

CSOs Warn of Urgency, Call for Action

The world faces an unprecedented combination of natural, economic, social, and political crises—crises that increase poverty and the burden for survival for poor people, especially in the developing world. The poor bear the brunt of rising food and fuel prices as well as the impact of climate change in the form of catastrophic storms, floods, receding coastlines, and droughts. They also bear the brunt of conflicts and war, as well as displacement due to economic restructuring and recessionary crises.

This is also the year of focus on development finance. Following the Accra HLF III is the Doha meeting on implementation of the Monterrey consensus, and several meetings on development cooperation and implementation of the MDGs.

On Monday the CSO Parallel Forum ended two days of discussions and debate with a statement warning of the urgency of the situation—a warning that many speakers in the opening HLF plenary also gave.

The challenge for all HLF participants is to deliver on their Paris Declaration commitments and enrich it through democratic ownership. Many have been reluctant to take the bold steps for change that are needed. As we take stock in Accra, it is obvious that genuine change requires a bit of retooling, which many stakeholders are pushing for in the Accra Agenda for Action. Civil society organizations have been one in pushing for clear commitments and indicators as well as for democratic ownership—the keys to achieving effective mutual accountability, managing for development results, and even alignment and harmonization.

In particular, clear commitments for eliminating policy conditionality and tied aid will not only strengthen country ownership but also deliver a clear message of commitment towards behavior change from the largest and most influential donors.

This is crucial and will prove to all that in Accra we are learning to include, learning to listen, taking the political will to commit, and from thence, taking commitment to action.

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