

**Multi-stakeholder Policy Forum on Development - Middle East and Neighbourhood South  
(Jordan, 3-4 October 2017)**

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. The political, social and economic context in the region reflects an increasing number of concerns that require particular attention, from inequality, poverty, unemployment and social exclusion to growing internal and cross border political instability. Dialogue is more important than ever.  
**Recommendation:** To adopt national policies addressing the challenges with proper strategies and plans, resulting from consolidated channels of permanent dialogue and trust building between national governments, CSOs and LAs, and to develop instruments to follow-up on progress towards shared goals.
2. Corruption and abuse of power are endemic in the region. They contribute to the erosion of public confidence and depressed economic and social development. Many other countries have been encouraging and benefiting from that situation, aggravating the problems of the region.  
**Recommendation:** Both the EU and EU Member States need to support systemic reforms and share responsibility for enhancing democracy, participation, accountability and a rights-based approach.
3. Civil society, by definition, is a highly diverse space where different forms of civic structures exist. Many of these structures have improved during the last decades: they elaborated visions in response to key challenges as well as provided tools for advocacy and policy change. However, civic space is challenged by severe measures undertaken by governments, shrinking the enabling environment in a very precarious way, with CSOs witnessing an increasing amount of arbitrary actions against them.  
**Recommendation:** Work together to enhance the protection of civic space, defenders of human rights and various social actors.
4. Inconsistencies remain regarding the EU approach to Policy Coherence for Development, in particular, the compatibility of the support to the 2030 Agenda and a rights-based approach to development with recurrent trade and investment practices that often conflict with globally shared development aspirations.  
**Recommendation:** Move forward ensuring policy coherence with rights-based and people-centred visions that include a full commitment to a partnership supporting the achievement of sustainable development as a shared priority.
5. The 2030 Agenda provides a good collective narrative to build bridges, with a comprehensive approach where all its goals must be realized and implemented by all the involved actors, including CSOs, LAs and the private sector. Two years after the 2030 Agenda was agreed, progress varies considerably across the region, but there are some positive trends, including leadership and capacity building in some countries. However, a big gap remains between theory and practice.  
**Recommendation:** Support inclusive national processes with increased awareness of the 2030 Agenda in the region as well as the active and effective participation of CSOs and LAs in both national debates and implementation.
6. Despite the importance of local governments in the implementation of global development goals, they remain heavily under resourced to fulfil their role. Global development funds destined to local governments account for about 2% and the region is no exception to that. At the same time, consultation with local governments remains very limited.  
**Recommendation:** Reaffirm the commitment to partnership, coherence between principles and policies, and increase financial support to enhance LA involvement in facing challenges and in coordinating solutions at different levels to tackle the challenges that the region is facing.

7. The notion of *resilience*, together with the new paradigm of security and development, is being redefined to focus on the root causes of increased insecurity/instability and migration as well as the means to solve them together. It is essential to adopt human rights standards and dedicate more time to understanding differences and particularities across territories to avoid a “one size fits all” approach across the region.  
**Recommendation:** Promote a rights-based understanding and exchange about the causes of the current crises and migration trends in specific contexts and support adequate means to address them properly and together.
8. Lack of opportunities (and specifically employment) is one of the common challenges for the countries in the region and affects the state of social systems, increasing inequality gaps and social exclusion. Women, people with disabilities and youth are particularly affected and require specific attention.  
**Recommendation:** Review past EU programs and interventions that target social inequalities and use SDG targets and indicators in new initiatives in order to develop an increased space for awareness as well as improved standards for gender equality, youth and people with disabilities.
9. The region has witnessed an increasing number of initiatives to protect the environment, a more efficient use of natural resources, improved waste policies and the application of new techniques to different sectors such as water or agriculture. However, those initiatives remain both limited and selective and there is a lack of a more systemic approach to tackle the environmental challenges that the region faces.  
**Recommendation:** Support a more comprehensive approach to environmental protection, including a better understanding of the impact of climate change in the region, transferring clean and renewable technology, the appropriate supporting policies, legislation and programs and more active participation of CSOs and LAs in planning and impact assessment of environmental initiatives.
10. The region lacks a strong infrastructure of networks and partnerships of both LAs and CSOs to advocate for collective action. The concept of building strong partnerships is essential to support and accompany dialogue platforms with the participation of all actors involved, including governments, CSOs, LAs and the private sector.  
**Recommendation:** Work together to strengthen the environment for global partnerships and cooperation between multiple actors, which can gradually establish more and better consultations, roadmaps and strategies, pulling together ideas and resources, to project dialogue into real action.