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# The Accra Agenda for Action From a Democracy, Human Rights and Gender Equality Perspective:

A Broadened and More Inclusive Aid Effectiveness Agenda



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**Authors:** Team Democracy and Public Administration

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# A Broadened and More Inclusive Aid Effectiveness Agenda

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this note is to set out the results of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) from a democracy, human rights (HR) and gender equality perspective implying a broadened and more inclusive aid effectiveness (AE) agenda. The note also sets out opportunities, challenges and commitments of this broadened and inclusive AE agenda.

## 2. BACKGROUND: THE PARIS DECLARATION AND THE FIVE PRINCIPLES

The AE agenda is built around five principles established in the Paris Declaration (PD):

1. Ownership
2. Alignment
3. Harmonisation
4. Managing for results
5. Mutual accountability

The five principles in themselves support democratic values, processes and institutions. Ownership, alignment and harmonisation are to a large extent about respecting the leadership of the partner country, respecting and using the democratic processes and institutions of the partner country and creating the preconditions for the country to assume the leadership. Managing for results is about shifting the focus from inputs and activities, and the risk of donor micro management, to results. The fifth principle of mutual accountability implies making not only the partner countries, but also donors, accountable for results.

After summarising the experience of these five principles, AAA strengthens the commitment to these principles and broadens their definition. The effect is a broader and more inclusive AE agenda.

## 3. THE BROADENED AND MORE INCLUSIVE AID EFFECTIVENESS AGENDA

The AE agenda has become broader as a result of the inclusion of gender equality, HR and environment, of broadening ownership to include non-government actors and of broadening the mutual accountability principle to also embrace domestic accountability. The AE agenda has become more inclusive by emphasising the role of civil society organisa-

tions (CSOs) in development cooperation and the role of parliaments, local governments, local CSOs, media, and the private sector in the development process of the partner countries. The demand-side of governance, i.e. the claims of citizens, is given increased emphasis.

By including gender equality, HR and environment in the agenda and by putting more emphasis on results, the agenda has further increased the focus on effectiveness of aid, i.e. on outcomes and impacts.

The implications of AAA and hence the core of the broadened and more inclusive AE agenda can be summarised in six points:

1. *Recognition of the importance of gender equality, respect for HR and environmental sustainability for the results of aid i.e. aid effectiveness.* AAA §3 states that democracy, gender equality, respect for HR and environmental sustainability are prime engines for development and cornerstones for achieving enduring impact. “It is vital that all our policies address these issues in a more systematic and coherent way.” AAA §13 c) commits developing countries and donors to “...ensure that their respective development policies and programmes are designed and implemented in ways consistent with their agreed international commitments on gender equality, human rights, disability and environmental sustainability.”
2. This recognition is strengthened by AAA §23, which gives *further importance to delivering results* stating that “We will be judged by the impacts that our collective efforts have on the lives of poor people”.
3. *The inclusion of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the AE agenda and the recognition of them as independent development actors in their own rights.* A commitment to deepen the engagement with CSOs and to provide an enabling environment that maximises their contributions to development (AAA §20).
4. *A broadening of ownership* to include not only central government institutions and actors, but also parliament, local governments, CSOs, research institutes, media and the private sector. In particular, the critical role and responsibility of parliaments in ensuring country ownership is acknowledged (AAA §13).
5. *A strengthened commitment to use country systems* by stating that “Donors agree to use country systems as the first option for aid programmes in support of activities managed by the public sector” (AAA §15 a)). AAA also states that donors should transparently state their rationale for not using systems when this option is chosen.
6. A further recognition of the *importance of accountability and transparency* and in particular domestic accountability. AAA §24 states that “We will be more accountable and transparent to our public for results.”

## 4. OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND COMMITMENTS

The broadened and more inclusive AE agenda gives support to, and provides opportunities for, the work on democracy, HR and gender equality. It also resulted in some commitments for the work on democracy, HR and gender equality and it implies some challenges. Sida needs to use these opportunities, meet these challenges and deliver on these commitments in its continued work with AE, democracy, HR and gender equality.

The broadened and inclusive AE agenda implies *commitments* and provides *opportunities* to:

1. Intensify the work to integrate gender equality, HR and environment in all development cooperation.
  - a) Use human rights and gender equality principles and standards in goal and results formulation; promote the inclusion of indicators that are sensitive to HR, gender equality and environment obligations and principles in results frameworks.
  - b) More systematically assess if/how plans and policies on gender equality, HR and environment translate into sufficient budget allocations.
  - c) Use the HR and gender equality systems with their conventions, treaty bodies and special procedures to establish broader ownership.
  - d) Use the HR and gender equality systems with their conventions, treaty bodies and special procedures, which identify rights holders and duty bearers, to strengthen accountability and use these as a basis for donor harmonization and prioritization.
2. Continue supporting parliaments in their legislative, representative, oversight and conflict resolution roles;
3. Continue supporting and developing the capacity of non-government actors to participate in dialogue and decision making and to perform their watch dog roles/functions;
4. Work together with CSOs to identify how they can work along aid effectiveness principles and how we as a donor can promote CSO development effectiveness through different aid modalities
5. Continue working with increasing the use of country systems.
6. Continue strengthening the capacity (including systems and procedures) of the public administration, and in particular public financial management (PFM), information and statistical systems and results-based management systems.
  - a) Assess the compliance of country systems with gender equality, HR and environmental obligations and the capacity of the systems to deliver against these obligations; support the strengthening of the systems in these regards.

The AE agenda also implies some *challenges* to the work on democracy, HR and gender equality:

1. The commitment to increase the use of programme-based approaches (PBA) is still valid.
  - a) What does it mean to work with a PBA in the support to democracy, HR and gender equality? New tools and methods?
  - b) How can we integrate democracy, HR and gender equality in the increasingly harmonised and aligned environment of the PBA?
2. The reinforced commitment to results implies that it has become even more important to be able to know and demonstrate results.
  - a) What is needed to know and demonstrate results in democracy, HR and gender equality?
  - b) How can we measure the development results of CSOs?
  - c) Results are important but there is an in-built risk that short-term and visible results are prioritised at the cost of long-term, less tangible development results. There is also the risk that demonstrat-

**Example:** In Zambia, Sida and other donors complement the general budget support with support to capacity development programmes directed to both government and non-government institutions and organisations. For example, support is given to develop the capacity of the Parliament to play its oversight role, as well as to the Auditor General whose capacity has been considerably strengthened. To further improve accountability and participation, support is also channelled to civil society organisations that are active in the formulation and monitoring of the national poverty reduction strategy, for example through public expenditure tracking surveys. Via an umbrella organisation, civil society participates in the budget support reviews along with members of parliament. Specific support is given to civil society to develop their capacity for budget analysis.

**Example:** Sida will work actively to implement the commitments on use of country systems in AAA in the "EU Operational Framework on Aid Effectiveness" internally and through the work in the OECD DAC Task Force on Public Financial Management. It will, for example, be important to identify and disseminate existing examples of the use of country systems, such as the support to the Rural Energy Agency (REA) in Tanzania. In its support to REA, Sida has gone from using Sida procurement rules and paying consultants directly to:

- Using Tanzania procurement regulations.
- Channelling funds via the treasury to the REA special account.
- Giving REA full control over the funds and responsibility for the payment of consultants.

**Example:** A process has been initiated at Sida to increase and improve the use of gender, human rights and green budgeting techniques. The purpose is to use budget analysis more effectively in work on gender equality, human rights and environment/climate and to assess the PFM systems more effectively from these perspectives.

ing results becomes more important than the other principles of the AE agenda. How do we balance ownership, alignment and a long-term perspective with achieving and demonstrating results even in the shorter term?

3. New indicators were not developed to follow up AAA's broader, more inclusive commitments. Hence, there is a need to develop these indicators.
4. The alignment agenda tends to be focused on the technical dimensions of country systems. The challenge is to broaden this agenda to include alignment with the constitution and other legal instruments, international commitments and obligations, and national, regional, provincial and sectoral strategies, including those related to gender equality and women's empowerment, HR and environment.

**See further:**

- "DAC Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" December 2008.
- "DAC Guiding Principles for Human Rights and Aid Effectiveness", March 2009
- "Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, OECD DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations", August 2008

# Annex 1.

## **AAA paragraphs of particular relevance to the broadened and more inclusive approach to aid effectiveness:**

§ 3 “Democracy, economic growth, social progress, and care for the environment are the prime engines of development in all countries. Addressing inequalities of income and opportunity within countries and between states is essential to global progress. Gender equality, respect for human rights, and environmental sustainability are cornerstones for achieving enduring impact on the lives and potential of poor women, men, and children. It is vital that all our policies address these issues in a more systematic and coherent way.”

§4 Today at Accra, we are leading the way, united in a common objective: to unlock the full potential of aid in achieving lasting development results.

§10 Achieving development results—and openly accounting for them—must be at the heart of all we do. More than ever, citizens and taxpayers of all countries expect to see the tangible results of development efforts. We will demonstrate that our actions translate into positive impacts on people’s lives. We will be accountable to each other and to our respective parliaments and governing bodies for these outcomes.

§13 We will engage in open and inclusive dialogue on development policies. We acknowledge the critical role and responsibility of parliaments in ensuring country ownership of development processes. To further this objective we will take the following actions:

- a) Developing country governments will work more closely with parliaments and local authorities in preparing, implementing and monitoring national development policies and plans. They will also engage with civil society organisations (CSOs).
- b) Donors will support efforts to increase the capacity of all development actors—parliaments, central and local governments, CSOs, research institutes, media and the private sector—to take an active role in dialogue on development policy and on the role of aid in contributing to countries’ development objectives.
- c) Developing countries and donors will ensure that their respective development policies and programmes are designed and implemented in ways consistent with their agreed international commitments on gender equality, human rights, disability and environmental sustainability.

§15 a) Donors agree to use country systems as the first option for aid programmes in support of activities managed by the public sector.

b) Should donors choose to use another option and rely on delivery mechanisms outside country systems (including parallel project imple-

mentation units) they will transparently state the rationale for this and will review their position at regular intervals.

§20 We will deepen our engagement with CSOs as independent development actors in their own right whose efforts complement those of governments and the private sector. We share an interest in ensuring that CSO contributions to development reach their full potential. To this end:

- a) We invite CSOs to reflect on how they can apply the Paris principles of aid effectiveness from a CSO perspective.
- b) We welcome the CSOs' proposal to engage with them in a CSO-led multistakeholder process to promote CSO development effectiveness. As part of that process, we will seek to i) improve co-ordination of CSO efforts with government programmes, ii) enhance CSO accountability for results, and iii) improve information on CSO activities.
- c) We will work with CSOs to provide an enabling environment that maximises their contributions to development.

§22 We will be judged by the impacts that our collective efforts have on the lives of poor people. We recognise that greater transparency and accountability for the use of development resources – domestic as well as external – are powerful drivers of progress.

§24 Transparency and accountability are essential elements for development results. They lie at the heart of the Paris Declaration, in which we agreed that countries and donors would become more accountable to each other and to their citizens. We will pursue these efforts by taking the following actions: a) We will make aid more transparent. Developing countries will facilitate parliamentary oversight by implementing greater transparency in public financial management, including public disclosure of revenues, budgets, expenditures, procurement and audits. Donors will publicly disclose regular, detailed and timely information on volume, allocation and, when available, results of development expenditure to enable more accurate budget, accounting and audit by developing countries.



Sida works according to directives of the Swedish Parliament and Government to reduce poverty in the world, a task that requires cooperation and persistence. Through development cooperation, Sweden assists countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Each country is responsible for its own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge, skills and expertise. This increases the world's prosperity.

## A Broadened and More Inclusive Aid Effectiveness Agenda

The aid effectiveness agenda has become broader as a result of the inclusion of gender equality, HR and environment, of broadening ownership to include non-government actors and of broadening the mutual accountability principle to also embrace domestic accountability. The aid effectiveness agenda has become more inclusive by emphasising the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in development cooperation and the role of parliaments, local governments, local CSOs, media, and the private sector in the development process of the partner countries. The demand-side of governance, i.e. the claims of citizens, is given increased emphasis.

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden.

Visiting address: Valhallavägen 199.

Phone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64.

[www.sida.se](http://www.sida.se) [sida@sida.se](mailto:sida@sida.se)

