

Statement by Hanna Hansson, CIVICUS, on the global partnership for delivering on the Post-2015 Agenda and Financing for Development

Thank you Mr. Co-facilitator. I am speaking on behalf of CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, and as a member of the Post-2015 Human Rights Caucus, a broad coalition of development, environmental, feminist, trade union and human rights organizations worldwide.

Are we ready to move from words to actions?

If we are, then we can only do so by making ambitious commitments on *how* to deliver on the universal goals and transformative change we set out to achieve in the post-2015 agenda. We need to agree on a fair international financing framework and create a global, inclusive and accountable partnership, which is aligned with human rights principles. Addressing these aspects of the agenda is arguably the most important piece of the post-2015 puzzle.

The renewed partnership must be accountable to the people, especially the poorest and most marginalised. Therefore, the Post-2015 Human Rights Caucus appreciates that the UN Secretary General Synthesis Report recognises the need for "*a new paradigm of accountability*" in which all actors are accountable to the people themselves.

Specifically, I would like to stress 2 points.

First, on the accountability of the private sector. Responsible, human rights-sensitive investments play a vital role in the global economy. However, the potential of the private sector investment is yet to be realised in the majority of developing countries due in large part to the failure of states to effectively regulate the private sector and ensure that it acts responsibly when operating both at home and abroad.

The global partnership must ensure that where the private sector is involved, they are a fully accountable partner, with clear conditions and safeguards in place. Member states need to regulate the actions of the private sector, in order to guarantee that their actions are aligned with the SDGs, human rights law, and environmental standards. Rather than simply urging businesses to embrace sustainable development commitments, as stated in the draft outcome document of the FfD Conference, businesses should be mandated to do so in their operational activities. Any partnership must be fully transparent and subject to regular monitoring and review of their impacts, with access to remedy for those who may be affected adversely by business practices, as outlined in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

This would include, among other things:

- Requiring business to pay their taxes everywhere they operate, respect human rights and protect the environment and natural resources
- States and the UN conducting ex ante assessments of the suitability of potential private sector partners
- Conducting human rights and sustainable development impact assessments for new projects and partnerships
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing the actions and involvement of the private sector, as part of the mandate of any post-2015 and FFD follow-up and review mechanisms.

While private sector partnerships are being prioritised, civil society's role is being undermined in various parts of the world. This brings me to my second point.

It is critical to institutionalise the role of civil society in the post-2015 agenda and its implementation. This should include guarantees on civic space and recognition of CSOs as independent development actors in their own right, rather than just supportive minor partners. Failure to do so would risk undermining the whole framework, and would have disastrous consequences for the poorest and most marginalised, as civil society help to ensure the representation of diverse voices in sustainable development. Civil society assists in finding innovative solutions to complex challenges – and delivering those solutions, as we have seen in the response to the Ebola epidemic as well as during recent natural and man-made disasters. Importantly, civil society groups at all levels independently evaluate whether commitments made by governments are met, and are in line with people's needs and aspirations. Civil society is an essential component of accountability.

We remain deeply concerned about various forms of legal and practical restrictions on civil society activities, which clearly contradict international commitments. Protection of civil society freedoms of expression, association and assembly should be clearly articulated in the goals and targets, but should also be measured in the indicators along with an evaluation of the quality of partnerships with civil society. This would be in line with the UN Secretary General's Synthesis Report, which calls for the creation of an enabling environment for free, active and meaningful engagement of civil society in all its diversity.

Now is the time for all partners to join in creating a renewed global partnership and commit to deliver on these initiatives that help create the world we want. The only partnership worth having is one that is transparent, inclusive, and accountable to those it sets out to purports to serve – otherwise it is not a partnership at all.

Thank you!