June 24, 2021

Letter to the Chair and the Members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) with regard to an OECD DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society

Dear Chair and Members of the OECD DAC,

The DAC CSO Reference Group is writing to seek your full support for a positive decision on an OECD DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in the coming weeks. We fully endorse such a Recommendation and have welcomed the thorough engagement with the DAC and the DCD in the development of this policy instrument over the past several years, including the CSO Reference Group's consolidated feedback from nearly fifty CSOs on a recent draft of the Instrument.

An OECD DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society will encourage the application by DAC members of the collective body of knowledge developed by the DAC through years of analytical work and engagement with civil society. Such a Recommendation is commensurate with the level of trust that we feel is reflected in our current engagement with the DAC, as well as the critical importance of these issues. It acknowledges the widening range of conditions affecting civic space and an enabling environment for CSOs across a growing number of countries. In this spirit we hope that the Recommendation continues to reflect

- The importance of specific measures supporting an inclusive and independent civil society and fully advancing the respect, protection and promotion of open civic space, in line with fundamental rights of peaceful assembly, association, expression and participation;
- The importance of structuring donor support, including its financial support (core and program-based support), for civil society as development actors in their own right;
- The importance of reflecting human rights relating to freedom of association, assembly and expression in donor partnerships with the private sector, where private sector initiatives may undermine community development and harm human rights defenders;
- The importance of enabling laws and regulations, reflecting CSOs as actors that have a positive impact on terrorism prevention;
- The importance of promoting and investing in the leadership of local/national civil society actors in partner countries or territories; and
- The importance of all DAC members following the basic principles, values and directions in the Recommendation, in the context of their differing legal, institutional and policy frameworks.

CSOs have welcomed, while also offering suggestions to strengthen, the third pillar in this draft Recommendation regarding incentivizing CSOs own development effectiveness. Many CSOs and CSO platforms have been taking measures to address our own shortcomings, which is our responsibility as development actors in our own right. We will continue to do so and be held accountable to high standards of practice as reflected in the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness.

We look forward to a positive endorsement by DAC members for an OECD DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society. The Reference Group stands ready and eager to work with the DAC and all Members in the progressive implementation of its commitments, including active participation in the creation of any guidance that would follow the Recommendation, as well as in other follow-up and implementation.

Approval for this Recommendation will send a powerful message about the essential importance of inclusive democratic development options, as we together tackle with urgency conditions of growing poverty and inequality, a climate emergency and a global pandemic.

Respectfully,
On behalf of the DAC CSO Reference Group and the 122 formally endorsing organisations listed hereafter

1. ABONG, Brazil
2. ACT Alliance
3. Act Church of Sweden
4. ActionAid
5. Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN)
6. African Coalition on Migration and Development
7. AidWatch Canada
8. Alga, Kyrgyzstan
9. Alliance 2015
10. Alliance for Sustainable Food Systems and Empowered Communities
11. Alliance Sud, Switzerland
12. Ambrela, CSO Platform, Slovakia
13. Angikar, Bangladesh
14. Aqua Alimenta
15. Asia Development Alliance (ADA)
16. Asociacion Nacional de Centros, Peru
17. Associação para a Cooperação Entre os Povos (ACEP), Guinea Bissau
18. Balkan Civil Society Development Network
19. Beginning - Tajikistán
20. CAFSO-WRAG for Development
21. Caritas Europe
22. Center for Legal Support of Women and Children NGO - Mehrjon, Uzbekistan
23. Civic Initiatives (Gradjanske Inicijative), Serbia
24. CIVICUS
25. Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development
26. Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS)
27. Co-ordination Office of the Austrian Bishops' Conference for International Development and Mission
28. Commonwealth Medical Trust
29. Cooperation Canada
30. Coordinadora de ONG de Desarrollo Espana
31. Coordinadora dela Mujer - Bolivia
32. Cordaid
33. Center for People's Development and Governance, Philippines
34. Centre for Research and Advocacy Manipur, India
35. CRIANÇA E DESENVOLVIMENTO INTEGRAL DE ANGOLA
36. Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity
37. CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness
38. DECA EQUIPO PUEBLO DE MEXICO
39. Democracy Education Center Mongolia
40. Diakonia
41. Dochas
42. Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research (EILER), Philippines
43. Education Technologies Initiatives Fund, Kazakhstan
44. Ekvilib Institute, Slovenia
45. Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation
46. Eurodad
47. Fastenopfer
48. Feminist League, Kazakhstan
49. FINGO - Finnish NGO Platform
50. Finn Church Aid, Finland
51. Folkekirkens Nødhjælp / DanChurchAid, Denmark
52. Food First Information Action Network of Sri Lanka (FIAN Sri Lanka)
53. Forum CIV, Sweden
54. Forum of Women's NGO of Kyrgystan
55. Forus International
56. Fundación Red Nicaragüense de Comercio Comunitario
57. Globalt Fokus
58. Global Responsibility - Austrian Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid
59. HEKS/EPER Swiss Church Aid
60. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Switzerland
61. IBON International
62. Icelandic Church Aid
63. Iktidor Public Organization, Tajikistán
64. IM Swedish Development Partner
65. Indigenous Peoples Organization Australia
66. Institute Povod, Slovenia
67. Inter Pares
68. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
69. Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC)
70. Kopin, Malta
71. Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KOCO), Republic of Korea
72. Kvinna Foundation, Sweden
73. Land Defense Coalition, Palestine
74. Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation
75. Lithuanian NGDO Platform (Vystomojo bendradarbiavimo platforma)
76. Martebe Plus Kazakhstan
77. Misean Cara - Mission Support from Ireland
78. Mission-21
79. NAVA - Niue Australian Vagahau Association
80. NGDO Platform, Portugal
81. NGO Federation of Nepal
82. Niu Vagahau Niue Victoria (NVNV)
83. Niue Netball Association Victoria
84. North-East Affected Area Development Society, India
85. Organization for Social and Economic Development, Afghanistan
86. Oxfam International
87. Pacificwin 2030
88. Pacific Australian Women's Consultative Standing Committee
89. Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
90. Partners Albania for Change and Development, Albania
91. Reality of Aid Africa
92. Reality of Aid - Asia Pacific
93. Reality of Aid Network
94. Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe – REPEM
95. Rwanda Development Organization-RDO
96. Savie asbl NGO LGBTIQ PGEL RDC
97. Skat Foundation
98. SLOGA - Slovenian Global Action
99. SMC Faith in Development, Sweden
100. Solidar Suisse
101. SPIN Plus Tajikistan
102. Sri Lanka Nature Group
103. Stiftung Horyzon, Switzerland
104. Swissaid
105. Swisscontact, Switzerland
106. Tanzania Coalition on Debt and Development
107. Trocaire
108. Tu Tagaloa Trust
109. Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC)
110. Tzuk Kim Pop Movement
111. Unité, Switzerland
112. Vaka Tiale Outrigger Canoe
113. Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition
114. Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Suisse
115. Vétérinaites Sans Frontières International (VSF International)
116. Village Watch Papua New Guinea
117. Vivamos Mejor
118. Wemos
119. Women of East-Sharkaeli
120. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
121. World of Equal Opportunities
122. Zavod KROG, Slovenia