

Progress since the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness — which sets out the principles of *ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability* — has fallen short, jeopardising the global fight against poverty. Yet the follow-up meeting to Paris, to be held in Accra from 2-4 September, has not fully remedied these problems.

The proposed Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), to be signed by attending donor and developing country governments, and multilateral agencies, needs to address more adequately:

- *Democratic ownership, participation and accountability in the development process.*
 - Purely donor-driven policies can compromise the sovereignty of partner countries and aid effectiveness.
- *Corruption's role in undermining the development process.*
 - Corruption skews the playing field, renders institutions ineffective, amplifies social marginalisation, distorts decision-making and disrupts the provision of basic services.

Addressing corruption: A pre-requisite for change

Addressing corruption is a prerequisite for all other effectiveness objectives, and enables citizen participation and effective governments.

Donor and partner countries must send a clear signal in Accra by committing to concrete action on corruption.

- Donors and developing countries must set clear timelines for improving transparency and accountability as well as setting benchmarks for measuring progress.
- Incentives and institutions — such as aid agency investigation units, and national anti-corruption bodies and strategies — must align with these plans if behaviours and actions are to change.

Solutions: Fulfilling the promise of the Paris Declaration

The five core principles of the Paris Declaration remain vital guideposts and dictate key areas for action.

1. Access to information - To advance all the Paris Declaration principles

Accountable and transparent development approaches depend on access to information. It is a non-negotiable requirement for citizen participation and monitoring.

- Ensure accessible, understandable, timely and relevant information for citizens on aid funding and programmes.
- Formulate clear standards for disclosure by donor and developing countries.

2. Public procurement - To ensure alignment

TI endorses the push for greater integrity in public procurement and advocates:

- Introducing better standards and practices for procurement that are country-based rather than donor imposed, focussing on strengthening local institutional capacity.
- Employing no-bribes pacts, for bidders and contracting entities (i.e. TI Integrity Pact).

3. Policies and budgets - To promote alignment, managing for results and mutual accountability

Citizens in recipient countries must have a voice in development policies if they are to be successful.

- Engage with civil society and citizens as a mandatory step for development funding.
- Build accountability of parliament and its capacity as an institution of oversight, both domestically and through donor support. This applies equally to supreme audit institutions.

4. Accountability mechanisms - To ensure ownership, mutual accountability and harmonisation

Harmonised assistance and accountability to citizens will drive better governance in the long run.

- Development assistance must concurrently strengthen institutions of oversight and governance for countries with weak accountability systems.
- Donors must continue to work towards harmonising and coordinating assistance.
- Greater transparency of currently complex aid architecture and its actors is needed to facilitate effectiveness and better monitoring by parliament, civil society and media, *inter alia*.