



**Commonwealth  
Foundation**



**West and Central Africa regional consultation  
on the theme of the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of  
Government Meeting:  
*“Partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future”***

Tou'ngou Hotel, Yaoundé, Cameroon  
**6 – 7 May 2009**

Organised by

The Commonwealth Foundation in collaboration with  
Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN), Cameroon

**REPORT**

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# **1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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- 1.1 Introduction and context
- 1.2 Key issues
- 1.3 Pressing Challenges
- 1.4 Overall key messages and conclusion
- 1.5 Recommendations

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1 Over forty representatives of Civil Society Organisations from five West and Central African countries: Cameroon, the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone met in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 6-7 May 2009 to share views and analysis on the theme of the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: **“Partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future”**.

2 The meeting took place against a backdrop of a multiple crisis: financial, economic, demographic and social, as well as environmental.

## 1.2 KEY ISSUES

3 Participants recognised the world is facing the worse crisis since the 1930s. As a result of the vulnerability exacerbated by extreme poverty, Africa in general and the West and Central African region in particular, are much more affected.

4 In a context of global market integration where partnership has taken over domination, it is recognised that the crisis will very likely slow down development in the West and Central African region and make it more difficult to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. As a consequence of mismanagement at great scale in the West, it will also play a role in changing the global balance of power with the rise of China and India. However, the crisis could well be considered as an opportunity for Africa to rethink its development. It raises the question of how well national governments are equipped to deal with the crisis, considering that the actual missing link with the youth in policy design has to be addressed as a priority

5 The Commonwealth is a strategic space that represents almost 1/3 of the world’s population, 40% of the WTO Membership and the world’s biggest and most diverse development network, participants discussed financial, economic, environmental, and systemic as well as governance and gender related issues.

## 1.3 PRESSING CHALLENGES

6 Youth unemployment is one of the major challenges in the region as millions of young women and men find no outlet after school. As a consequence, migration in search for better life outside Africa is on the rise despite the risks attached to clandestine attempts to travel abroad. Some well trained potential work force in strategic areas such as education and health also seek to migrate out of Africa.

7 Gender and sector inequality in resource and wealth distribution is a problem that creates others like lack of social justice and exacerbation of poverty in rural areas. The informal sector and other vulnerable parts of the population have limited access to available resources or find it difficult to benefit from the actual systemic arrangements, as in the case of financing for development, where rural farmers hardly get funding from the banking system.

8 Governance improvement as a crucial necessity for development is to be fully considered at all levels, including environmental governance through a more responsible exploitation of natural resources, in a formula that protects the environment and prevents climate change; Political governance that should promote inclusive democracy and accountability.

9 Trade and industrialization is crucial for the region. Agricultural subsidies hinder African competitiveness on the world markets. The issue of Economic Partnership Agreements which do not really serve the interests of Africa is also at stake. Much dumping of products by developed countries on developing countries threatens local industries, putting these at risk of closing down and causing loss of employment.

10 Health degradation in general and HIV and AIDS in particular are a major problem for the region. More efforts need to be made in order to protect the population whose production capacity is very badly affected, with negative impact on national productivity. The number of HIV and AIDS infected persons is on the rise and would get to critical levels very soon in many countries if nothing is done urgently. Health quality is deterred by insufficient infrastructure and braindrain.

11 Other challenges exist and also need to be tackled urgently in order to give a more realistic chance of the achieving of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

#### **1.4 OVERALL KEY MESSAGES AND CONCLUSION**

12 Beyond the world financial and economic crisis, Africa faces serious challenges and needs to seize this opportunity and rethink its development. African leaders should use this time to take the policy space that they have missed so far in the traditional structure of international cooperation. It is crucial that domestic resources be managed in a more responsible way and that solutions to the crisis be designed with full consideration of the fact that “without a symbiotic relationship between Governments and civil society organisations, development would not follow and that intelligence is not one sided but rather complementary.

## **1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

13 Participants made the following recommendations:

### **To Governments**

- Steps should be taken in international cooperation to hold China and India accountable on issues of environmental sustainability, responsibility, transparency and accountability. There is a need to be for a global order to check excesses at national level since they could have a world effect and a uniform solution to climate change should be prescribed to Commonwealth countries.
- African governments should be aware of the strategic importance of natural resource and raw materials that Africa supplies to the global market, when they engage in international cooperation.
- Industrialization is a key development factor besides agriculture and as such should be seriously considered in development strategies; so too should culture and tourism. Processing industries should be established to transform raw materials into finished products before exportation, thus creating jobs.
- Gender should be given serious consideration as a determining factor in national development policies.
- Youth should be given spaces for exchange of views within the sub region on a more sustainable development through partnerships and exchanges.
- Involve civil society contribution at all stages of national development policies, including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- The financial and economic crisis should be considered as an opportunity for all to turn a new page towards a better future, where more resources will be invested in achieving the MDGs in general and universal primary education for all in particular, with full attention to the 95% of disabled who are not in schools.

### **To Civil Society Organizations**

- CSOs should support rural masses in initiatives addressing governance and promote genuine partnerships at national, regional and international level.
- There should be solidarity among CSOs to encourage technological growth, as some reasons for poverty could be found in transfer of the effects of technological development to Africa rather than in the transfer of technology itself.
- Greater effort should be made to inform and influence government officials and relevant regional institutions at all levels.

## **To the Commonwealth**

- The Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Foundation could bring pressure to bear on issues of good governance in developing countries to improve on prevalent situations such as accountability, transparency, fraud corruption and crisis of hegemony.
- There is a need for more support to the Civil Society in order to ensure their contribution to global events and trends.
- Creation at regional level of a field for informal dialogue and debates between government and civil society on pressing issues of concern at national, regional and pan-commonwealth levels.

## **2- REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS**

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- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Day one: Wednesday, 6 May 2009
- 2.3 Day two: Thursday, 7 May 2009

## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Delegates drawn from civil society organisations in Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and The Gambia) assembled in Yaoundé, Cameroon from the 6 - 7 May 2009 at Tou'Ngou Hotel to hold consultative talks on key issues and challenges of the moment and come up with proposals to be submitted as input to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago in November 2009 under the theme: "*Partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future*".

The consultation, besides providing a forum for frank talk was very enriching as well as educative and confirmed the value of genuine and sustainable partnership

## **2.2 DAY ONE (WEDNESDAY, 6 MAY 2009)**

Activities for day one included:

*Phase I: Official opening ceremony*

*Phase II: Background to the consultation and Discussions*

*Phase III: Presentation of national perspectives*

### **2.2.1 Phase I: Official Opening Ceremony**

Present were:

1. The representative of the Minister of External Relations , Mr. Mbayu Felix, Director in Charge of Relations with the Commonwealth
2. Mr. Yombo Daniel, Sub-Director at the Commonwealth Department, in charge of Social and Non-Governmental Cooperation with the Commonwealth, Ministry of External Relations
3. Chief Fondju Joseph, Sub-Director at the Commonwealth Department in charge of Economic, Technical and Cultural Affairs
4. Mr. Tchotelle Thomas, on behalf of the Ministry of Finance,
5. Dr. Chemuta Divine Banda, Chairman, National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms
6. Mr Martin Tsounkeu, General Representative of Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN)
7. Delegates from Cameroon, the Gambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria

Mr. Vijay Krishnarayan in his introductory remarks welcomed all present to the consultative meeting. He explained the consultation was the first in a series of consultations to be held in preparation for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting scheduled for November 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago. He appreciated the efforts of the organization team, particularly Mr. Tsounkeu Martin of Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN).

Mr. Krishnarayan thanked the Ministry of External Relations- Cameroon for their invaluable support and the dinner offered to all the participants that evening. With regard to the Commonwealth Foundation and its action areas of priority, he said that in order to cover the need for partnerships amongst civil society organisations, the Commonwealth Foundation was given a mandate to work with civil society organisations.

The importance of the role of civil society organisations in development was acknowledged; as such the Commonwealth Foundation was available to provide a platform for their voices to be heard at the Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

The objectives of this consultation were to:

- Enable civil society organisations to share information in order to influence discussions at the CHOGM scheduled for November 2009 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago;
- Provide opportunities for exchange of ideas on the CHOGM theme;
- Grasp a sound understanding of the Commonwealth Foundation, and the CHOGM;
- Select a spokesperson to present the ideas of the CSOs from the Central and West African Region.

The second speaker was Mr Martin Tsounkeu, the General Representative of Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN). He began with a word of thanks to all who made it to this workshop and then expressed the warm feelings from Cameroon for the opportunity to offer a platform to gather ideas for the CHOGM in the context of a multiple crisis: financial, social, economic and environmental a crisis he added which is in no way new to the African continent which has always been in crisis, considering that poverty is the worse imaginable condition of crisis.

He concluded by inviting all the participants to come up with objective proposals and ideas to be forwarded to the CHOGM in November 2009.

The third and the last speaker for this phase was Mr. Felix Mbayu, Director of the Commonwealth Department, sitting in for the Minister of External Relations called up to other duties.

He started off by presenting apologies from his Excellency the Minister of External Relation, in the person of Mr Henri Eyebe Ayissi whose absence he said was not lack of interest for the come together although he would prefer that civil society organisations be able to discuss freely without the Government canalising their ideas.

He highlighted the fact that the Cameroon Government was very interested in working with civil society organisations and is concerned that they succeed in

their activities. Mr Mbayu acknowledged and lauded the work done by the Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN) and encouraged other civil society organisations to emulate their example. He added that without a symbiotic relationship between Government and civil society organisations, development would not follow and that intelligence is not one sided but rather complementary. He concluded by entreating participants to furnish them with ideas for the Forum of Public Service Ministers scheduled in Cameroon next year.

## **2.2.2 Phase II: Background to the consultation and discussions**

- a) Background, process and technical information to the consultation
- b) Discussions led by Dr Mailafia, CEO-Centre for Policy and Economic Research, Nigeria.

This phase had as main moderator: Mr Seth Lartey, Programme Manager, Governance and Democracy of the Commonwealth Foundation, assisted by Mr. Vijay Krishnarayan, Deputy Director of the Commonwealth Foundation and Mr. Martin Tsounkeu, General Representative of Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN).

### ***Background, process and technical information on Consultation***

Mr. Lartey put highlighted the following points:

- Heads of Governments meet biennially;
- The last Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting (CHOGM) was held in Kampala, Uganda in November 2007;
- The next meeting will be in the Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago in November 2009;
- Prior to the CHOGM in November, the Commonwealth Foundation will organise a Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF) from 22-25 November in Port of Spain;
- The Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF) has evolved and now focus specially on issues to be addressed by Head of Governments at their Summits;
- CSOs discussions and inputs are now an official part of the CHOGM agenda;

Finally, Mr. Lartey said that the entry point for CSO's work is not at the big meeting but at national level. He emphasized that the key is relationship building is key to ensuring that messages get through. Partnership, the key concepts in the theme he added, especially with government departments, will be the main dimension of the consultation.

Participants were informed that the consultation in Yaoundé, Cameroon, was the first. Further consultations would be held in Grenada, Malaysia, Malta, Tonga, and South Africa.

He made reference to the Kampala Civil society Statement to the 2007 CHOGM, as an output of consultations like this one, and confirmed the fact that some successes have been registered in relation to the key challenges raised therein.

The Commonwealth Foundation is working with its Civil Society Advisory Committee, comprising 16 civil society organizations in the Commonwealth, to organise and facilitate the consultations.

The outputs from the various consultations will be synthesized by the end of August 2009 and presented as draft CSO statement highlighting key issues, to the “Committee of the Whole” to be held in London, UK, in October 2009.

Mr Lartey stressed the important role of CSOs in informing and influencing strategic government officials, senior officials, ministers, diplomatic missions in London, New York and other capital cities about the Commonwealth People’s Forum.

On technical issues, Mr Lartey explained that the Commonwealth has 53 member states which represent almost 1/3 of the world’s population is made up of some world’s richest and poorest countries.

Participants were schooled on the fact that the theme for CHOGM in November is “Partnering for more equitable and sustainable future” and could be broken down into four concepts:

- *Partnerships,*
- *Equity,*
- *Sustainability,*
- *Future.*

Finally, Mr. Lartey catalogued the global context of the discussions between CSO and Head of Government as follows:

- *A Global Financial and Economic Crisis;*
- *A Food crisis*
- *An energy crisis*
- *An environment crisis*
- *A demographic and social crisis.*

After citing some specific examples and impacts of the above mentioned issues, he called on CSO to work in partnership with Governments and other

development actors to develop appropriate policy responses for environmental sustainability, economic and social development, good governance and conflict resolutions.

## ***Discussions***

Dr. Obadiah Mailafia, raised issues related to the current situation in Africa drawn from his personal experience as a banker and former Deputy Director of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

He spoke about African leaders in the prevalent Financial and Economic crisis and invited them to reflect on challenges and how to tackle them. Like Mr. Lartey, Dr. Mailafia came back on the key words of the theme, namely partnership, equity, and sustainability which according to him has to do with the future.

In relation to the economic crisis, he pondered whether the aggressive lending policy by US banks to people who later on could not pay back, and speculative exuberance contributed to the crisis. He cautioned against the belief that assets will continue to grow and remain high. Other issues raised had to do with good governance (including accountability and transparency, greed and incompetence). In Dr Mailafia's view, all of the above had led to a loss of trust in the US as an economic leader.

He highlighted some efforts towards addressing of the situation such as the modest optimism by Gordon Brown during the recently held G20 Summit, the pledge by G20 member states to put to provide a stimulus to the global economy. Dr Mailafia also noted the IMF commitment to sell some of its gold reserve to put more financial resources to developing economies.

Dr. Mailafia also talked about the importance of genuine partnership at all levels and hailed the Commonwealth pragmatic approach – consensus in decision making, equity, which is still a serious challenge to leaders as well as climate change. He emphasized the relationship between markets and states and called for a careful use of available resources in the face of carbon based resources from developed countries. He invited CSO leaders to consider new issues in development.

Following Dr Mailafia's presentation, Mr. Krishnarayan threw some light on the fact that good governance was related to these issues at the national, regional and international levels. He added that the global economic decline which is likely to continue further has also in part been caused by liberalized markets.

There was a call for pragmatism which was to be used to get out from the difficult situations. Civil society organization have had the capacity more than they seem to realize and as such need to shape the way they are seen from

grassroots, to networks, sub-region, regions and the continent in order to influence change.

Highlights of the discussions in plenary included:

- China and India should be cautioned on issues of sustainability, responsibility, transparency and accountability besides their actions that qualify them as emerging world powers.
- Distinction between financial and economic crisis – where one is a repercussion of another at the level of developed and developing countries.
- The need for a global order to check excesses at national level since they could have a world effect.
- Commonwealth could bring pressure to bear on issues of good governance in developing countries to improve on prevalent situations – shortcomings of leadership, greed, fraud corruption – crisis of hegemony.
- Efforts could also be initiated by rural masses with support from CSO to address – governance on the issues of cynicism in “Partnership”.
- Need for genuine partnerships at national, regional and international level.
- Solidarity among CSO to encourage technological growth as some reasons for poverty could be found in transfer of effect of technological development to Africa and not technology.
- Much dumping of products by developed countries on developing countries, which lead to closing down of local industries and loss of employment.
- The strategic importance of raw materials should be highlighted for Humanity started off in Africa and therefore the future of humanity will come from Africa.
- Industrialization is a key factor besides agriculture and as such should be seriously considered.
- Culture is very crucial for Africa’s development.
- Gender concerns should be considered seriously as the theme calls for partnership and equity which elicits a gender perspective.
- Youths should be offered spaces for exchange of their views within the sub region for a more sustainable development through partnerships.
- Ninety-five percent of disabled children are not in schools. If the situation is not reversed, this MDG for achieving universal primary education for all will not be met by 2015.
- Financial and economic crisis should be considered as a need for all to turn a new page towards a better future.
- Leadership systems are crucial and should address concerns of the Government.

### 2.2.3 Phase III: National Perspectives

(a) *Kebba Barrow, The Association of Non-governmental Organizations, The Gambia: "Sustainable Partnerships for a better future"*

After talking about a historical background, objectives, mandates, visions, missions and strategic objectives of The Association of Non-governmental organizations (TANGO), Mr. Kebba schooled participants on issues of partnership. He shared the experience of the EXCEL (Empowering civil society organizations through capacity building and network linkages) project which has as objective to enhance the capacities of civil society organizations and to network.

Key issues at the National level:

- Government and CSOs accountability
- Food security
- Quality Education
- Access to basic social services
- Participation

Development challenges

- Deepening poverty
- Political and Institutional Governance
- Youth participation in development
- Gender empowerment
- Delivering quality education
- Food crisis
- Energy crisis
- Global financial and economic crises and its impact on remittances trade and trade prices
- Unemployment
- Low wages
- Low statistical capacities

What Governments and Civil Society Organizations can do to address development challenges:

- The need for participation to ensure effectiveness and quality of non state actors involvement in the design implementation and monitoring of government policies and service delivery
- Ensure that the space for participation in in-depth, more process orientation and more commitment from all stakeholders
- More sensitization, more civic engagement, networking and coalition alliance building scaling intervention

- Better coordination and information sharing mechanism
- Strengthening the monitoring and tracking functions for better developmental outputs.

*(b) Durrel N Halleson, Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement, Cameroon: The case of the extractive industries sector on Cameroon*

Extractive industries were defined as industrial operations related to solid minerals and hydrocarbons. He said these operations include exploration and exploitation of the industrial and non industrial minerals, exploitation of quarries, artisan mining of precious gem stones, natural and related industrials projects; exploration and production of crude oil and gas and downstream petroleum related activities.

The speaker highlighted the following issues:

- Socio environmental problems in extractive industries included:
  - o Destruction of biodiversity around the forested ecosystems
  - o Destruction of fishing reefs on the coast of Kribi, 300 km South of the capital Yaoundé
  - o Stagnant water ponds created around settlements leading to health hazards
  - o Doubtful contingency plans for efficient intervention in the case of oil spills
  - o Expulsion of indigenous people from their homeland as a result of the creation of the Campo Ma'an National park
  - o Acute impoverishment of local fishing communities with the advent of the pipeline project
- New challenges for Cameroon extractives industries
- Social Crisis that could emanate from onshore oil exploration and exploitation
- Severe deforestation in forest exploitation zones
- Respect of conditions prior to the exploitation such as soil reparations at the end of operations
- Decline in overall welfare of local populations

He proposed the following as the way forward:

- The government should practice good governance in the extractive industries sector
- Balance need for economic growth – need to provide environmental protection for sustainable development
- Need for effective monitoring by CSO
- Need for government to reform law to ensure environmental sustainability

- Foresee cohabitation of state law and customary law
- Design specific law for artisan and small scale mining

*(c) Ngalim Eugene, Cameroon Youth and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP): "Cameroon youth perspective on partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future"*

The starting point for the presentation was the link between high unemployment, endemic poverty and rising levels of migration of youth out of the country in search for better economic conditions.

**The following statistics were highlighted:**

- Youth unemployment rate is 13%
- Youth underemployment is 75% in cities and 63% in rural areas
- Youth in informal sector 92%
- 3 millions youth are inadequately employed
- 1 million unemployed
- 2 million young people out of a population of 18 million are underemployed

**Challenges facing young people in Cameroon include:**

- Unemployment
- HIV and AIDS
- Participation in decision making

A series of efforts made by the government to overcome these were listed as follows:

- Creation of a National Employment Fund specific law for artisan and small scale mining
- Liberalization and professionalisation of studies in higher education
- Creation of a ministry of employment and professional training
- Putting in place of employment programmes
- Creation of a national observatory for employment and professional training
- Creation of a national AIDS committee
- HIV screening centers in all regions of Cameroon
- Creation of a ministry of youth affairs
- Celebration of a national youth day to valorize youth
- African youth charter will enhance youth participation
- Ministry of Youth working on National Youth Policy (NYP), National Youth Council (NYC), National Youth Action Plan (NYAP)

**The following recommendations were made:**

- Creation of national youth volunteer service in public services

- Setting up of a national youth forum
- Rethink the employment policy
- Review the tax policy to trigger investment
- Review professional education by provision of services and facilities for the sector
- Graduate placement programmes
- Introduce sex education in the curricula
- Effective assistance to infected youth
- Adoption of law on HIV/AIDS
- Need for funds for mobilization of youth in election participation
- Review of Government appointment policy
- Ratification and implementation of African youth charter:

(d) *Nsikan-Georges Emana, Gender and Development Action, Nigeria: "The paradox of Nigerian's economy".*

#### **Cross cutting issues:**

- Gender
- Youth development
- Weak primary health care
- HIV/AIDS
- Social insecurity
- Human rights and access to justice
- Seven point agenda (Energy, security, wealth creation, education, land reform, mass transit, Niger Delta Regional development)

#### **Development challenges**

- Governance
- Unemployment
- Declining informal sector
- Poverty
- Energy insecurity
- Weak capacity for international trade
- Poor rural and infrastructural economy
- Environmental problems
- Volatile commodity prices

After listing a catalogue of Nigeria's development efforts since 1999, The presenter, noted there has never been a well organized, conscious and sustained efforts at achieving these goals. Weaknesses and gaps were highlighted. Ms Emana proposed some actions for CSOs and Government to address these gaps and weaknesses. In her closing remarks she outlined that partnership with the Commonwealth requires Governments of member states to promote genuine democratic regimes that are committed

to the protection of human rights, people-centered development and market oriented economies.

(e) *Iyesha Kamara, 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone and Marcella McCaulley Campaign for Good Governance, Sierra Leone: "Partnering for a more equitable sustainable future - the Sierra Leone perspective".*

**The following issues were highlighted by presenters:**

- Highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world
- Vulnerability to crime, corruption and growing power of South American drug cartel
- Resurfacing of violence as electoral democracy has bred political intolerance
- Resurfacing of ethnic tensions and regional factionalism
- Questionable efforts towards poverty reduction due to noninvolvement nor consultation of CSO
- Persistent conflict with a major cause being youth unemployment
- Low level of women involvement in decision making process
- Unequal distribution of resources leading to mass exodus of communities to urban areas
- High level of illiteracy (60% and 80% for women)
- ICTs still at rudimentary level
- Inadequate development infrastructure
- Agriculture and food still at subsistent level

**Main development challenges:**

- Aid dependency
  - Government unaware of many developmental project being carried out in the country
  - Parallel governance structures
  - Donor influence on Government
  - Lack of trust between donors and Government
- After outlining weaknesses and gaps, some partnership in the National context were listed<sup>1</sup>

(f) *Florence Nakazibwe, Commonwealth Human Right initiative, Ghana: "Ghana perspective on partnering for more equitable and sustainable"*

Key development issues in the context of Ghana were identified as follows:

- Economic crisis,
- Climate change
- High cost of energy,
- Cultural harmful practices.
- Political rights

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<sup>1</sup> See full presentation (Annexes)

- Poor access to justice
- Women's rights other gender issues
- Discrimination against the disabled
- High population growth
- Environmental crisis
- Political governance
- Human rights protection
- Health Rights
- Corruption
- Human Security
- Housing rights and displacement
- Environment

Development challenges included:

- Increased commitment to good governance objectives to consolidate anti-corruption measures and facilitate citizen participation in governance and development programs
- Strengthening of judicial structures to ensure efficient delivery of justice
- Expansion of legal aid services to rural areas
- Effective implementation of human rights standards by all relevant institutional bodies including the Ghana Police Service
- Rehabilitation of Police Cells
- Increased civic education on human rights standards
- Equitable resource allocation targeted at meeting the socio-economic needs of local communities
- Increased commitment to gender equality and empowerment
- Improved partnership between Government and civil society
- Adoption of a national housing and evictions policy

### ***Discussions***

Highlights of the discussion included:

- International organizations are not seen as CSO especially when it concerns poverty.
- Government partners with CSO when services are needed but not when issues of accountability and transparency arise.
- Foreign donors use aid to sell their ideas, so that they should not be considered with development issues.
- Despite level of education of some African, the imperialist interest is still prevalent in some countries as in the case of Sierra Leone.
- CSO should pay closer attention when MOU<sup>2</sup> are being signed with their local communities.
- CSO need to be informed and then be able to influence policies by informing grassroots in such a way as to build the critical mass to interrogate democratic issues.

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<sup>2</sup> MOU Memorandum Of Understanding

- Governments are hypocritical and fail to inform CSOs – consequently, regional institutions like ECOWAS or CEMAC need to create forum for sensitive issues to be raised by CSOs.

Rounding off the discussions, Mr Krishnarayan asked participants to reflect on the following question, on the basis of the outcome of the last CHOGM:

- *How can we be sure that our discussions are going to make a difference this time around?*

## **2.3 DAY TWO, THURSDAY, 7 MAY 2009**

Day two commenced with a recap of day one activities.

### **2.3.1 Recap of issues raised on day one**

- **Partnerships** have become the accepted norm of international economic activity which tends to help in terms of global ethics. These partnerships however pose questions of donors with respect to the dignity of the recipient countries without undermining the duty of the latter to manage resources judiciously.
- **Equity:** Globalisation has engendered deepening inequalities. Gender equity would give women greater roles in the decision making process which is essential for growth and poverty reduction elements essential to the attainment of the MDGs.

The voices of youth are the flower of the future and need to be heard as such they should be equipped with technical skills to ensure the future and to give them the feeling that everyone cares.

- **Sustainability:** Resources should be exploited with a deep consideration for the future
- **Governance:** Poor leaderships can be justified by ignorance rather than incompetence which highlight the urgent needs to strengthen capacities and review our civil service to be results oriented.

### **2.3.2 Issues overlooked on day one**

- **Trade:** Africa makes up only 2.8% of global trade and subsidies which are very important for developing countries seem to be slow at coming, so there is a vital need to create an international trade regime that pays closer attention to the needs of developing countries.

- **Climate Change:** constitutes a pressing development challenge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, together with the building of sustainable energy systems. Assistance as such to support these development challenges in this particular effort becomes an urgent need.

### **2.3.3 Group Work sessions**

There were two group work sessions.

#### ***Session I***

##### Feedback from group I

##### *Key Issues*

##### **GOVERNANCE**

- Leadership
- Corruption
- Capacity building
- Institutional strengthening

##### **UNEMPLOYMENT**

- Skills development
- Education (functional literacy)

##### **GENDER**

- Illiteracy
- Social justice
- Equity/ discrimination

##### **POVERTY**

- Unequal distribution of wealth
- Rural development
- Limited access to opportunities
- Informal sector development

##### **TRADE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND PARTNERSHIP**

- Technological development
- Research and development
- Infrastructure
- Institutional frameworks
- Policy framework
- Dumping of foreign goods

## **HEALTH**

- HIV/AIDS
- Malaria
- Tuberculosis
- Primary health care

## **HEALTH CONDITION**

- Reproductive health
- Health infrastructure
- Health service delivery across the board

## **ENVIRONMENT GOVERNANCE**

- Sustainable development
- Climate change

### *Gaps and weaknesses*

#### **Governance**

- Non inclusive governance
- Centralization of power
- Usurpation of power
- Citizens' participation
- Non- responsiveness
- Lack of accountability and transparency
- Capacity gap
- Political will
- corruption

### *Key messages*

#### **Governance**

Active involvement and participation of all stakeholders at all levels of policy elaboration and implementation with an obligation of accountability is key to development.

#### **Gender and Unemployment**

Recognizing the unused potentials of women in the development process, Government are urged to embark on gender responsive policies and programs by deeply involving all stakeholders regardless of their sex, age and social status.

## *Recommendations*

### **Governance**

- Effective decentralization of governance with the following stakeholders:
  - o Government at all levels
  - o CSOs
  - o Citizens
  - o Development partners

### **Gender and Unemployment**

- Governments are encouraged to provide relevant quality education and employable skills for citizens particularly youth and women.

## *Feedback from group II*

### *Key Issues*

- Health
- Natural resources
- Education
- Youth unemployment
- Water and sanitation
- Trade
- Governance
- Financing for development
- Human Rights
- Partnership challenges, weaknesses and gaps
- Skills, Expertise & Resources Required
- Opportunities

### *Key messages*

#### **Message to Governments**

- Address the effect of HIV and AIDS to special groups through adoption of favorable national policies.
- Why Government – CSO partnership have not worked effectively? Because CSOs are not organized and there is lack of cohesion between CSOs as well as mistrust from Governments.
- There is lack of political will on the part of to partner with civil society organizations.
- There is a perceived fear of diverse loyalties of CSOs due to sources of funding. This creates suspicions and mistrust between partnerships between CSOs and Government.

- Outcomes of partnership meetings and consultations are generally not translated into concrete policy actions.
- Conflicting agendas and perception of divergence in priorities/targets, with CSOs perceiving governments as deceptive for not implementing mutually agreed positions is a problem and there is Need to harmonize agendas between CSOs and governments, in order to fight mistrust and ensure confidence built upon mutual understanding on positive image.
- It is the duty of government to listen to the voice of civil society and there are opportunities in the region that should be leveraged for better regional partnership: NEPAD, EITI, Paris Declaration, Regional mechanisms and economic blocs such as ECOWAS and SADC, HIPC initiative and related fora. Existing global context, despite the crisis, reveals opportunities of greater achievement of purpose in creating synergies for visibility and concrete actions. Building genuine partnership between government and CSOs is ideal and a win-win situation.

### *Recommendations*

#### **Natural resource management**

- Need to respect community rights to ensure that they benefit from proceeds of exploitation, facilitate community participation and involvement.
- Need for clear guidelines of accountability on resource management.
- Policies on natural resource management should be sustainable to meet social public interest, to address basic needs of the local communities.
- Effective implementation of all relevant policies and laws on natural resource management.

#### **Water and Sanitation**

- Need for infrastructural development and upgrading in urban centre and expansion of water facilities.
- Need to provide clean and potable water especially in rural areas will impact greatly on health and poverty.

#### **Trade**

- Trade policies to be reviewed, governments to invest in tertiary industries.
- Increase industrialization with complimentary policies that will anticipate environmental consequences as well as insulate local communities from the adverse impact of industrialization.
- Donors should step up efforts to provide trade-related development assistance to promote self-reliance in trade amongst developing countries.

## **Governance**

- Mainstreaming gender in development process.
- Concrete action is needed in areas where existing policies are not implemented to ensure effective results.
- There is need for training on implementation strategies to guide actions.
- Resource allocation through gender budgeting should be emphasized to address inequity in the distribution of wealth as well as budgetary allocations.

## **Climate change**

- Implement policies bordering around climate change.

## **Human Rights**

- Effective implementation of human rights standards.
- Commitment to respect political civic rights; expunging repressive laws.
- Approach human right as a shared responsibility – promote awareness programs to empower people to demand enforcement.
- Attitudinal change against dehumanizing cultural practices.

## **Science and technology**

- Investment in science and technological development.
- Harness local knowledge and local intellectual capital to translate into value additions for raw materials.
- Investment in physical infrastructure.

## **Partnership**

- **Identify stakeholders** – governments, donors, civil society, multi-lateral agencies, and multi-national corporations.
- **Partnerships model shift** – traditional pattern of top-down approach has now reversed. New partnerships to focus on mutuality of participation such as: NEPAD, EU/ACP.
- The following categories of partnerships to be considered:
  - Government – Civil Society partnerships
  - Private sector – governments
  - Public – Private partnership in the case of privatization of public utilities and financing of public infrastructure.
- Partnerships to be enhanced by:
  - Enabling environment, enacting legislation to formalize the activities of CSOs and these laws to be formulated and or reviewed with active participation of CSOs;
  - Creating liaison offices to facilitate partnerships between government and CSOs, in the form of an independent body from government;

- Giving space to CSOs to re-organise themselves to come out with united force for effective communication and to influence negotiations at the policy level with a common message.
- Developing memorandum of understanding as benchmark for terms of reference to guide activities of governments/CSO partnerships. This will help identify the clear roles and responsibilities and accountability on delivery.
- Capacity-building to enhance technical expertise on government and civil society.
- Avoid 'window dressing' or paying lip service to commitment on partnerships.
- Clear distinction of what constitutes CSOs as non-profit making agents operating in an independent character vis-à-vis NGOs.
- CSOs to take proactive measures to lobby government on prospective benefits of collaboration and partnership in improving the image of the nation to the different interest groups such as the international community.
- Better internal resource management practices and Internal audit/review for CSOs to become more useful to government.
- Internal capacity Building for Civil Society to be funded in order to ensure their accountability and consolidate ethics and integrity.
- Construction of CSOs networks to competently deliver on issues of national interest. This should be part of action for the creation of a unified front.
- In order to achieve partnership goals between CSOs and other stakeholders, including International community, multilateral agencies, international NGOs and Government, the following problems should be fully resolved:
  - Donors refusing to approve projects for undisclosed reasons;
  - CSOs mismanagement of funds and failing to implement projects;
  - Unhealthy partnerships because of inequalities – donors occupying a superior position leaving CSOs without the leverage to influence partnerships;
  - CSOs' lack of capacity to negotiate effective partnerships, to identify the dynamics of the partnerships, governing parameters and appreciate the institutional requirements;
  - International community do not provide enough resources for capacity building of CSOs;

- CSOs are not equipped with enough skills and resources for managerial and leadership;
- There is no pool for indigenous knowledge systems.

*Table of issues from the two groups*

<b>Common</b>	<b>Other priorities</b>	<b>On partnership</b>
1- Governance 2- Gender 3- Trade and industries 4- Health 5- HIV/AIDS 6- Education 7- Youth and employment 8- Science and technology	1- Climate change 2- Human rights 3- Natural Resource management. Mgt 4- Water and sanitation 5- Financing for development	1- Institutional frameworks 2- Policies required 3- Skills and resources

*Levels of partnership considered in the table:*

- 1- Government and CSOs
- 2- Private sector and CSOs
- 3- Inter government(south/south and south/north)
- 4- Government and private sector
- 5- Government and external development partners

*Discussion and prioritization of key challenges*

*Cross cutting issues for both groups*

- Governance
- Gender
- Trade and industrialization
- Health
- HIV/AIDS
- Education
- Youth and unemployment
- Science and Technology

*Other issues in one group or the other*

- Financing for development
- 10 Human rights
- Climate change
- Natural resource management
- Water and sanitation

## **Session II**

### *Feedback from Group I*

#### **Partnerships**

- The government and civil society
- The government and development partnerships including communities
- South/south partnership
- North/south partnerships
- Private sector/government
- Media

#### **What resources?**

- Human resources need skills for empowerment
- Financial and material resources
- Information (access to information)

#### **What policies?**

- Institutionalized a voice space for the Civil Society, the media and the private sector in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. They should be enshrined in the instrument of government at the highest level
- Engendered policies
- Affirmative action policy to include vulnerable groups in decision making
- Policies should reflect the interests of all different players in cooperation and agreements
- Policies to ensure social justice

#### **International framework**

- International instruments for example NEPAD, CEDAW, resolutions, ECOWAS, WACSO, APRM, Commonwealth, African Union
- Terms of Reference for partnerships
- National constitutions
- Intensifications of cooperation and trade ties between countries in the South, through information exchange, education, visits and financial resources sharing.

#### **What resources?**

- Human
- Material
- Financial
- Information

### **Skills required**

- Capacity building for empowerment
- Information collection analysis and sharing.
- Skills for consultations
- Information technology capacity building
- Advocacy skills
- Awareness raising and generating skills
- Lobby skills
- Public/education skills

### **Feedback from Group II**

### **Partnerships**

- Government and CSOs
- Government and private
- Public and private

### **International framework**

- NEPAD
- Paris Declaration
- Regional Economic Communities
- Post HIPC

### **Challenges**

- Lack of cohesions between CSOs affecting united front.
- Perception of conflicting and harmonization of agenda
- Outcomes are not translated into policy actions
- Weak capacities of CSOs (technical expertise)
- CSOs mismanage funds
- Unhealthy partnership between CSOs and international donors

### **Recommendations**

- Partnership agreements
- Transparent initiatives
- Government should stop paying lip-service
- CSOs playing proactive roles to lobby government to work with them by showing mutual interest
- Duty of government to listen to the voice of the CSOs
- CSOs to build confidence with government
- Intensive capacity building
- CSOs to undertake internal audit of their activities
- Enactive legislations that formalizes CSO activities
- Creating effective liaison structures as contact points between government and CSOs
- CSOs must recognize themselves as a body
- Good internal resource Management. practices

- CSOs to build capacities
- Accountabilities – ethics

#### **2.3.4 Overall issues on developing effective partnerships**

- Need for an enabling environment for CSOs (creating of an unhindered space) and translation of policy into accessible language.
- Need for skill building for CSO and governments and then contact foreign partners to breach the gaps. As such government must provide opportunities for these skills to be used by CSOs
- Need for CSOs to organize themselves, coordinate their efforts internally as well engage in auto evaluations.
- Institutionalize Liaison officers with CSOs in government departments

#### **2.3.5 Concluding remarks by Mr Vijay Krishnarayan.**

- CSOs should be part and not just beneficiaries of policy and implementation
- Other partnerships which could contribute to development, should be taken into consideration besides those highlighted in this consultative talks
- Ideas from this forum should be shared to benefit others.
- For each action there need to be an equal opposite reaction so that partnerships should be WIN-WIN relationships

### **2.4 CONCLUSION**

All in all the consultations confirmed the need for genuine and effective partnerships with deep considerations of all regardless of sex, age or social status and sustainability at the heart of all actions in order to ensure a bright future and consequently visible progress in Human development. Within this backdrop, participants made a number of recommendations.

### **2.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **To governments**

- Steps should be taken in international cooperation to caution China and India on issues of environmental sustainability, responsibility, transparency and accountability besides their actions that qualify them as emerging world powers. There need to be for a global order to check excesses at National level since they could have a world effect and a uniform solution to climate change should be prescribed to Commonwealth countries ("Mitigation and Adaptation Planning").
- Need for African governments to be aware of the strategic importance of natural resource and raw materials that Africa supplies to the global market, when they engage in international cooperation.

- Industrialization is a key development factor besides Agriculture and as such should be seriously considered in development strategies; so too should culture and tourism. Processing industries should be established to transform raw materials into finished products before exportation, thus creating jobs.
- Gender should be given serious consideration as a determining factor in national development policies
- Youths should be given spaces for exchange of views within the sub region on a more sustainable development through partnerships.
- Need to fully call for and facilitate Civil Society contribution at all stages of national development policies, including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- The financial and economic crisis should be considered as an opportunity for all to turn a new page towards a better future, where more resources will be invested in achieving the MDGs in general and universal primary education for all in particular, with full attention to the 95% of disabled who are not in schools.

### ***To Civil society organizations***

- Necessity for CSO to support rural masses in initiatives addressing governance and promote genuine partnerships at National, Regional and International level.
- Need for solidarity in CSO to encourage technological growth, as some reasons for poverty could be found in transfer of the effects of technological development to Africa rather than in the transfer of technology itself.
- Need to put more effort in informing and influencing at all levels, with strategic government officials, regional institutions within regional networks and diplomatic missions.

### ***To the Commonwealth***

- The Commonwealth Secretariat and Foundation could bring pressure to bear on issues of good governance in developing countries to improve on prevalent situations - shortcomings of leadership greed, fraud corruption and crisis of hegemony.
- Need for more support to the Civil Society in order to ensure their contribution to global events and trends.
- Creation of a regional level field for informal dialogue and debates between government and the civil society on pressing issues of concern at national, regional and pan-commonwealth levels.



West and Central Africa regional consultation on the theme of the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

*“Partnering for a more equitable sustainable future”*

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