

**CPDE Response Statement to 2018 High Level Political Forum¹
UN Headquarters, New York
9-18 July 2018**

The CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) calls on Member States to rekindle the spirit of cooperation that delivered the Agenda 2030, work together to redress the failure to reach consensus on a Ministerial Declaration in this year's High-Level Political Forum, and uphold the mandate and principles of effective development cooperation (EDC)² in order to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This outcome sets a worrying precedent for the HLPF and CPDE is concerned that the 2030 Agenda means of implementation have slimmer chance of delivering the commitments of the SDGs in many countries if this is to continue.

As the main mechanism for accountability of SDG implementation, the HLPF must provide the space to ensure that countries are transparent and accountable, have democratic ownership of their development strategies, undertake inclusive partnerships, and maintain a results focus built on the notion of leaving no one behind.

CPDE believes that in order to achieve the scale and ambition of the 2030 Agenda and realise the SDGs, UN and Member States must address the following concerns:

On the SDG Financing and development cooperation

The token reference to development cooperation in this year's Ministerial Declaration pales into insignificance compared to the importance given to the increasing role of private sector in development.

The mantra of billions to trillions³ gave many development partners licence to ignore the 0.7% GNI commitment. The widespread failure to meet this target is more disturbing given the financing needs to realise the SDGs. Many governments now suggest that financing flows must come from sources other than official development assistance (ODA). This has been used as a way to diminish the relevance of aid and divert away from the abandonment of the 0.7% commitment.

This is complemented by approaches to financing development that puts public funds as a mere last resort, as seen in the current model of the World Bank. These approaches pose issues to achieving policy coherence for effective development cooperation, and also raise the question on whether big private financing is the most appropriate means to addressing inequalities.

¹The CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) is a platform of civil society organisations, spanning seven regions and eight sectors, engaged in the discussion of effective development cooperation and development finance. CPDE sent a delegation to engage in the 2018 HLPF. These engagements included participation in official sessions, side events and special events, including through direct interventions. CPDE also actively engaged the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism to further diffuse the platform's key messages.

² The principles of EDC are democratic ownership, accountability and transparency of all development actors, focus on results for the people, and inclusive development partnership

³ As articulated by multilateral development banks such as the World Bank Group

CPDE reiterates the importance of ODA in financing the SDGs, calls on development partners to meet the longstanding 0.7% GNI commitment, as well as to rethink the current blanket assumption that favours the private sector in development cooperation.

On the accountability of the private sector

Governments and international financial institutions (IFIs) at the HLPF believe that the private sector will be the key partner in implementing the SDGs and will step in to fill the gap in SDG financing. CPDE expresses strong reservations on the role the private sector in the 2030 Agenda, whether it through the promotion of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) or blended financing, especially if the necessary systems of accountability are not in place.

Moreover, the issue of private sector accountability should cover multinational private sector's role in unsustainable production and consumption patterns. This is a major factor in environmental deterioration, negatively impacting on people's access to water, food, and the efforts to eradicate poverty.

CPDE calls on the UN and its Member States to develop and enforce accountability systems to ensure that both public and private actors are complying with existing frameworks, including International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UN protocols, UN guiding principles on Business and Human Rights, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines for Multi National Enterprises. Systems must be in place to ensure that these financing modalities are aligned with democratically-agreed national development strategies, are fully transparent and accountable, and in full compliance with international human rights principles – especially the people's right to development – as well as environmental standards.

In this regard, the role of CSOs, trade unions, workers representatives, and other peoples' and grassroots organisations in keeping enterprises and governments accountable is critical. In the absence of these mechanisms, rights of the people, and accountability to the public are both at risk in the name of profit.

On inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships, the voluntary national reviews and commitment to CSO Enabling Environment

CPDE welcomes the space and opportunity provided to CSOs to engage and intervene during this year's HLPF, in particular during its thematic week. However, we express our concern that the Ministerial Segment, where Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are presented, remains an artificial dialogue, which does not allow civil society organisations (CSOs) to meaningfully participate or engage governments on the content of review presentations.

While the 2030 Agenda has recognised the important role of CSOs in all aspects of implementation, monitoring, and the follow-up processes, this largely remains in rhetoric and is missing in actual implementation. This year's VNR process is a clear indication that there is a need to improve the inclusivity of this process.

CPDE stresses the need for genuine multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs). MSPs should include all development actors to embody inclusiveness, transparency and accountability for all actors, and underpins the human rights-based approach to development.

CPDE believes that the VNR implementation framework has yet to integrate and implement the Effective Development Cooperation principles that will ensure meaningful CSO participation. Despite civil society's engagement, its role as interlocutor of peoples' issues, and track record in presenting sustainable alternative models, the process fails to recognise and fully utilise that CSOs as independent development actors in their own right. This is in contrast to international private sector whose supposed positive role has been affirmed by various governments.

In this regard, minimum standards must be set for the institutionalised participation of civil society and peoples' organisations at all levels of the review process. More broadly, the platform calls on Member States to reverse the trend of closing spaces for civil society even at national level, towards enabling meaningful participation in national development processes and country-level SDG monitoring.

The future of Agenda 2030 and the HLPF

CPDE believes that addressing these concerns will be critical for implementing the SDGs and realising the 2030 Agenda. CSOs are concerned that Member States are backtracking on many of their commitments at this year's HLPF. The platform will continue to call for accountability of Member States to these commitments.

CPDE remains committed to the realisation of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. The SDGs will not be achieved without the involvement of all development actors, especially civil society representing the broadest development stakeholders. As societies face the challenge of becoming resilient and sustainable for this generation and the next, CPDE maintains that development cooperation has an important role to play in addressing the developmental needs of all, especially the poor and the marginalised.