



ZAMBIA

EU COUNTRY ROADMAP FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

2015 - 2017

SUMMARY

Background:

In 2012, the European Commission published *“The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with Civil Society in external relations”*, where it was stated that the EU and its Member States will develop country roadmaps for engagement with CSOs to improve the impact, predictability and visibility of our actions, ensuring synergies and consistency throughout the different sectors covered by the EU’s external relations.

State of Civil Society:

The number of civil society organisations has continued to grow in Zambia since the 1990s and includes professional bodies, trade unions, gender-based groups, human rights and advocacy groups, service-oriented CSOs, faith-based organisations (religious organisations), international NGOs and the media. Whilst certain institutionalised mechanisms (eg “Sector Advisory Groups” and the Provincial and District Development Coordinating Committees) for citizens’ participation in decision-making have been established, their participation is still impeded by certain factors, such as:

Government and Administrative structures are highly centralised; CSOs often have a heavy dependence on donor funding and donor funded programmes do not always recognise local needs or lack sustainability. CSOs also face organisational and monetary constraints; a lack of coordination and collaboration; limited access to the media and often they are community based.

There are a number of issues which potentially pose a risk to CSOs in the Zambian context and these can be summarized as follows: The NGO Act, Human Rights, Freedom of information, the Public Order Act, and the constitutional review process.

Participation and roles of civil society in Zambia:

Participation in Public Policy - Participation is usually on an ad hoc basis and is often driven by trending thematic subjects. The main areas of Public Policy where CSOs participate are in the five year National Development Plans, the national budget-making process, in PRBS and SWGs¹, through the possibility to participate in Provincial and District Development Coordinating Committees and through engagement with Parliament.

Service Delivery - CSOs play an important, if not crucial, role in the delivery of services to the population of Zambia. The principle areas where they play this role are: health, nutrition, education and in the provision of Legal Aid.

Inclusive and Sustainable Growth - In respect of inclusive and sustainable growth, CSOs are engaged in the areas of unemployment/social protection and, being a backbone of the country's economy, the agricultural sector, as well as involvement in issues related to climate change and in the area of trade.

Conflict Prevention, Peace-building and State-building - In the area of election monitoring, which is seen as a tool for conflict prevention and peace building, CSOs have played a consistent role at national and local level. Further, CSO's have actively followed the constitutional review processes and have provided submissions that they hope will lead to the development of a "People Driven Constitution."

Organisational and Financial Capacity, credibility and internal governance:

NGO's in Zambia have a heavy reliance on donor funding (external) and on volunteers (around 70% of organisations). This has made it difficult for them to set their own agenda and to develop their organisational capacities as well as to attract, retain and invest in human resources. In response to this situation, the Zambian Governance Foundation (ZGF) was established in July 2009 which offers multi-annual funding, also as core funding, to more established civil society organisations, selected on a competitive and needs-assessment basis, together with one-off grants and capacity building to small and emerging organisations. It is financed by a basket fund to which Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, the UK and Germany contributed.

The EU in Zambia has worked with and through a range of both international and Zambian CSOs under a variety of funding arrangements, and in a variety of sectors and locations throughout Zambia.

¹ Poverty Reduction Budget Support (PRBS) and Sector Working Groups (SWGs)

Experience shows that the capacity and resilience of CSOs can be variable, including their capacity to raise funding. The 2011 Civicus study highlighted that CSOs are weak with regard to their institutional and managerial capacity and that their technical competence in their respective thematic area is limited. However, some major CSOs have developed result-oriented strategic plans and M&E systems and this trend is likely to continue as cooperating partners are increasingly insisting on results.

Insofar as CSOs representation is concerned, it is estimated that 73% of CSOs are members of networks. Sectorial networks are seen to be strong, working under thematic umbrella organisations. However, communication outside these umbrella groupings is poor and there still is a high level of duplication of CSO activities due to a lack of coordination.

The Zambian civil society sector has an active network of CSOs carrying out evidenced based research and policy engagement work, however, the reach of their findings is limited and the papers generated are limited, due to the fact that research activities are often not embedded in broader change processes.

Links with regional and global networks exist but are limited and they are accessed almost exclusively by CSOs based centrally in Lusaka. Most CSOs do not know how to join networks or which networks are most relevant to their work.

EU Engagement and the international community:

Dialogue with Civil Society - The EU and Member States present in Zambia meet regularly with the Government, political parties, CSOs and other stakeholders for discussions on various topics. Issues related to governance and democratic spaces are continuously addressed in these consultations.

The EU Delegation has regularly engaged in a dialogue with CSOs, generally on a needs basis. It has provided substantial and important support to CSOs to implement projects in the areas of good governance, food security, human rights, education and health.

For the 11th EDF programming the EU Delegation organised bilateral meetings with government, EU Member States and major CSOs. Also, international CSOs are regular participants in the Cooperating Partners Non-State Actors Groups (NSAG) meetings and local CSOs participate on an ad-hoc basis on specific topics.

Mainstreaming Civil Society - The EU is working towards mainstreaming civil society in all areas of development cooperation programming and policy dialogues with government.

In relation to regional cooperation, Civil Society participation has been very limited. Apart from the COMESA Business Council, CSOs have not shown much interest in the regional integration agenda. However, under the 11th EDF regional programme with COMESA it is envisaged to reach out more to Civil Society at large and businesses in particular, through consultation, awareness-raising, capacity building and, where possible, direct participation in the implementation of programmes.

Coordination - The EU and a number of EU Member States have substantial activities with regard to civil society such as Germany, DFID (UK), Sweden, Irish Aid and Finland. The **US Government (USAID)** works very actively with civil society in the framework of their health Programmes.

Coordinating mechanisms are mainly through cooperating partners' groups in the various thematic sectors. These groups meet once a month at the general level and at sector level.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia hosts Sector Advisory Groups twice a year. Information exchange about the status of civil society and its operating environment is coordinated through the Non-State Actors Group (NSAG) which consists of representatives from donors and some international NGOs' active in Zambia

Lessons Learnt:

During the consultation with CSO in preparation of the 11th EDF and the preparation of the CSO/LA concept note, as well as the EU CSO roadmap, it has been realised that it is important to strengthen coordination of CSO support at country level in order to prevent the duplication of capacity building activities. Harmonised funding should be directed towards capacity building, evidence-based research and advocacy, and information sharing platforms that promote horizontal communication between CSOs. The EU Delegation has opted to provide support to CSOs through the intervention programmes within the focal sectors. There will be no separate CSO support programme.

The EU shall focus on three priorities in its further engagement with Civil Society Organisations, namely:

PRIORITY 1:- Enhanced CSOs' capacities in project management, internal governance, fund raising, monitoring and evaluation.

PRIORITY 2:- Enhanced CSO contribution to governance and development processes, improved interaction with Government and more specifically linked to the 11th EDF focal sectors.

PRIORITY 3:- Improved coordination between Delegation, EU MS and other international donors & joint support where possible.