having conducted preparatory work on the Global Gateway Dialogue Platform, consisting of civil society organizations (CSOs) and associations of local authorities (LAs).

## **2. Nature of the meeting**

The Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Dialogue Platform Constitutive Meeting was an invitation-only meeting for selected dialogue platform members and EU officials. It was organised back-to-back with the first Global Gateway Forum, in hybrid format.

The meeting was organised in two parts: the first part (14:00 to 15:00) with the Commissioner for International Partnerships interacting with dialogue platform members on key issues in relation to GG, the second part (15:00 to 16:30) with Commission staff and platform members to discuss the role and upcoming activities of the Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Dialogue Platform.

## **3. Main points discussed**

### **Part 1: CSO/LA Dialogue Platform Meeting with EU Commissioner for International Partnerships**

This first meeting of the CSO and LA Dialogue was opened by Jutta Urpilainen, European Commissioner for International Partnerships. She focused on four points:

- Dialogue Platform as a framework for structured engagement with CSOs and LAs in the implementation of Global Gateway.
- Global Gateway as EU's vehicle for advancing progress on sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- Reducing inequalities as key priority; She highlighted particularly the recently launched inequality marker, which serves as a tool to enhance understanding and monitoring of the impact of efforts on the ground.
- Global Gateway, as a multi-actor partnership. She stressed the importance of collaboration with the private sector through the Business Advisory Group, as well as with civil society organisations and local authorities through the Dialogue Platform to allow to better reflect on Global Gateway flagships and gather valuable input for future engagement.

After the opening, several dialogue platform members (CONCORD, ITUC, ICA, PLATFORMA-CEMR, FLACMA, Transparency International, WECF) intervened on three main overarching themes: *Good practices in addressing inequalities*; *Stakeholder engagement and interaction on the ground to address inequalities*, and *Impact investments needed from the Global Gateway*. The following key points were raised within this framework:

- CSOs are eager to make valuable contributions through their experience and evidence-based knowledge. This can be best achieved by early engagement in project design and by sharing information on how projects are being implemented on the ground. Global Gateway can contribute to combating inequalities by addressing intersectionality, multidimensionality and by ensuring policy coherence for development.
- In order to be successful, the GG strategy needs to make clear references to guiding principles and responsible business conduct. Social partners are pivotal in promoting a rights-based approach and the respect of labour standards, decent and quality jobs that ensure safety and secure living conditions are crucial for Global Gateway.
- It is important to strengthen regulatory frameworks and an enabling environment for CSOs and LAs participation, also in the light of shrinking democratic space for CSOs in different parts of the world.
- Localisation and access to impact funds are crucial. CSOs and LAs are deeply rooted in communities, they play a vital role in addressing inequalities and in finding solutions to local issues. Shift required towards a decentralised model of cooperation that fortifies local authorities and actively engages citizens. Need to address the current imbalance between well-equipped national institutions and under-resourced local bodies. Need to structurally engage local authorities.
- Targets. Enhance the use of markers to improve the monitoring of Global Gateway implementation, with a focus on addressing inequalities. Draw from the experience of the gender marker and consider setting new targets. E.g., At least 85% of Global Gateway projects contribute to inequality reduction and 20% are principally about inequality reduction.
- Transparency. Strengthen transparency and accountability in (1) the implementation of Global Gateway – a significant portion of ODA is currently lost due to corruption; and (2) the selection and operation of Global Gateway flagship projects.
- Gender-responsive financing. Create an enabling environment for women-led businesses through blended financing modalities and reduced interest rates.

## **Part 2: CSO/LA Dialogue Platform Meeting with EU officials**

This session provided the opportunity for an overview of the Global Gateway strategy and state of play, including concrete examples showcasing the contribution that GG can offer to partner countries. This was followed by a short presentation of the Dialogue Platform's purpose, rules of operation and engagement, as set out in the call for expressions of interest for the selection of members.

### **1. Key points raised by the Commission:**

- New challenging context and geopolitical landscape. GG main rationale and overall objectives, key investment areas and implementation modalities, key principles

informing the Global Gateway as a value-based strategy, flagship projects with operational milestones in 2023.

- GG contribution to addressing inequalities, SDGs. Commitment to high standards, sustainability, and impact crucial to demonstrate that value-driven investments can deliver positive outcomes.
- Concrete examples of GG partnerships in critical raw materials, encompassing not just mining but the entire value chain, from exploration to processing and refining, hard and soft infrastructure (skills development), cooperation on research and innovation, alignment on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards, as well as a stakeholder consultation process.
- Dialogue Platform as a working group of the existing Policy Forum on Development and part of the GG governance; it will complement consultations of civil society in partner countries through EU Delegations and consultation with the private sector within the newly established Business Advisory Group (BAG).

## 2. Key points raised by CSOs and LAs:

- Ensure transparency and provide regular updates on the Global Gateway rollout, particularly at the local level; Key to build a successful partnership is to involve CSOs and LAs right from the start and provide access to information well in advance of project implementation.
- Facilitate engagement of platform members' local networks with EU Delegations to enable the sharing of experience and expertise and to strengthen local dialogue around GG flagships.
- Ensure that the Dialogue Platform can contribute to monitoring value-based investments.
- Establish a shared space for discussion and collaboration with private sector counterparts (BAG)
- Co-creation in defining dialogue platform's principles and ways of working together should remain a priority. Relevant contributions from the Dialogue Platform will depend on having enough time to consult.
- Other interventions pointed at the importance of building a coherent narrative on why partner countries will benefit from joining GG partnerships. The Dialogue Platform could provide a contribution on those points.
- Finally, several participants enquired about the GG Forum and the reasons for the (limited) participation of civil society organisations and asked for greater and timely involvement in future editions.

## 4. Conclusions

The constitutive Dialogue Platform meeting provided valuable contributions from participants that set the frame for follow up work. CSOs and LAs have a double role to play in enhancing effectiveness and sustainability of the Global Gateway strategy, by sharing knowledge and experience and by ensuring adherence to key principles also enshrined in the Global Gateway strategy, such as good governance and high standards, transparency and equal partnerships, human rights-based approach, as well as for monitoring and oversight. Reducing inequalities in the frame of Global Gateway is a shared priority for the Commission and platform members. Localization plays a pivotal role, and it is important to collaboratively identify ways to establish linkages between the dialogue platform's activities and national level dialogue.

## **Next steps**

- Terms of Reference for the group. Within the “broad parameters” set in the call for expressions of interest, Dialogue Platform members will share the responsibility to further shape the Dialogue Platform’s operational modalities and the priorities it will pursue.
- Steering Group. A “call for volunteers” was announced and interested organisations were requested to show their interest by November 10, 2023. The inaugural Steering Group meeting will take place shortly after the group is constituted.
- Dialogue Platform members were invited to actively engage through our designated online platform. A link to join this platform was provided, enabling members to continue discussions and collaborative work online.

## **5. Next meeting**

The next significant milestone regarding meetings will be the inaugural Steering Group meeting, which will take place at a date to be defined shortly after the group is established.