



Joint Ecumenical Message for the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness

Our vision of development is based on the theological affirmation that all persons are created *in the image and likeness of God* (Genesis 1:27) with the potential to live just, humane and dignified lives in sustainable communities. In line with this vision, aid for development must contribute to the advancement of both the individual and shared responsibility. Inclusion and participation are therefore indispensable ingredients of any development policy. The effectiveness of aid should primarily be measured in terms of sustained and positive impact on poverty eradication, respect for human rights, and justice for all.

Churches and faith-based organizations (FBOs) are working to ensure that the *common good* of all people is achieved. Our political engagement is rooted in the scriptures, our close involvement in lives of communities, and long history of providing aid and social services for holistic development. Furthermore, the Church is well placed to ensure an informed and reflective representation of their constituency and to facilitate influencing national and local governments. Church partners support citizens in asserting their rights and help them use and enlarge opportunities for civic engagement.

We note that the Paris Declaration calls for the systematic involvement of “a broad range of development partners when formulating and assessing progress in implementing national development strategies.” However, our experience with our constituencies reveals the inadequacy of interaction and awareness of the Paris Declaration principles and commitments and a lack of formalised instruments for participative monitoring and influencing of such strategies being rolled out. We therefore make the following recommendations for practical engagement with all stakeholders to ensure that the aid effectiveness agenda promotes broad ownership and real accountability:



Meaningful Engagement of All Stakeholders

We call on Governments to define policy space and mechanisms at country level, which allow meaningful engagement of all stakeholders, including parliaments, Churches, FBO's and other civil society organisations, in the planning, implementation and evaluation of development plans. We ask that Churches be explicitly recognised as key stakeholders in the Accra Agenda for Action.

National Policy Influenced by Community Level

We challenge our African leaders to engage their citizens, civil society, the Church and parliamentarians, to be co-creators of good governance and to ensure that information from community and district levels guides policy at national level.

Greater Transparency by all Actors is Essential

Donors and recipient Governments must make concrete commitments to greater transparency, setting clear standards for timely and accessible publication of information, which allows citizens and their elected representatives to participate in decision making and hold governments and donors to account.

Promote Inclusive Frameworks for Accountability at the National Level

Coherent with commitments to democracy and good governance, donors and recipient Governments have a responsibility to promote inclusive frameworks to ensure proper accountability systems at national, regional and local levels. Furthermore, donors have a duty to ensure that their own demands for accountability do not displace the role and participation of national actors. Many good examples of multi-stakeholder mechanisms for monitoring the impact of development policies exist. Donors and governments must commit to adopting 'internationally-agreed best practice' such as those proposed by Faith Based Organisations through policy monitoring tool-kits, which can be used as a guideline for mutual accountability at the country level.