Development policy: participation of non-state actors

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PURPOSE : to present the Communication on the involvement of Non-State Actors (NSAs) in EC Development Policy. CONTENT : this paper describes the progressive involvement of ACP Non-State Actors (NSAs) across the development process, from implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, to growing consultation with NSAs at political summits. The Communication on the EC's approach to dialogue with, and programme implementation by NSAs, is intended to contribute to the broad policy discussion. The aim is to clarify expectations and inform the debate with partner countries. This paper examines practices by instrument and region, beginning with humanitarian aid and moving on to thematic budget lines and geographical instruments. The latter includes the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, cooperation with South Africa, the MEDA programme, the ALA Regulation, assistance to the Western Balkans, PCAs with Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The amounts involved over the last three years on humanitarian aid, thematic budget lines and geographical instruments are analysed. The paper discusses the respective roles of EC Delegations and headquarters. The deconcentration process begun in 2001 will lead to a gradual transfer of resources and responsibilities to delegations, and the Head of delegation will have an increased role in NTAS access to funding. The Communication concludes that Non State Actors are increasingly being involved in EC development policy throughout the various co-operation programmes and policy dialogues with partner countries. It is estimated that every year some EUR 1.4 billions out of the EUR 7 billions of EC yearly official development assistance (20%) is being managed by NSAs. Implementation of the principle of NSA participation in the development process will evolve over time and will require identification of best practices, flexibility and institutional innovation. This means adopting country specific approaches and taking account of varying political conditions, levels of organisation of these actors and existing traditions or mechanisms for dialogue. Differences between regions are expected in relation to NSA involvement in the development process due both to different legal provisions in the co-operation and partnership agreements and to social, political and historical contexts. However, the Policy Statement on EC Development Policy provides for the involvement of NSAs in the development process. Consequently, an adequate level of consultation and participation is to be ensured in all partner countries. Certain standards should be met, These include: - promotion of NSA involvement in the preparation of the National Development Strategy or Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers by the authorities; - NSAs should be consulted more systematically on Country Strategy Papers and throughout the programming process as part of the discussions on the EC response strategy with the relevant national authorities; - NSA involvement should include discussions on trade policies and economic cooperation; - a balanced representation has to be found between social and economic partners, and NGOs representing different groups or areas of concern; - clear information is to be provided to NSAs in good time toallow them to prepare their participation in consultations as well as their reactions and proposals; - the EC will continue to encourage NSAs to participate in the implementation of cooperation projects and programmes; - capacity building is essential to enable NSAs to play a constructive role in the development process. The EC encourages the Northern NSAs to provide their know-how to other development actors and to moving from implementing projects towards capacity building by assisting their partners in developing countries; - enhanced co-ordination with the Member States and other donors is an effective way of strengthening political dialogue with national authorities and facilitating NSAs' capacity to use all the opportunities offered in the development process; - the EC intends to keep the two existing types of relations with NSAs: implementing partners and NSAs' own initiative. The dialogue on implementation will therefore continue. In the context of this dialogue, the Commission intends to discuss with NSAs the mechanisms to carry out systematically monitoring and evaluations at all levels; - the Commission will prepare guidelines for EC Delegations on NSA involvement in the development process. Another set of guidelines for the EC Delegations in ACP countries on implementing Cotonou Agreement provisions relating to Non-State Actor access to EDF funding is also being prepared. These two sets of

guidelines complement the Commission Services' "Programming guidelines No. 6 - The new actors in the partnership" for ACP countries.