

**Title of session:** Revision of Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA): Towards a partnership between EU and ACP countries after 2020: which priorities and what role for CSOs and LAs?

**Objective(s):**

- Identify objectives and priorities for the post-2020 framework
- Identify main challenges and opportunities as regards CSO's and LAs role that a future partnership should help to address and grasp, taking into account the changed context
- Take stock of the current ACP-EU framework and assess, through the presentation of case studies and examples from CSOs and LAs. What worked well and should be kept? What did not work well and should not be repeated?

**Background:**

The Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) has explicitly acknowledged the key role that actors such as Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Local authorities (LAs), the Private sector and Parliaments play in the development process since 2000. ACP countries and the European Union legally committed themselves to involving CSOs, LAs and the Private sector in all phases of the cooperation process and to providing funds for strengthening them as partners in development cooperation.

The revision of the CPA provides the occasion to discuss new challenges and opportunities important for PFD stakeholders. In addition to the public consultation on the CPA carried out in October 2015, the EC is undertaking an evaluation of the current CPA, which will be presented in March 2016. This will be followed by an impact assessment about the future of the agreement. Eventually, by the end of the year, EU Member States will begin negotiations about the future shape of the CPA. It is expected that the negotiations with the ACP countries will start in the course of 2017.

Therefore, the 2016 meeting of the PFD is a chance to discuss key aspects of the partnership agreement and hear from PFD stakeholders as to how the revised CPA could best support them in achieving shared development goals.

**Expected Results:**

- Key messages and recommendations of CSOs and LAs are taken up by the EU and ACP secretariat to inform the post-2020 reflection process
- Recognition of CSOs and LAs as key actors in the post-Cotonou reflection process and identification of spaces for political dialogue at EU and ACP level
- New ideas and recommendations are included in the on-going work of the PFD

**Methodology:** 3 hour 15 minutes session with two panels (including 30 minute break and 15 minute wrap up)

Moderator: Jan Orbie, Director of Centre for EU Studies, Ghent University

Speakers:

- H.E. Patrick I. Gomes, Secretary General, ACP Secretariat
- Koen Doens, Cotonou Task Force, Director, Development Coordination, East and Southern Africa, DEVCO
- Robert Hessel van Dijk, Team Leader, EU Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands
- Kristin de Peyron, Head of Division, Pan-African Affairs, EEAS

### **I. Introductory Panel (1 hour)**

- Introductory statements by speakers on the perspectives of the Cotonou partnership post-2020 addressing:
  - What is the state of play of negotiations: timeline, content, issues, etc.
  - Which post-CPA scenarios are envisaged by the EU and what kind of impact could these scenarios have on the future of development policy? (international cooperation?)
  - What is the post-CPA vision from the ACP Group standpoint?
  - What involvement of CSOs and LAs is envisaged throughout the process and what would be their role in the future framework?

### **Coffee break**

### **II. Experts Panel and plenary discussion (1 hour)**

This is followed by questions by the moderator, which are linked to the objectives of the session, to which all panellists will provide short feedback.

CSOs/LAs panellists:

- Anne-Cécile Coly, Member of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee of the European Economic and Social Committee, member of the *Union nationale des syndicats du Sénégal* (UNSAS)
- Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, UCLG Africa
- Gina Wharton, Advocacy Advisor, IPPF European Network (IPPF EN)/ CONCORD Cotonou Working Group
- Brenda King, Chief Executive, Africa and Caribbean Diversity; Member of the Employers' Group of the European Economic
- Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General, CEMR

Three rounds of questions from moderator:

#### *1. Priorities for a new partnership*

The current Cotonou Partnership is a full-fledged agreement with provisions and principles of which some might still be valid for the new agreement and others need to be changed. It might therefore be important not to adopt a tabula rasa approach when looking into the content of a

new agreement but to safeguard key elements from the current CPA, while adapting them to the new geographical and historical context as well as global development policies (e.g. Agenda 2030).

- What are the future priorities? Which elements of the current partnership are worth preserving and which aspects should be changed?
- What are main challenges and opportunities for CSO's and LA's which a partnership should help address and grasp?

## *2. Future elements of the partnership*

The future shape of the partnership needs to take into consideration important elements that will enable realistic results. These elements include, among others, a renewed institutional set-up, a more flexible approach according to different regional needs, the possibility of including the EDF in the EU budget, and the impacts of the differentiation approach.

- What kind of partnership after 2020? E.g. institutional set-up, regionalisation, budgetisation, differentiation, etc.

## *3. Time permitting or closing of moderator - link to Tuesday's session on EE:*

The EU has increasingly supported CSOs and LAs in its Development policy. The new partnership will demand an active role at all levels and in different capacities (decision-makers, watchdogs, implementers, etc.) How can we ensure an inclusive approach and effective implementation?

- How to strengthen a multi-stakeholders approach within a future partnership, going beyond a mainly government to government relationship? What kind of tools for the effective inclusion of CSOs and LAs should be developed after 2020?

## **III. Questions from the audience to the panel** (30 minutes)

## **IV. Closing** (15 minutes)