

PFD in Brief: Second regional meeting of the Policy Forum on Development Asia and Pacific region: Bangkok, 24 - 25 June, 2015

The second regional meeting of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD) was held in Bangkok on the 24th and 25th of June. The meeting mobilized more than 60 representatives from civil society organisations (CSOs) and associations of Local Authorities (LAs) from the Asia and Pacific region, the private sector, regional institutions and representatives from the European Commission, the European Union (EU) Delegation to Thailand and EU Member States. This note presents the **key messages** and summary of the meeting proceedings.

1. *Ensure mutual accountability in a Post 2015 framework. This includes favouring accountability mechanisms to observe environmental and human rights violations, and supporting accountability mechanisms for corporations, such as the Business and Human Rights mechanism*
2. *Urge private sector compliance with tax obligations and contributions to decent working conditions.*
3. *Encourage the replication of laws and regulations that promote sustainable development*
4. *Pursue the harmonisation of donors' practices and monitoring mechanisms. Beyond overseas development assistance (ODA), this should also include: investment and finance agreements, loans and policy positions in multilateral negotiations, including climate and human rights*
5. *Protect the institutionalized space for CSOs and support CSO activity at different levels: 1) promoting participation in national/international level policies and implementation, 2) recognizing their role in all stages of development planning; and 3) investing in them through capacity development schemes*
6. *Build capacity in countries (including in government administrations), particularly at the local level, to support development policies, regulations and practices; as well as proper data collection*
7. *Ensure that the EU's Aid for Trade policy strategy is coherent with international Human Rights norms and standards to play its role in achieving poverty eradication and sustainable development*
8. *Encourage the autonomy of governments to maintain policy space to promote pro-development laws, independent of preferential trade agreement conditionalities*
9. *Ensure that gender equality and protection against gender-based violence are incorporated into all aspects of policy and programmatic planning and implementation*
10. *Consider thematic meetings of the PFD as a way to further the important work taking place via this forum*

Session I: The EU's engagement with CSOs and LAs

Mr. Michel Laloge, Head of Sector for Local Authorities (LAs) and Decentralization, at the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) and Ms Luisa Ragher, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Thailand, welcomed all participants and emphasized how much the EU values working closely with CSOs and LAs. Ms Maria-Theresa Nera-Lauron, Member of the PFD Task Team, on behalf of CSOs, noted how far we still are from the aspirations of ending poverty and achieving a decent life for everyone. She commented that "even the Asia and Pacific region, considered an engine of global growth and centre of emerging economies, is still facing challenges of inequality, poverty, environmental destruction and impacts of climate change." Mr Anwar Hussain, Member of the PFD Task Team, on behalf of LAs, spoke about the increasingly relevant role of LAs in development, by providing improved and efficient municipal services to citizens.

Mr. Michel Laloge and Ms Salima Chitalia (DG DEVCO) presented the the EU Communications on CSOs in Development and LAs in Development; the CSO Roadmap process; and the EU's Territorial Approach to Development (TALD) and the CSO-LA Multi-Indicative Programme for 2014-2020. Regional examples of engagement included: Ms Pansy Ton Thein, of the Local Resource Centre in Myanmar, who reviewed the remarkable progress made by CSOs in the last decade, particularly in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, from emergency self-help groups to the consolidation of development organizations and a more fluent dialogue with the national government; and Mr Neil Maharaj, PIANGO, who introduced both the experience in Fiji and the context of the process of regional integration of the Pacific Islands.



Session II: The Global Scene

Mr Riccardo Mesiano, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), provided an update on the post-2015 agenda process and kicked off a lively panel of regional voices, from CSOs and LAs to cooperatives and the private sector, who enriched the discussions with points around: country ownership; the need for a human rights-based approach to development; and the need for all stakeholders to be held accountable. The panellists raised the theme of development justice, including the following 5 key pillars: i) Redistributive justice aiming at redistributing resources, wealth, power and opportunities to all human beings equitably; ii) Economic justice aiming at developing economies that enable dignified lives, accommodate for needs and facilitate capabilities, employment and livelihoods available to all; iii) Gender and social justice, aiming at eliminating all forms of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion that pervade our communities; iv) Environmental justice

for collective, harmonious development and ending harmful extraction of all forms; and v) Accountability to peoples, requiring participatory, democratic governance. Participants included: Ms Kate Lappin (APWLD), Ms Erin Palomares, (ROA-AP), Mr Harsh Jaitli (VANII), Mr Balu Iyer (ICA-AP), Mr Kesarralal Gunasekera, Deputy Mayor of Dehiwela Mt. Lavinia (Sri Lanka) and Mr Abdul Wahab Abu Bakar, Malaysian Employers Federation. Ms Maria-Theresa Nera-Lauron moderated.



Mr Michael Ellis, DG DEVCO, provided an overview of the main points that describe the EU's approach to the Post 2015 process, including i) enabling and conducive policies; ii) capacity building; iii) domestic public finance; iv) international public finance; v) private sector; vi)

trade; vii) science, technology and innovation; and viii) migration. He stressed the fact that there should be one overarching, inclusive and transparent monitoring, accountability and review (MAR) framework for the whole post 2015 agenda operating at local, regional and international level.

Ms Aizhamal Bakashova (PA Shazet) moderated a panel on climate change and the COP 21. Mr Gregory Tsouris, (DG Clima) provided a comprehensive presentation on the main aspects that characterize the EU's position and highlighted priorities for the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, including: i) addressing mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, capacity-building, transparency of action and support in a comprehensive way; ii) keeping global average temperature increase below 2°C vs. pre-industrial levels; and iii) broadening participation. Mr Azra Sayeed (Roots for Equity), presented the reality and consequences of climate change from the perspective of a developing country and criticised instruments created by developed economies that follow a market-based approach. Mr Nilo Villanueva, Mayor of Municipality of Mabini, described the experience of LAs in the Philippines and repeated the concern of other speakers that the EU should encourage multi-national companies operating in the region to respect and promote environmental standards and include mitigation and adaptation in the forefront of their responsibilities.

Working groups based on these discussions developed recommendations, including: encouraging private sector responsibility; enhancing donors' coordination; supporting CSOs and LAs in capacity building and protection of space in which to work; building enough capacity in countries to support environmental policies, regulations and practices; and ensuring the accountability of all stakeholders in the post-2015 agenda.

Session III: EU regional programmes in Asia and the Pacific



Ms Jenni Lundmark from the EU Delegation to Thailand led an overview of EU programmes in the region and participants discussed examples of EU cooperation with the ASEAN region, including: ARISE (Support to ASEAN Economic Integration), SUPA (Sustainable Use of Peatlands and Haze Mitigation in ASEAN) and E-READI (Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument) programmes; Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) process [Ms Sunkyoung Lee, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)]; and the SWITCH-Asia Programme [Ms Sunkyoung Lee, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)], designed to promote sustainable consumption and production in the region. Ms Nuria Rodriguez-Aller and Mr Jean-François Miche, DG DEVCO, presented the EU Blending Mechanism and Ms Chloe Allio, DG DEVCO, presented the Garment Initiative, an initiative to look at the industry as a whole and focus on the

development of responsible supply chain management, by videoconference. Sub-regional working groups then discussed how the EU could support them in the implementation of the Post 2015 agenda. Recommendations included: i) capacity building of CSOs and LAs at the local level; ii) creating a structured national platform for CSOs and LAs; iii) providing technical assistance for studies and project development; and iv) ensuring that European companies adopt home standards when operating abroad.

Closing:

The meeting closed with a joint CSO-LA statement, requesting EU support in creating an enabling environment for CSOs and LAs; coordinating better financing mechanisms with other donors; and supporting accountability and transparency mechanisms, including for corporations. Mr. Antonio Tujan, IBON, on behalf of CSOs, and Ms. Bernadia Tjandradewi, UCLG ASPAC, on behalf of LAs, made final remarks, noting the importance of the forum, highlighting the theme of development justice and calling upon the EU to support the development of a high level forum to monitor SDG implementation. Mr. Michel Lalogue closed the Policy Forum by restating the EU's commitment to support development efforts in the region on an on-going basis and encouraging continued dialogue, particularly in the context of the different global events taking place both this year and next.



All presentations are available on [CISOCH](#) and more information also available on [C4D](#)

Annex 1. Joint CSO and LA Statement

Joint CSO and LA Statement on the Occasion of the 2nd Regional Meeting of the Policy Forum on Development in Asia Pacific June 24, 2015

We, 50 CSOs and LAs from Asia and the Pacific, gathered together at the 2nd Regional Policy Forum on Development on June 24-25 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Coming together, we have realized that CSOs, LAs, and their constituents, face some common issues and challenges in the field of development, which could be addressed with support from EU, through the following measures:

- Support the enabling environment for CSOs and LAs through measures such as:
 - CSO and LA participation in the development, implementation, and monitoring of policies and projects, at all levels (national, regional, and international).
 - Capacity building for CSOs and LAs to improve their own development effectiveness and accountability.
- Coordinate financing mechanism with other donors so as to avoid duplication and enhance synergies using need-based approaches, and moving from project-based to program-based funding.
- Capacity development for the implementation, monitoring and data collection, and evaluation of development policies.
- Supporting accountability mechanisms for corporations, such as the Business and Human Rights Mechanism
- Support more public-public and public-people partnerships in development cooperation.

We welcome and acknowledge the value of the PFD, as a space for policy debate, consultation and exchange of information and experiences on the EU's main policies and initiatives in the development field. In order to continue working together, more efficiently and effectively, deeper trust needs to be developed among the different actors involved to recognize their common vision and challenges, while respecting the differing contexts where they are coming from. More trust-building exercises are needed, and these will take a lot of time, commitment, openness, and resources.

In the spirit of moving forward, we recommend the continuation of the PFD with regularity, and with more structure through adopting thematic-based meetings, with the participation of relevant directorates of the EU, to address the different aspects of EU's development policy. This will entail greater harmonization and synergies among the units of the EU, which handle different concerns and themes.

The upcoming evaluation of the PFD presents a good opportunity to reflect on its experiences for the past two years, and revisit its mandate to make it into an effective space for policy influencing.

CSOs and LAs will continue working together with the EU with the common objective of making development work for the people and the planet.
