



Civil Society's Voice on the 10th EDF



Introduction

On the 5th of July 2006, the European Commission delegation to Nigeria called for comments from civil society organizations on the Nigeria CSP Issue paper on the 10th EDF. To further assist civil society organizations in Nigeria have access to this document; the Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNNGO) forwarded the *Nigeria CSP Issue paper on the 10th EDF* to its listserve of over 1,000 NGOs nation wide, calling for their views, comments and responses to the document as well as call for comments on the NNNGO blog: www.nnngo.net

From the 20th -21st July 2006, NNNGO invited over 40 civil society organizations to a focused online forum on www.nnngo.net and 10thEDF@googlegroups.com to seek their inputs and comments on the Nigeria CSP Issue paper vis-à-vis outcomes from the 9th EDF, main issues and the first indication of EC intervention as identified by the Nigeria CSP Issue paper.

On August 1st 2006, NNNGO further consulted with its members in Lagos state¹ through a face to face meeting to receive feed backs from them on the Nigeria CSP Issue paper. In attendance at this meeting were over 40 civil society organizations.

In pulling together this summary it proved impossible to reference all submissions we received, further, NNNGO has decided not to mention any particular organization or individual in the text but reference their participation at the end in Annex 1.

NNNGO is pleased to have had the opportunity of compiling this report, based on the constructive feedback received and hopes this will provide an overview of civil society organizations in Nigeria's voice on how money available to Nigeria should be spent under the 10th EDF.

While many respondents expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to offer their comments, we at NNNGO have found that this adds value to our work and that of the European Commission's Delegation to Nigeria and hopes that outcomes of this consultation with civil society organizations by the EC delegation to Nigeria will reflect the overall thrust of our collective voices and also help support a constructive change.

This report target, in a generic way, to summarize a number of comments based on participant's views and on the outcomes of the 9th EDF, main issues and the first indication of EC intervention as identified by the Nigeria CSP Issue paper:

Main Issues

On the basis of the above key observations, the main issues for the preparation of the next CSP are as follows:

1. How to use EC cooperation funds in a way that they will foster changes and help Nigerian authorities to improve their performance (thus achieving an important leverage effect, considering the much larger volume of Nigerian budget funds)?

2. How to ensure that EC funds are additional to, rather than substitutes for, Government undertaking its responsibilities? The EC should not provide the services which the Nigerian institutions fail to provide due to mismanagement of their own resources.

3. How do we ensure that reforms that are being achieved at Federal Level translate into an effective improvement at community level where the incidence of poverty remains high? It is the persistence of poverty that encourages migration to the big cities and overseas.

4. Which sector(s) should the EC support where good progress can be achieved within the time frame available and funds allocated?

5. At which level(s) should the EC provide support and what will be the scope? (Federal, State and/or Local Government; number of States)

6. How to design a programme compatible with Delegation staff limitations (or to adjust Delegation staffing levels to be able to support the programme (largest ACP population, complex Federal structure, high needs for supervision because of corruption).

First indication of EC intervention areas

Focal Sector 1: "Governance & Integrated Community Development"

Focal sector 2: Water, sanitation and hygiene education

"The Nigeria Network of NGOs sees this consultation with civil society organizations on the 10th EDF by the EC delegation to Nigeria and subsequent consultation by the network with its own members as a positive way of ensuring inclusiveness and participation in policy design and implementation"

*Bolaji Rosiji
NNNGO Secretary General*

NNNGO, August 2006

¹The face to face consultation held in Lagos was planned to coincide with the monthly meeting of the Lagos members of the Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNNGO) and had in attendance over 40 civil society organizations, further feedback from them was also sought through the nnngo-lagos@googlegroups.com and 10thEDF@googlegroups.com

Comments were also received from non members of the network who are mainly part of the nnngo@googlegroups.com listserve; this listserve has over 1000 members including CSO's, private individuals, multilateral and donor agencies.

Overview

Over 30 civil society organizations responded to the online invitation and another 40 participating at the face to face consultations held by the network with its civil society members based in Lagos, with varying comments ranging from their feelings on the state of the nation, to the need for capacity building at both the federal, state and local government levels in order to be able to meet the countries developmental plans.

While some participants saw the issues arising from the 9th EDF findings positively others did not, integrated community development and good governance were the most frequent themes with strong emphasis placed on the need to create linkages between all tiers of government for a sustainable grass roots development.

Most respondents based their comments on what they thought about the Nigeria CSP issue paper reflecting more on their experience within the development sector and what they thought was missing such as the role of the civil society organizations in putting pressure on government at the state and local government level and also sustaining the tempo of the pressure being put on government at the federal level.

Some focused on what level of government the EC funding should be channeled, majority would like to see the money spent on states and local levels of governance in Nigeria, the thinking behind this might not be unconnected to the fact that for sustainable development to be achieved, local communities must be developed.

Many stressed that the NEEDS, SEEDS, LEEDS and CEEDS could help achieve the MDGs, if only government would be committed to its promises, again many would like to see civil society involvement and engagement platform at this point capable of partnering with government in achieving this development plans beyond that the need for a strong civil society movement capable of putting pressure on government at all levels was again reinforced.

Many noted that benchmarking for the nations development plans would set a platform for a detailed comparison of the quality of public finances used up for service delivery, many felt a LEEDS benchmarking with the support of the EU is in the right direction.

Some felt that while more support for the EFCC is a step in the right direction, others would like to see an EFCC that is more professional and capable of extending its tentacles towards local governments, the need to institutionalize EFCC was also raised by participants citing also the importance of having an effective civil society component within the activities of EFCC.

A respondent would like to see the EC taking advantage of the role Information Communication and Technology can play in helping a nation like ours achieve the MDGS, specifically the participant felt that with the help of technology the human development index (HDI) can be well monitored and reported.

While thankful for the opportunity to make inputs into the activities of the EC and for the opportunity provided by NNNGO for its members in commenting on the paper, several noted that the process leading to the final physical consultation by the EC may not really allow for proper representation of the nations civil society's voice and called for further discussions to be more consultative and far reaching.

Civil Society's Voice on the Nigeria CSP Issue Paper-10th EDF

Over the period of the consultation, 10thEDF@googlegroups.com received most of the postings; with few postings made on the www.nnngo.net; the face to face meeting in Lagos generated lots of comments and was truly interactive and engaging. Through out the consultation a number of participants expressed their views on the Nigeria CSP Issue Paper.

Majority of respondents spent the first 2-3 paragraphs of their submissions to voice their displeasure on the state of affairs in the country in terms of development:

"It is disheartening seeing Nigeria lagging behind drastically in the attainment of MDGs despite the sufficient resources the country has. I quite agree with Nigeria CSP Issues Paper that government's fat income from oil is being misused through corruption and mismanagement which has led to disappointing outcomes when it comes to providing socio-infrastructures for the populace especially people at the grassroots".

"To those of us committed to development journalism, it is rather worrisome to note the state of decay in Nigeria... the world's largest concentration of black people. No doubt, we are a race of missed opportunities"

"Missed opportunities in the sense that we are the only geo-political entity in the universe aspiring to go to the moon in the very near future without putting in place the rudiments... stable electricity generation to spur other sectors for societal growth."

"Missed opportunities in the same vein that after forty-five years of 'independence,' we are still groping to entrench democratic tenets, better still, institutionalise democratic controls in our governance. No doubt, what is obtained is encompassing 'misuse of revenues through large-scale corruption and studied mismanagement."

Capacity building for government agencies and parastatals were also seen as an area that requires EC intervention one respondent noted:

"It would be of good practice if EC cooperation fund could be used on projects that target training and equipping government to do its job. One should believe that this capacity building project would go along way in improving the capacity of governance structures to deliver services as it is believed that when a person or a system is well equipped and trained, it is expected to deliver giving no room for excuses as to whether the person or the system is without competence."

"To shed more light on the essence of training and equipping government to foster changes and to improve their performance in service delivery, take for example some Federal ministerial appointees like Prof. Charles Soludo, Ikonjo Iweala and the host of others and check out the type of training, orientation and best practices they have received, which they in turn made to bear as they are delivering excellently in their capacities. The result of this is made manifest in terms of reforms that are really transforming some sectors."

“However, that is in Federal level but if government at state and local government levels are trained and well equipped, the same result can be achieved. The result of this capacity building could translate into judicious and strategic use of Nigerian budget fund in providing services efficiently and effectively as well as achieving the MDGs if well monitored both at the state and local government levels. EC funds could serve as impetus to the above mentioned results.”

On the premise that Nigeria has enough resources to achieve the MDGs as stated in the findings from the 9th EDF document one respondent opined thus:

“The nation's scholars and international friends believe that Nigeria 'has sufficient resources to achieve the MDGs.' But to the group of patriots like us who witnessed the colonialists at work, studied skepticism had since taken over. Can Nigeria remotely achieve the first goal of the MDG... to eradicate poverty and acute hunger before 2015?”

“Nigeria is the only country that I know of with Euro40billion accruable to the Federal Government and the other tiers of governments on a yearly basis and still have over 54% of its people living below the relative poverty line. And here we are talking of revenue from oil receipts alone. What of the revenue from other sectors... agriculture and mining licenses?”

“Yet, the optimists that we are, we shall not abandon the Nigerian experiment. The Nigerian experiment is a litmus text for the human race of whatever colour and persuasion. This is more like the reality in that if the nation that harbours one in every black citizen in the world fails to make a successful 're-entry' into the digitalised global village within the shortest time possible (forget about 2015!) then we optimists should go back to our drawing boards ...with the divination trays in tow.”

Another respondent added:

“Attainment of the MDGs by 2015 is obviously beyond Nigeria's capacity. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is a tall order in a mono-culture country where the lion's share of government revenue comes from the oil sector. Though hunger is not one of the country's major setbacks, but the massive migration to urban centres is worrisome.”

“Achieving universal primary education may materialize after 2015 if there is the will by the government to prioritise this all-important sector. But could this be achieved bearing in mind the fundamental religious sentiments of a large section of the people where child labour is the norm rather than the exception?”

Providing answers to the above some respondent were of the opinion that reforms at all levels of government might give a push and offers hope for Nigeria to achieve the MDGs:

“...there is need to extend these reforms to poverty stricken community level if the MDGs were to be achieved in Nigeria. In line with this, EC must continue its support for Federal government in mounting pressure on state and local government in seeing that they expend their allocations and revenues in a proper and transparent manner.”

"...since MDGs cannot be achieved without first achieving our NEEDs, SEEDs, LEEDs and CEEDs as Nigerian government has put it in its plan to support the development of LEEDs and CEEDs as part of the overall national NEEDs policy, this should be taken seriously by the government by co-opting civil society meaningfully in all levels in achieving this. Also by extension, most of these reforms taking place at Federal level should also be concurrently implemented both at the state and local government level as this will go along way especially in helping people at the community level to feel the impact of the reformers that are being achieved at the Federal level."

Good Governance and Integrated Community Development received tremendous support from majority of the participants while also adding the need for the involvement of civil society organizations within the process:

"It is of very good idea for EC to have picked Governance and Integrated Community Development as its first focal sector as one of its areas of intervention. Going by the analysis and the approach proposed by EC in achieving the MDGs considering the approach that works in practice i.e. across-the-board development, civil society efforts should be supported with EC fund more than ever in helping to demand for better governance. This should be encouraged in all ramification as civil society has come of age in making sure that MDGs are achieved both at state level and especially in LGAs and communities (grassroots)."

" It will be preferable that EC support focal sector 1:; "Governance and Integrated Community Development; ". This sector is all encompassing in the sense that it is a package of investment and governance-reform measures which is enough to achieve all the MDGs that also has water, sanitation and hygiene education as some of its component. And for this approach to be successful it would be important that activities at state and federal level have a clear link with those taking place at local government and at the community level so that substantial population at the grassroots will also enjoy dividend of democracy."

"EC should continue funding budget monitoring programme that will focus more on the financial activities of local government. There is need for EC to continue carrying out pilot projects tailored around MDGs in local communities with great transparency. This will be a challenge to local governments that fail to do so."

Reinforcing this one participant noted:

"Dear all, good day after carefully reading the CSP, I discovered that for its success more work with the Local Government Authorities (LGA) level has to be done, so how do we go about this- by working closely with LGA tier of Government where the populace reside, this is a big responsibility for the civil society"

The missing link- role of civil society organizations in putting pressure on both state and local government including the federal government was identified during the consultation:

"In implementing the 10th EDF, the EU should encourage the involvement of civil society organizations in its implementation but more importantly in the monitoring and evaluation of such projects"

"There is the need for a regulatory framework for CSO's in Nigeria, I am of the opinion that this will bring about a credible platform capable of putting pressure on government at all levels not only that it will assist in ensuring that the citizenry is able to hold government accountable"

"Our role as agents of change cannot be overemphasized, I have noted with great amazement that the Nigerian CSP Issue paper has not stressed in concrete terms the role of CSO's in mounting the needed pressure on government... may be this would be included in the final document I do not know but it is worth stating at this point"

"My comment is that, there should be transparency and accountability in the use of the funds with all stakeholders including NGOS taken along"

Concentrating /Channeling EC funding towards performing state and local government level received a favourable response:

"Considering the level(s) at which the EC should provide support, critically speaking, EC support should be limited to State and Local government levels. This should be so since most of those that affected by poor services or poverty are the people at the state and especially at the community level. Also for the fact that Federal government has made it clear that budget support is not in its interest, it is then becomes imperative that EC support should be limited to state and local government levels. The scope of this support should be limited to some better performing states and local government areas so as to serve as a kind of competition between the states and local government areas."

"EC should continue funding budget monitoring programme that will focus more on the financial activities of local government. There is need for EC to continue carrying out pilot projects tailored around MDGs in local communities with great transparency. This will be a challenge to local governments that fail to do so."

"There should be more support from EC to local government whose good governance would bring about grassroots development. Outstanding local government in the areas of transparent and efficient management of public finances should be given this support."

"Community Enhancement programs on the issues should be in place, to promote Community Ownership and Commitments towards poverty reduction programs, which will in turn encourage youth to stay in their localities and salvage it. CSOs should be involved in the process because they are Catalysts and Change Agents in the Communities."

A respondent went further to comment on commitment by the Nigerian Government and donor funding plus EU intervention:

"On the issue of considering donor funds in achieving the kind of transformation needed in a considerable numbers of communities, the initiative is worth considering by the EC because of the long term benefits that will accrue from that later if the state governments could implement similar initiative."

“To ensure the EC funds are additional to, rather than substitutes for government undertaking its responsibilities, the scheme or approach of counterpart funds should be employed. This will serve as only basis on which commitment is shown on the part of the government.”

On the benchmarking exercises as a force of example a participant noted:

“Apart from SEEDS benchmarking exercise there should be one for local government as well with support coming from EC. The LEEDS benchmarking exercise will serve as a platform where there will be detailed comparison of the quality of public finances of all local government. Donor and federal funding should be directed to the best performing local governments.”

On the EC’s support to EFCC, the thinking of some respondents is as follows:

“EC should also encourage EFCC-through its technical and financial support-to fully extend its struggle against corruption to the local government. This will jeer up local government authorities to be more efficient and transparent in the way they manage public finances.”

“ A civil society space should be evolved within the EFCC to boost its activities and also provide for a flow of information on corrupt practices in a transparent manner without fear of favour”

Finally one respondent remarked:

“ As an observation in all that have been discussed, it has not been seen in any tone on how ICT could also be of imminent tools in achieving the MDGs. I think it should also be included as part of the EC’s ‘Focal Sector 1: Governance and Integrated Community Development’. This should be given a serious consideration as ICT’s could make serious positive impact on economic productivity, health, education, democracy & governance, and quality of life as all these attributed immensely to the computation of Human Development Index (HDI).”

Annex 1

List of Invited Participants for the Online Discussion on the Nigeria CSP Issue Paper

1. Pastor Ifekoya- Reallife International
2. Remi Ajayi
3. Tola Olajuwon
4. Adewale Adeyoju
5. Wale Adeoye- Journalists for Democratic Rights
6. Moralogy Anyi
7. Hajara Momodu- National Association of People on War against AIDS and Poverty, Sokoto.
8. Hannah Aniogoro- NIRADO
9. Pastor Irowele
10. Dr Rose Ekeleme- International Association for Volunteer Efforts (IAVE)
11. Wale Fawole – The Conservators
12. Emmanuel Oloyede- Rural Voices of Youth (UNICEF VOY)
13. Yemetu Community Development Association
14. Akin Fawole- ICT4D Kiddies Club
15. Ayo Adebusoye- Gauranga Foundation
16. Kunle Idowu- Kunle Idowu and Associates
17. Pamela Braide- Youth Employment Summit (YES)
18. Kind
19. AREF
20. Educare Trust
21. Action Health
22. Fidelis Ozemhoya - CREDEP
23. Otunba Dele Ajayi-Smith- ACDF
24. Women's Board
25. WODEF
26. Christie Iyoha
27. Baobab
28. Mrs. Omowale
29. Samuel I Ojoro- Leapfrog Alliance
30. Dr. Ebenezer Oyeyemi
31. Nike Adeyemi- Real Woman Foundation
32. Olatoun K Williams
33. Mallam Ahmadu
34. Gloria Egbuji- CRIVFON
35. Toyin Olatayo
36. GADA Nigeria
37. Food not Bombs
38. Christian Alliance against Poverty
39. Chief NGO
40. Joseph Gimba
41. Olatubosun Mrs. - Effemab
42. WADEM Osogbo
43. Funke Oluyemi
44. Dr Nosa Aledeselu
45. WONACO
46. MB Attah- WANGO
47. Yusuff Risikat - One F

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**Read about the project: Institutionalizing Democratic Controls for
Grassroots Development on:** www.ibadannorthcommunitypartnership.org



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