



## **UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals**

### **Sixth Session: Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

Statement delivered by Jean Letitia Saldanha, CIDSE Senior Policy Advisor at the interactive session with the OWG Co-chairs on 10 December 2013.

As we open the discussion on the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development I would like to start my presentation by asking:

- Partnerships for whom ? And
- Partnerships with whom ?

With regard to the question "*Partnerships for whom*", I hope that the response is for people and the planet:

- Particularly those directly feeling the impact of the failings of today's global partnership.
- Those living in poverty, on the margins of society or completely excluded from society.
- Women and girls make up a large number in these groups.

With regard to the question "*Partnerships with whom*", the new partnership for sustainable development should be between States. Developed and developing countries. Because they are the primary duty bearers to deliver the positive outcomes for the people they are responsible for and accountable to.

And here we should not forget local governments. They are the face of the government that people are most exposed to and know. While primarily intergovernmental, this partnership needs to be inclusive. With a multi-stakeholder dimension, to be effective and meaningfully achieve the objectives at hand.

Civil society plays an important role in this multi-stakeholder dimension. Directly- or indirectly through our partners. We are the closest to the life experience- hearing and seeing the needs of those we say the partnership should be for.

The private sector is indeed also part of the multi-stakeholder dimension. But the private sector is not a monolith. It is not only the big Transnational corporations.

The majority of private sector actors are medium, small and micro enterprises. Those active at a national level or only at a local level. One person operations, family operations, collectives and cooperatives etc. They often operate in the grey economy in developing countries. They play a crucial role in basic survival strategies. Beyond that, in forging prosperity for individuals and their communities. At each step of the way, they have their own challenges and regulatory requirements. A partnership for sustainable development will have to be open to these actors to be meaningful.

The next set of questions to ask is:

1. Are today's global partnerships conducive to sustainable development?
2. If not, what reforms are needed?

I think that there is sufficient consensus that today's global partnership is not delivering adequately. And MDG8 did not help.

The problems are well known and well documented in the MDG Gap Task Force Reports. But are the current trends in this conversation going in the right direction? A dominant trend is to reform partnerships to bring in the private sector.

I would like to raise a few risks about this trend:

1. It is isolated to benefit a very small set of actors within the private sector. They do not represent the interests of the entire range of actors in the sector. Let alone not considering civil society as a whole.
2. It appears to be a convenient way by which governments are bypassing their responsibility. An example: Prompted by shrinking aid budgets and fears about the ability to reach the 0.7 target, donors now want to redefine ODA to count public money used to leverage private investment in developing countries.
3. This discussion is taking place in a singular manner without adequate attention to:
  - o The macroeconomic risks associated with leveraging private investment in developing countries with public money.
  - o The whole risk of socialising risk and privatising gain.
  - o Putting in place adequate regulatory frameworks and safeguards. And,
  - o Putting in place adequate accountability frameworks for the private sector.

In conclusion I would like to welcome the attention being paid to the global partnership. This comes from the realisation that MDG8 was the Achilles Heel of the MDG framework. Going ahead, we should guard against the risk that the global partnership becomes the Achilles heel of the Post-2015 framework.

If we are sincere about forging a genuine partnership, then:

- Accelerate the reform of the IFIs and WTO, the monetary and financial system.
- Put in place a fair and permanent sovereign debt work-out mechanism.
- Address inequalities in governance of aid and tax cooperation at the international level.
- Address deficiencies in accountability and transparency at all levels.
- Respect the space of civil society. And I can go on.

Do not hide behind the private sector. Do not expect that bringing them into the partnership will deliver the longstanding commitments that States have made and should still deliver on.

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