

## **Ownership and Inclusiveness for Greater Impact and Sustainability**

**Presentation by Mr. Samuel Zan Akologo – Liaison for Ghana Aid Effectiveness Forum, to the ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum High Level Symposium on ‘Gearing Development Cooperation towards the MDGs: Effectiveness and Results’.**

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### **Introduction**

Ownership and Inclusiveness have been underscored in the Paris Declaration and further emphasized and elaborated in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). While the PD and AAA provide the current framework of principles for development cooperation, the intention and scope of ownership and inclusiveness are inadequate for the purposes of impact and sustainability. For instance ‘ownership’ is narrowly viewed as ‘country ownership’ and further operationalised as ‘government ownership’. ‘Inclusiveness’ is emphasised in terms of harnessing the resources of diverse development actors. While CSOs have raised serious concerns about their definitions within the current framework, their value is further eroded by persistent maintenance of diverse and subtle forms of aid conditionalities.

For us in civil society, ownership of development is about the wellbeing of citizens which is determined by themselves through their participation or by their consent. Inclusiveness is the right that all citizens (women, men, disabled people, those living in deprived communities etc) exercise to participate in development programmes and policies. Inclusiveness is the corner stone of a rights perspective to development or rights-based approach to development. Therefore ownership and inclusiveness are complementary ingredients of Development Effectiveness.

### **Development is about Impact and Sustainability**

The theme for this high level symposium – Gearing Development Cooperation towards the MDGs - is quite pertinent. After all, the MDGs are the barest fundamental needs for human survival. Development cooperation needs to define its impact in terms of benchmarks that improve people’s livelihoods. The current framework under the Aid Effectiveness model puts too much emphasis on technical processes that need to be improved and made more efficient. When this happens, real people and their fundamental rights are marginalised in the relations and processes that are used.

### **Enabling Environment is essential for ownership and inclusiveness**

Parties to the 2008 Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness - Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) underscored the need and committed to providing enabling environment that maximises civil society contributions to development. This condition is even more critical in the broader and comprehensive consideration of Development Effectiveness. In Ghana and very few other countries, we have seen how genuine and open national policy dialogues and capacity support for CSOs are contributing to improving governance and social cohesion. Yet the general evidence since 2008 for most countries is that both governments and development partners are using diverse and subtle manoeuvres that constrain the space for CSOs full exercise of their right and capacity to participate in development processes. These include legal restrictions, denial of funding, restricted information access and bureaucratic

administrative procedures and requirements. Ghana's example of good practice could have been further enhanced if the long awaited Freedom of Information law were passed into law by Parliament.

### **Conditionality affects Development Impact and Sustainability.**

Conditionality is an instrument of power and only fit for the purpose of 'power games'. Fairly so, Aid for Development is seen by many as a 'power game'. Therefore the use of conditionality is often cynically endorsed. That is why conditionality should be avoided in genuine Development Cooperation. Besides, its direct negative impact can be enormous. For instance, a trigger to freeze public sector employment for a defined period, as a condition to release a budget support tranche means that education and health institutions will remain understaffed. This will result in poor education and health service delivery to citizens. It also means that new graduating teachers and nurses do not get placements. Yet those who impose those conditions are fully aware that this is not a sustainable way to managing public sector expenditure.

### **Ownership and Inclusiveness controls corruption.**

The preconditions for ownership and inclusiveness are openness and transparency. Promoting Ownership and Inclusiveness in development also allows for independent tracking and assessment of development outcomes. 'Who feels it knows it'! Therefore citizens' testimonies and experiences about development processes can be a disincentive for duty bearers to be untoward with the use of public resources. In Ghana, we used Citizens' Monitoring Groups to heighten civic awareness and engagement with the use of Multilateral Debt Relief resources which contributed to increasing the impact of utilization, especially in the provision of social services.

Ownership and Inclusiveness also enhances mutual accountability for development results. The starting point at the national level is by participatory national development planning. The tendency of resorting to political party manifestoes to drive national development effort is counter productive to this effort. Ownership and Inclusiveness promotes partnership among all development actors, including Parliament (Opposition and Government) for mutual accountability. The Africa regional workshop on mutual accountability organized by the Working Party on Democratic Ownership (Co-chaired by the Government of Tanzania) in their preparations towards Busan, underscored this when they issued a statement in Accra recently 'recognizing the importance of genuine partnership' for development results.

At the international level, we think that ownership and inclusiveness can be brought to bear in Development Cooperation through a new and more democratic architecture that addresses the current imbalance of power among development actors in OECD DAC framework for development cooperation. The ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum's efforts can be further strengthened to bring this about, especially in the area of developing an internationally-owned mandatory mechanism for demanding accountability for commitments on development. This is particularly critical for post-Busan Development Cooperation which should be based on development effectiveness.