

## THROUGH THE AGES: THE STORY OF THE TASK TEAM ON CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



As a **multi-stakeholder coalition**, we work together to advance **effective CSO participation** in development processes. To support CSOs, worldwide, to fully play their role as **key actors in development**.

## THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS ON CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS & ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The Task Team believes that civil society organizations (CSOs) are key actors in development and works on furthering effective CSO participation in development processes. In its work, the Task Team promotes the international commitments on CSO development effectiveness enabling environment. The origins of these commitments lie in the period when the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** were formulated in **2000**. World leaders pledged to work together to 'make the right to development a reality for everyone'. In particular, MDG8 on 'forming a global partnership for development', recognized that it would be impossible to make progress on these goals without different partners, including civil society, working closely together in development.



In April **2003**, the **High Level Forum on Harmonization** was held in Rome. It was this forum that kicked-off the aid effectiveness movement and the various **high level forums on aid effectiveness** that followed. In **2005**, at the Second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, the **Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness** was endorsed. The Paris Declaration had partnership at its core. It created a paradigm shift that changed the relationship between governments that provide and receive international development aid and governments receiving aid.

However, it was soon realized that governments were not the only development actors. Subsequently, in Accra in **2008**, the **Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)** committed to: i) Including CSOs in dialogue on development policies; ii) Working with CSOs to provide an enabling them; iii) Encouraging CSOs to strengthen their development effectiveness, including their accountability, transparency, and coordination.

In **2011**, the **Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness** emphasized the need to include CSOs in development, implementation, and monitoring of development policies and processes. CSOs' independence as development actors in their own right was re-affirmed. Busan also strengthened the commitment to provide a CSO environment, and encouraged CSOs to strengthen their own effectiveness and accountability, guided by a set of principles for CSOs, developed by thousands of CSOs worldwide, called the **Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness**.

In **2015**, at the **UN Sustainable Development Summit**, more than 150 world leaders adopted Agenda 2030 and the 17 **Sustainable Development Goals**. The commitments on the CSO enabling environment and CSO development effectiveness are of fundamental importance for the SDGs. CSOs are included in the SDGs both as a means and an end of development. As a means, CSOs are expected to contribute to implementing and monitoring the SDGs - both individually and as part of the multi-stakeholder partnerships called for under **SDG 17**. As an end, the existence of a vibrant civil society can be considered part of **SDG 16** on peaceful and inclusive societies.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE TASK TEAM

Following the formulation of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** in **2000**, the **Working Party on Aid Effectiveness** (the predecessor of today's **Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**) was established in **2003**, as a 'partnership for development' called for by MDG 8. The ultimate aim of the Working Party was to make aid work better.

In reaction to growing interest of CSOs to engage with governments on issues of aid effectiveness, the **Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness** was created in January **2007** to advise the Working Party on the inclusion of civil society in development policies and processes. The aim was to engage civil society in the international aid effectiveness debate and consensus building process ahead of the 2008 **Third High Level forum on Aid Effectiveness** in Accra.

The Advisory Group ended its work shortly after the High Level Forum in Accra. At this point, Advisory Group members decided to establish a follow-on multi-stakeholder group to help maintain the momentum of the development effectiveness movement. Thus, in **April 2009** the **Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment** (Task Team) was established in Stockholm, with leadership and funding from the **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)**.

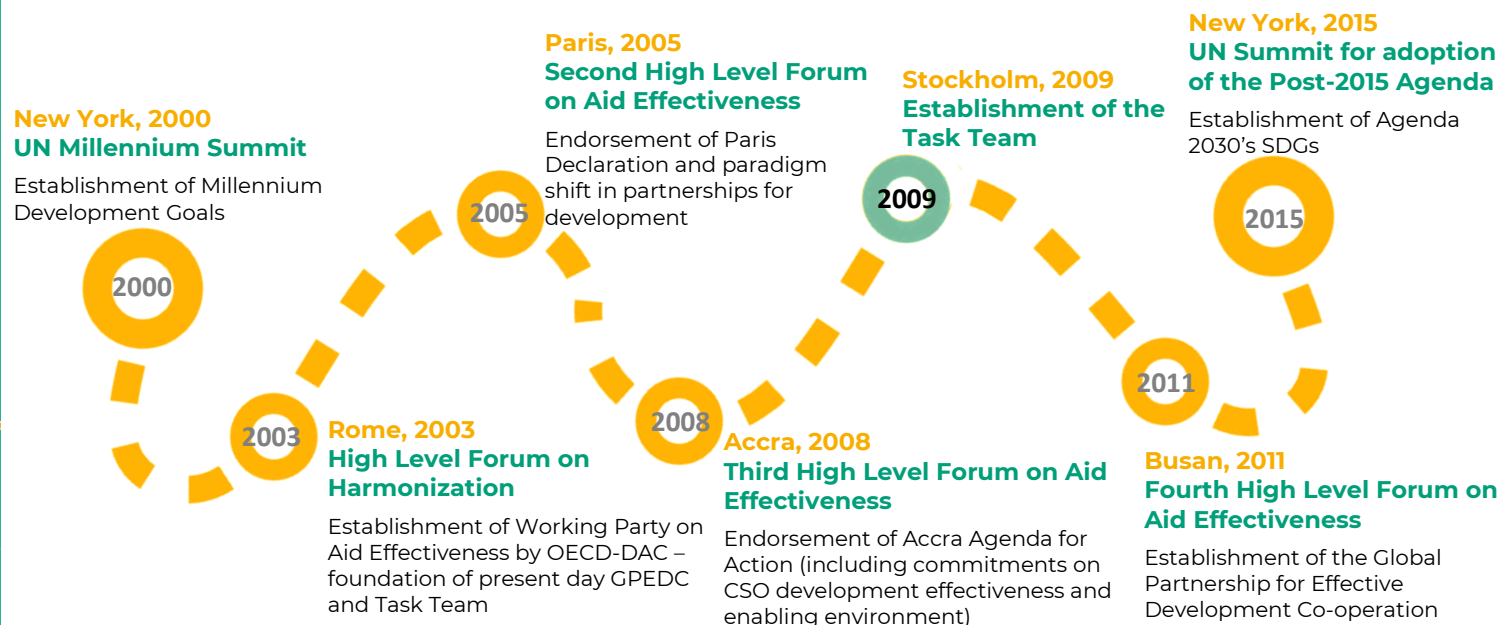
Like now, the Task Team's three stakeholder groups at that time consisted of CSOs, particularly those affiliated with the Better Aid Platform and the Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness (now merged to form the **CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness - CPDE**), and governments that receive or provide development cooperation. The Task Team has always operated under a Co-chairing arrangement, with one representative from each of the three stakeholder groups.

The Task Team was established with the specific aim to promote and monitor implementation of the **Accra Agenda for Action's (AAA)** CSO-related commitments. It provided a platform to promote synergies and mutual learning in addressing civil society, aid and development effectiveness issues in the lead up towards the **Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness** in **2011** in Busan.

In **2012**, the Task Team's mandate was renewed. Its purpose now was to promote and facilitate CSO development effectiveness and enabling environment, in line with the CSO-related commitments as agreed in during the 2008 High-Level Forum in Accra and re-affirmed at the 2011 High-Level Forum in Busan.

From its inception, the Task Team had been supported by a modest Secretariat comprised of an independent consultant and a Sida lead policy specialist. In **2013**, the Task Team Secretariat moved to the **International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam**, with the intention to professionalize support and coordination of the Task Team. To date, the Secretariat continues to be funded by Sida. Most recently, in 2019, Sida renewed its support to the Task Team and its Secretariat until 2022.

Today, the Task Team remains a voluntary **multi-stakeholder coalition** comprised of donors, partner country governments, and CSO affiliated with the CPDE, with the aim of advancing an enabling environment for CSOs and CSO development effectiveness at national, regional and global levels.



## KEY TASK TEAM SUCCESSES

In its work to advance CSO development effectiveness and the CSO enabling environment, the Task Team has provided a platform to promote multi-stakeholder dialogue, synergies and mutual learning. It has done so through means of knowledge development, experience sharing, and producing research and policy documents at global and regional and local levels.

The Task Team has made significant contributions to advance effective CSO participation in development:

### Policy Influencing

The Task Team advocated for the creation of a civil society related indicator in the **GPEDC's** global monitoring of effective development co-operation commitments. Today this is known as **Indicator 2**, which largely builds on the Task Team's **4-part framework** on CSO Development Effectiveness & Enabling Environment.

### Guidance and Good Practice

The Task Team's **Guidance and Good Practice** on CSO Development Effectiveness & Enabling Environment is a practical tool that results from a multi-stakeholder collaboration and aims to build a common understanding of what is meant, practically speaking, by CSO enabling environments and CSO development effectiveness.

### Key Outputs

The Task Team has conducted solid research and analysis as an evidence base for its messages, including:

- ➔ The 2016 published study on **Multi-stakeholder Initiatives**
- ➔ The **ongoing study** on CSO participation in SDG implementation at country level.

### Representation at High-Level Meetings

The Task Team has been represented at all **GPEDC High Level Meetings** and has provided key inputs, including to the 2016 **Nairobi Outcome Document**, which distinctly commits to reverse the trend of shrinking space for CSOs. In July 2019, the Task Team also organized a **side event** during the 2019 **UN High Level Political Forum**.

### Country Level Initiatives

The Task Team is co-creating **multi-stakeholder workshops** at country level, which build on the Task Team Guidance to promote an understanding of CSOs' Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment. The first workshop was held in Nairobi in June 2019, with over 70 participants from different constituencies.

#### Our 4-part Framework

The most essential principle underlying the Task Team's work is that creating the right conditions for CSOs to maximize their contribution to development is a shared responsibility that calls for a multi-stakeholder approach, in which donors, partner country governments, and CSOs all have a role to play. This is reflected in the Task Team's four part framework for understanding CSO development effectiveness and the enabling environment, which stems from a collaborative effort of the Task Team's three stakeholder groups.

Part 1: Multi-stakeholder Dialogue

Part 2: CSO Development Effectiveness, Accountability & Transparency

Four Part Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness & Enabling Environment

Part 3: Official Development Co-operation with civil society & CSOs

Part 4: Enabling laws, regulations, policies and practice

## LOOKING AHEAD: BRIDGING THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL



Over the last decade, the Task Team has worked hard to promote and raise awareness on the commitments on the CSO enabling environment and CSO development effectiveness.

These efforts were mostly focused at the global level, together with like-minded actors, where the Task Team has generated attention for the commitments, and contributed to their reaffirmation and further strengthening. Ultimately however, progress in implementing these commitments needs to be made on the ground. Facilitating country-level activities relating to the theme of multi-stakeholder dialogue for CSO development effectiveness and the enabling environment, has been an ambition of the Task Team since its inception.

The Task Team aims to bridge the global and local level, in order to fill the gap between global discussion and local action, through means of multi-stakeholder workshops on effective CSO participation in development. Together with Government, CSOs, and Donors in country, the Task Team co-creates interactive and informational workshops on the international commitments on CSO development effectiveness and enabling environment. The intent of the workshops are to share good practices from around the world and stimulate multi-stakeholder dialogue around these issues.

The workshops provide a platform for the Task Team to bring its key messages from the global level to the country level; targeting local stakeholders for maximum impact. In doing so, the Task Team advocates for the shared responsibility of all actors in advancing effective participation of CSOs in development processes to achieve the SDGs under its motto: "Going Further Together."

## KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

### Participants

The Task Team is comprised of Donors, Partner Country Governments, and CSOs (affiliated with the CPDE)

30 Active Participants

3 Co-chairs

4 Secretariat Members

### Areas of Work

The Task Team's efforts to raise awareness on the commitments on CSO development effectiveness and enabling environment, and further their implementation, are targeted at 3 areas of work:

- i) GPEDC, ii) Agenda 2030 SDGs, iii) Country-level engagement

### What We Do



Watch our 2 minute video