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How can civil society and communication strengthen transparency and accountability?

Transparency and accountability in development is in focus for the European Development Days, 2009. But how can this be achieved? This session strives to find some answers.

"Achieving development results – and openly accounting for them – must be at the heart of all we do," states the Accra Agenda for Action on development effectiveness. This is also the general message of this year's European Development Days. But how should it be done? How can we find systems and means to make development more accountable to the citizens both in developing and developed countries?

The central theme of this event is to explore how communication can be used as a tool to strengthen transparency and accountability in donor-financed programmes, as well as in the management of revenues from the extractive industries in Africa.

Methods and models ensuring accountability and participation will be discussed on the basis of actual cases, with the Auditor General of Zambia *Anna O Chifungula* as a special guest. Alfred Brownhell from Green Advocates in Liberia will explain the benefits of implementing the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) and the challenges involved in institutionalising and deepening the process in the coming years.

In addition, *David Isaksson* from Global Reporting, *Antoine Heuty* from the Revenue Watch Institute and *Per Tjernberg* from BearingPoint will share their experiences on how communication and management tools can be used in combating corruption and increasing transparency.

The seminar will also include comments from the members of The Foreign affairs Committee of the Swedish parliament, *Bodil Ceballos* (*Miljöpartiet/green party*) and *Christian Holm* (*Moderaterna/Conservatives party*).

This event is open to all, including government officials, civil society activists, policy-makers and journalists interested in the transparency movement.

Moderator: *Anki Wood*, who is nominated as Communication Coordinator at the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe.

Revenue Watch

Though abundant natural resources – such as oil, gas or minerals – can provide a windfall for the countries where they are found, too often the opposite effect is seen, and wealth that could be harnessed to spur development and widespread social benefits instead leaves the country as soon as it leaves the ground, or falls into the hands of a few elites while public welfare stagnates, and often declines. About 50 developing or transitional countries are resource-dependent, and 2/3 of world's most impoverished people live within these countries' borders on less than \$2 per day.

Transparency is critical to addressing the paradox of plenty and transforming wealth underground into wellbeing aboveground. When governments disclose the payments they receive from oil, gas and mining companies, citizens, civil society groups, the media and other branches of government itself gain the knowledge they need to follow the money and hold government more accountable for how it manages and spends the nation's resource wealth. Responsible and transparent management of extractive resource wealth helps to keep money and investment inside a nation's borders, which fosters growth and reduces dependence on foreign aid.

Frameworks like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) provide a model for improved regulation in producing countries, and a tool enabling governments, citizens, and extractive companies to form a partnership to improve transparency of extractive industry revenues. The EITI is becoming an increasingly accepted standard for transparency of extractive sector revenues; it includes 33 countries in different stages of implementation.

The Revenue Watch Institute and a team of economists, legal and environmental experts are collaborating in the drafting of an international Natural Resource Charter, a document that offers resource-rich societies a vision and a blueprint for the future of their country's natural resource sector. Although successful exploitation entails a complex set of policy decisions, there are certain practical considerations that can help ensure that these resources contribute to social and economic development for the country. In October 2009, former Mexican President *Ernesto Zedillo* was named as Chair of the Charter's oversight board, along other founding members Yegor Gaidar, former Acting Russian Prime Minister and *Charles Soludo*, who was until recently Central Bank Governor of Nigeria.

BearingPoint

Development cooperation has from time to time problems reaching its goals for sustainability, efficiency, accountability, transparency and results.

As such this is very much similar to what the industry sector has faced for decades, developing innovating methods to improve its capability to reach its goals in time, with high quality and at the lowest cost. It is then logic to think that similar methods could be applied to development cooperation

Of course it would be naïve to think that development cooperation is not using any tools inspired from the industry; the widespread Result Based Management (RMB) concept is an example of how donor organizations attempt to implement better project planning and control. But often these tools and methods are designed for the donor organizations benefits, and they may not produce the expected effects on the recipient organizations, sometimes resulting in undelivered projects and uncontrolled spending.

From an industry perspective, this donor-recipient relation would be compared to a supplier-buyer transaction. Modern methods and concepts have been developed and applied to reduced leadtime, increase quality and decrease cost linked to the supplier-buyer transaction. A key denominator in that case is to create great value for both the supplier and the buyer; only then the transaction can be optimized.

Adapting this concept to development cooperation, recipient organizations need to see the great value they can obtain from their cooperation with donor organizations. This is

not about simply complying with control and reporting methods imposed by the donor organizations in order to obtain funding. This is about realizing the short, mid and long-term benefits that will arise for the recipient organization, for the citizen in the receiving country, when using modern methods to secure Sustainability, Efficiency, Accountability, Transparency and Results. Ultimately the whole donor-recipient relation will improve.

Global Reporting

Communication can be a vital tool to strengthen democracy, increase the respect for human rights and assure transparency in implementation. By letting more people participate and strengthening the communication between all stakeholders the development process will be improved.

Despite the fact that a planned communication process is accepted as a key factor for success in many fields of the society, communication is seldom applied as a strategic tool for goal fulfilment in development cooperation.

Traditional one-way communication, or dissemination, has long been considered enough to reach objectives in development cooperation. It assumes that the receivers – the citizens – take the information and transform it into action. However, proof has shown that the dissemination method is neither sufficient nor efficient.

To be credible communication must take into account the focus on participation and transparency. With participatory approaches, projects, programmes and sector support will belong to those they are set to benefit assuring real ownership.

Modern communication theories rely on building relations, in other words creating a dialogue between those previously seen as senders and receivers. Civil society and the general public in general demand a proactive attitude where authorities serve the public with relevant and correct information. In this we must put further emphasis on the right to access of information.

Participatory communication methods together with enhanced rights to access of information will strengthen democracy, facilitating dialogue between governments and civil society. Further more media's role and independence will be strengthened. But to live up to these participation principles will require a fundamental shift in our view of communication.

The presentation will focus how communication could support participatory, transparent processes, giving hands-on examples on how communication can be used making donors and receivers more accountable to citizens in developing and developed countries.

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