CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND AID EFFICIENCY IN WEST AFRICA

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June 2008

I   INTRODUCTION

Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows have had little impact on economic development and on poverty alleviation in Sub Saharan African countries (SSA). Low Human Development Index countries are concentrated in the region (UNDP 2006). Even though ODA per capita to the region has increased from $4.0 in the 1960s to $29.8 in the 1990s, it is believed that ODA contribution to poverty reduction in this region has been weak because of insufficient volume of foreign assistance and aid management policies implemented in the past.

In fact, there is a consensus that, to be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Africa will need more assistance. This supplement is estimated to be between $ 20 billions to $25 billions per year from now to 2015 (UNDP 2006). If ODA has been judged to be insufficient, it is also believed that it has not been efficient in promoting economic development or in helping alleviate poverty in beneficiary countries. Poor aid efficiency in the past is the result of aid allocation and management policies. If before the fall of Berlin Wall, bilateral donors' political, economic, cultural and strategic interest considerations have played an central role in aid allocation, empirical researches tend to suggest that developmental criteria is becoming more and more important. Even with these changes, ODA impact on economic development or poverty reduction will not improve unless there is a dramatic change in aid management. It is in that perspective that ODA stakeholders Paris Declaration (PD) to govern international aid policies to enhance aid efficiency.

PD principles are a break through in aid efficiency improvement process. However, one of the weaknesses of PD is the little room given to civil society organizations (CSOs), especially to southern one, in aid management. Even though they play an important role in development management and poverty alleviation policies implementation, neither are they well represented in the High level Forum which adopted PD in March 2005, or are they mentioned in the new framework intended to govern aid management.

The present paper is intended to discuss the way CSOs can be involved in aid management so as to enhance its efficiency. The next section will present the rural dimension of poverty in West Africa and the aid flows to the region. In the third section after a presentation of CSOs in the region, the paper will discuss the constraints for their efficient contribution to aid management and necessary steps to be taken for CSOs to be more effective in promoting aid efficiency. Policy implication will conclude the paper.

II   AID AND CSOs IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA

2.1 Rural dimension of poverty

Most of SSA countries are far from being able to achieve the MGDs. Progress in poverty alleviation is very low as in Mali where people leaving under the poverty line decrease only form 68.3% in 1998 to 59.2% in 2005. Theses figures hind great disparities between urban and rural areas. In fact, due to poor productivity in rural areas and rural sector contribution to GDP and employment, poverty in West Africa has a rural dimension. In 2001 in Benin, 31.6% of the rural population is poor compare to 23.6% in the urban area. In Nigeria, 63.3% of the rural area population live under the poverty line compare to 43.2% of their counterpart in cities in 2003. In Mali, people living under the poverty line decrease from 30.1 in 1998 to

20.1% in 2005 in cities, whereas this figure declined only slightly in rural area (75.9% in 1998 to 73.1% in 2005).

Tableau 1 : Poverty incidence by area

	Rural Poverty	Urban Poverty
Bénin (2001)	31.6	23.6
Burkina Faso (2003)	52.3	19.9
Côte d'Ivoire (1998)	41.8	23.4
Ghana (1998-99)	51.6	22.8
Mali (2005)	73.04	20.1
Niger (1993)	66.0	52.0
Nigeria (2003-04)	63.3	43.2
Sierra Leone (2003-2004)	79.0	56.4

Source : Banque Africaine de Développement et OCDE, 2007, Perspectives Economiques en Afrique, pp. 646-647.

To achieve the MDGs objective related to poverty reduction, these countries need more resources and mostly efficient policies, especially in agriculture sector and rural areas. Even though it has been found not sufficient in the past, it is believed that ODA impact on development and poverty reduction will have been more important if the resources have been used more efficiently.

2.2 Official development assistance to West Africa

Following UNDP data, the growth rate of aid per capita to SSA has increased from 2.2% in 1965 -1969 to 5.5% in the 1990s before declining to 4.8% in the 2000- 2004 sub period. Aid per capita to the region had increased from $US 4 in 1965-1969 to $US 29.8 in the 1990s. Even though it has decreased to $US 27.6 in 2000-2004, aid per capita in SSA has become the highest to any other developing region.

Tableau 2 : Aid par capita, 1960-2004
(Mean during the period, in US dollars)

	1960-2004	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2004
Developing countries	11.4	2.7	6.8	13.2	16.8	12.6
Of which						
Africa	24.3	5.0	14.9	29.5	33.3	26.2
North Africa	30.5	8.9	31.4	36.1	45.5	14.6
Sub Saharan Africa	22.2	4.0	10.8	27.1	29.8	27.6
America	15.3	4.0	7.9	20.2	22.7	13.7
Asia	5.4	1.7	3.6	6.1	8.9	4.2

Source : Conférence des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique : Le Développement Economique en Afrique ; Doublement de l'Aide : assurer la « Grande Prudence », Genève, 2006

Grants to West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) countries have increased form 360.0 FCFA billions in 2002 to FCFA 662.2 billions in 2005.

Even if the volume of ODA is still found to be insufficient for the countries to achieve MDGs, weaknesses in, if not lack of, harmonization and coordination of donor's interventions, great influence and involvement of donors in recipient strategies, policies and programs design and

implementation have also been founded to be some of the determinants of aid inefficiencies in developing countries. Paris Declaration (PD) has been designed by aid stakeholders in March 2005, to respond to former weaknesses identified in aid management and to govern aid policies.

The Five Principles of Paris Déclaration

- **Ownership**: *« partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies co=ordinate development actions »*
- **Alignment**: *« Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures »*
- **Harmonisation**: *« Donors' actions are more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective »*
- **Management for results**: *« managing resources and proving decision-making for results »*
- **Mutual accountability**: *« Donors and partners are accountable for development results »*

PD principles have been found to be a progress toward aid efficiency improvement. However, the marginalisation of CSOs, as an agent of aid management policies, has been found to be one of the weaknesses of PD in its objective to improve aid efficiency.

III CSOs IMPLICATION IN AID MANAGEMENT

3.1   Panorama of OSCs in West Africa

CSOs included various organizations, such as family and village associations, students, women and youth associations, professional associations, trade unions, independent research and academic institutions, think tanks, advocacy groups, faith based institutions, and traditional authorities and so on. The members of these organizations adhere to them voluntarily in order to promote some common goals and ideals/values. These institutions work in the arena between the household, the private sector, and the state, to negotiate matters of public concern. As one of the main player in the democratic process, and due to their missions, CSOs are important in good governance enhancement. In fact, they are necessary to:

➢ Give voice to the poor and vulnerable groups;
➢ Mainstream policy issues especially pro poor policies and programs;
➢ Engage the public in the formulation of development policy concerning the poor;
➢ Ensure the transparency of the government and hold it to account for its policies and use of public resources.

Due to the concentration of the population in rural area and the high contribution of the rural sector in GDP and employment, CSOS are more concentrated in rural area and in rural development and find that "rural livelihood/agriculture" are their areas of focus. In Mali for example, among the 11 000 CSOs, about 6000 are peasant with different sizes and different legal forms. Due to lack of awareness of citizen rights, high illiteracy rate and socio-cultural factors (such as traditional values of unquestioning deference to authority), the large part of the population and mostly the poor, are not involved in the country's policy dialogue. Giving voice to the disadvantaged groups, CSOs improved their representation on the country's policy dialogue tables. In a recent study, ODI finds that for 78% of CSOs, influencing

government policy is of high relevance of their actions *(ODI, 2006)*. The objective of these associations is to promote solidarity among their members.

3.2   CSOs in aid management

-   CSOs important role as donors.

As canal through which aid is channeled to the beneficiaries, CSOs play an important role in resource mobilization and programs and projects implementation. CSOs from developed countries mobilize up to $14.7 billions for aid, which represented, 14% of all ODA[1] in 2005. Furthermore, some of the bilateral donors' resources are channeled through CSOs for programs and projects implementation for beneficiaries. In 2004, from 6 to 34% of the bilateral ODA of the 15 OECD most important bilateral donors are channeled through CSOs. Moreover, for Collier (2002), donors can bypass recipient country government and allocate aid via independent service authorities which can include CSOs. This is and will be the case for countries with bad governance track or insufficient administrative capacities for example. Therefore, these figures show that CSOs together may be seen by some developing countries as bigger donors than most of their bilateral donors.

To make sure that the development and poverty alleviation strategies and policies supported by ODA are in line with the population concerns, the first principle of PD is related to appropriation by ODA recipients. Appropriation means that the design and implementation of these strategies/policies are gone through a truly participative process. For participation of the population, and mostly the poor and vulnerable groups, to be effective, these groups must: (i) be well identified; (ii) have a voice, directly or through their representatives; (iii) have their concerns well identified; (iv) have these concerns exposed to policy makers and donors; and (v) have these concerns take care of in strategies/policies to be implemented.

Being closed to these groups, CSOs are supposed to be in better position to fulfill this first condition. The third condition depends on the capacities they have to do the task. The second and fourth conditions depend on the quality of their relationship with their partners such as governments and donors. In any case, making the concerns of the beneficiaries better known to the donors' community and population of developed countries, the northern CSOs help: (i) improve their southern counterparts' visibility and participation in policy dialogue; and (ii) their countries' governments aid policy better known to their taxpayers.

-   CSOs and the quality and degree of participation.

The PD's principles of ownership and alignment can have a significant meaning only if strategies ODA is supporting, is truly taking care of the concerns of the poor. Due to the fact that they are closed to the poor, it is believed that CSOs will be in better position to evaluate accurately the needs of their members. CSOs in Ghana, Zimbabwe and Kenya now provide 40% of all healthcare and education services in those countries (ODI, 2006). And through their activities, it is estimated that NGOs reach 20% of the word's poor (ODI, 2006). CSOs are therefore in better position to understand more clearly the problems of poor and to design appropriate and relevance strategies and policies which can be more efficient for poverty alleviation. The concern of the vulnerable groups and the poor can therefore be taken care of

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[1] This figure goes up to 18% if aid through debt reduction is excluded.

in strategies, policies and program for poverty alleviation. This in turn indirectly improves the degree and quality of population's participation. They will also be best implementers of programs and projects supported by ODA and are equipped for monitoring the results. Because they are more used to participatory methods through the involvement of strategic partners, such as chiefs and opinion leaders, CSOs will involve more beneficiaries in policy formulation and implementation.

- CSOs as "watch dog"

The implication of CSOs in aid management will be necessary for better result of PD implementation and improved aid efficiency.

But to achieve greater involvement in aid management, CSOs have to be first efficient themselves.

3.3 Constraints to CSOs efficient contribution to aid management

Even if CSOs are endowed with comparative advantages for helping ODA to be more efficient, there are constraints to their efficient contribution to aid management.

3.3.1 CSOs and the quality of their representation

Participation of the population and relevancy of strategies and policies are necessary for PD principles of appropriation and alignment to have a meaning. To have a significant impact on strategies, policies and program, CSOs must have good knowledge of the population they are supposed to represent and have a comparative advantage in the evaluation of the needs of the marginalized populations. Being close to the poor, the CSOs are able to help in targeting the pro-poor policies/programs and also facilitate the targeting of the poor who will be the beneficiaries of these policies/programs. But to be invited to seat on policy dialogue table and impact on policy agenda, CSOs must be judged by their partners (governments and donors) of having legitimacy and credibility.

Legitimacy

CSOs' legitimacy are often based on the fact that they are supposed to represent a particular group, the size of which may give them a weight on policy dialogue and may be important to impact policy arguments and issues concerning these groups. However, CSOs partners questioned the size of this membership. In fact, most of the CSOs operating in Africa have a very limited membership whose adherence to their rules is not even proven: most of the members do not pay their subscription fees. In many cases, the CSOs have been put in place by external members and also by Northern CSOs to implement programs/projects for which they have mobilized resources. Moreover, women, rural-dwellers, poor people and other traditionally marginalized groups, are under-represented as leaders of CSOs and women's groups. This undermines their capacity to properly represent the poor and marginalized community. To make things more complicated, the CSOs sector is often too broad and disjointed to have effective representation in the policy dialogue.

To overcome the constraint created by their limited membership, CSOs are networking with other organization to be in position to achieve a much larger representation. CSOs are often

gathered together by thematic or by geographic region. Concerning CSOs in rural areas, peasants associations in a village can network with each other in the same village to find answer to their problems. At a higher level, these larger associations can network with of their counterpart in other closed villages which have the same objectives. These groups can in turn network to form federations on the same thematic covering larger geographic area. Federations can link together to have a common plate form to fight for the interest of their members. The first peasants' plate form in West Africa was the "Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux" created in Senegal in 1993. The "Coordination Nationale des Organizations Paysannes du Mali (CNOP)" has been found in 2004 in Mali. The highest form of CSOs in rural area is when these national Plate forms networks together: in 2003, federations of five West African countries links together to form the "Réseau des Organizations Paysannes et de Porducteurs d'Afrique de l'Ouest" (ROPPA).

In spite of all these efforts, CSOs in Africa are still fragmented with competitive federation and weak if not any coordination of their activities. For example, concerning famers' organizations, there are five federations in Ghana: (i) The Farmers Organization Network in Ghana (FONG) is a network of 113 small scale farmers and fisher working towards the achievement of food security and food sovereignty; (ii) The Apex Farmers Organization of Ghana (APFOG), is an apex organization for farmers' engaged principally in agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries and agro-processing; (iii) the Peasant Farmers Association in Ghana (PFAG) has a growing membership of over 2 million male and female farmers. PFAG lobbies the Government for greater investment in agriculture, and for fairer trade and market access; (iv) The Ghana National Association of Farmers and Fishermen (GNAFF) established by the Government of Ghana to bring small scale farmers, fishermen arid women engaged in micro food processing in Ghana together under one umbrella; and (v) The Ghana Agricultural Workers Union (WAWU) of the Trades Union Congress represents the interest of all unionized agricultural workers in Ghana and in some instances, extended such representation to include the interest of self-employed rural employed workers (SERW) which includes rural farmers.

The efforts to bring together these organizations have not succeeded up to now and coordination of their activities is quite low. This result is often the consequence of fight for leadership, search of satisfaction of self interest and also lack of work plan.

Management and technical Credibility

Without credibility, it is difficult for CSOs to have the attention of the actors of policies such as government, donors and even Northern CSOs.

For improvement of their credibility, CSOs must be managed according to good corporate governance principle, which is far from the management of most of the CSOs in SSA. Most often, CSOs leaders are personalities elected without democratic rules. They also lack transparency in the management of funds they have mobilized. Furthermore, some of them have political and ethnic agenda. Following this, for most of the Governments, CSOs are considered as competitors for development aid, without the requisite responsibility for accountability.

CSOs also need technical skills to be able to make substantive contribution to policy dialogue. To be involved in policy dialogue, CSOs must have proven technical skills in their area of

intervention. If strategies and policies are found to be sound alternative to the one proposed by the public administration, the probability for CSOs to be invited to the policy dialogue is high. In this case, the population they represent can have confidence in them. Better evidence leads to better programs, which in turn leads to greater impact for CSOs engaged in direct service delivery. It is therefore understandable that research capacities of CSOs and the way they make use of their research findings will have greater policy influence and greater pro-poor impact. Therefore, credibility means also that CSOs must have technical skills in their interventions.

However, concerning research, most of CSOs face internal and external constraints. Even if there are closed to the poor, CSOs may lack technical capacities for strategies and policies design which can be good alternative to the one proposed by policy makers. On this ground, CSOs' partners questioned their ability to provide not anecdotic but accurate and critical analysis. To be in position to have a significant impact on policy agenda, CSOs must be able to address more and more complex issues. To design policy for food security for example, it is important for the countries and their government to find answers to such question as the impact of improved input subsidization, efficient provision of such inputs, access to technology and market. CSOs can have a place on policy dialogue table only if they are seen as source of expertise and if their positions are not based on ideological positions. Even though they are close to the population, CSOs need rigorous research to understand the concerns of the population they represent, design appropriate interventions, make practice more effective and monitor their results. They have to convince their partners, through rigorous research and arguments, that they have good understanding of political context and budgets constraints of the implication of their strategies and policies' proposal.

3.3.2 Constraints to CSOs efficient participation in aid management

Even though up to 44% of African CSOs find that they succeed in influencing policy in beneficiary's countries (ODI 2006), there are constraints for the improvement of their participation in policy dialogue. These constraints are internal and external to them. The internal barriers have to do mostly with their; (i) insufficient institutional, human and financial capacities; and (ii) inappropriate internal structural organization. Concerning the external barriers there are: (i) the institutional and legal framework governing the sector; (ii) access to information; and (iii) the fragile relationship with other aid stakeholders.

Figure 4: Main Obstacles to CSO Engagement in Policy Processes
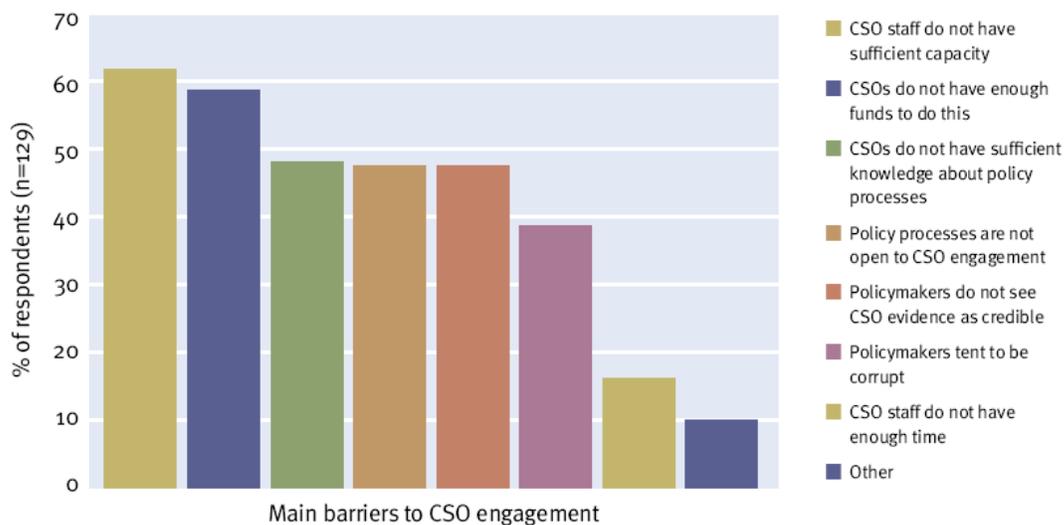
Source: Julius Court and al., p. 15

Internal constraints

Internal factors to the CSOs are seen to be the main constraints and among these internal barriers, insufficient capacity and funding (62% and 57% respectively) are the most important one.

- *Insufficient CSOs capacities*

In a study on CSOs in Côte d'Ivoire, Kouassi (1996), found that 28% of CSOs interviewed do not have enough resources even to pay for a receptionist services and 64% of them lack logistical, communication and financial resources for basic administrative works. Because of weak participation of their members and beneficiaries in internal resource mobilization, financial capacities of CSOs are precarious. Most part of their administrative and activities costs is financed by external donors and sometime by government; this reduces their room of maneuver and make them less independent.

To be efficient in aid management and development policies, CSOs must have control over their programs and be autonomous; they must be less dependent on non members. In this perspective, they must be in position to finance a large part of their activities, especially their administrative cost, through their membership subscription fees and other resources they collect from their members (be it cash or nature). The payment of subscription fees is a proof of the member confidence in his organization and of his active participation in its management and life. To be able to achieve this goal, CSOs especially those with high proportion of poor in the membership, must not confine their activities in socio cultural areas but also operate activities helping their members to improve their sources of revenue. In so doing, their members will be able to give more resources to finance their organization activities. Unfortunately, this is not often the case, southern CSOs heavily depending on their northern partners or on their Government or donors, to finance their activities. Most often they

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are therefore implementing programs/projects not in line with their expertise or their objectives.

Due to their low technical and financial capacities, southern CSOs may have little voice on policy dialogue. The situation is more serious when the agenda of CSOs is completely changed. "For example, many international working in Cambodia emphasize the protection of the forest rather than its utilization. This led to a lack of thought concerning efforts to ensure access to, and benefits from, forest resources for poor people. The result has been that the welfare and expectations of a population emerging from two decades of conflict has been largely ignored in the policy debate." (Julius Court, Enrique Mendizabal, David Osborne and John Young, p. 21)

- *Inappropriate internal structural organization*

Some leaders of CSOs abused of the weaknesses of their members of the associations, to put in place oligarchic structure. Leaders are not elected through appropriate democratic rules, do not account for their management and even are not in contact with members there are supposed to represent. These associations are more source of employment of their family members or of revenue for themselves and do not respect the principle or the objectives they have been created for. There is no appropriate flow of internal communication of information.

External constraints

- *Inappropriate legal framework*

From the 1990s, in most of the French speaking African countries, the "famous" 1901 law governing the associations has been updated. However, the legal framework remains inappropriate. In Burkina Faso, CSOs the law n°10/92/ADP of December 15, 1992 governing most of associations do not mention the concept of CSOs and NGOs. In Ghana, the law governing CSOs is the 1968 law on cooperatives. This law was adopted when the Government, with socialist ideology orientation, intervened heavily in economic activity and when most of the cooperatives are under the responsibility of the Government. This law is no more in conformity with the associative life, with various types of CSOs autonomous from the Government and the intensification of democracy. To adapt it to the new CSOs configuration, the Government submits a bill to the Parliament. The legal framework of CSOs in Togo is compounded of three legal texts: Law No N° 40-484 of July 1st 1901 for no lucrative associations; decree N°92-130/PMRT of may 27 1992 governing partnership between Government and NGOS in Togo; and ministerial decree N°002/MPAT/MEF du 20 mars 1997 by which the Government define the program of each category of NGO. However the country lacks a clear legal framework of the CSOs and in this case it is the 1901 law which is often used. Due to this Togolese legal framework weakness, group of association do not have a legal existence

To promote the efficiency of CSOs in aid management and in development initiatives, there is an urgent need to improve their institutional and legal framework. In the first phase an in-depth evaluation of the actual framework is necessary. The new framework which will be designed through a participatory process will depend on the socio cultural environment and on the role the society will like the CSOs to play in the political life and the development process

in the country. It is necessary that CSOs take part in the conception of the new framework to govern them.

The Government of Ghana, after consultation with CSOs through a series of seminars and workshops and meetings released in 2000 a policy document, *Draft National Policy for Strategic Partnership with NGOs/CSOs*, intended to regulate CSOs activities in the country. This document which was revised in 2004 was supposed to serve as the basis of the new framework of CSOs activities. NGOs/CSOs welcome the attempt to provide a national regulatory framework for the 3,800 registered NGOs in the country, especially, the separation of NGOs/CSOs from for-profit companies for regulatory purposes is an improvement, both conceptually and practically. However in 2006, the Government introduces the Trust Bill with no reference to this document and formulates the *Draft NGO Policy Guidelines and Regulations 2007* document, which is meant as subsidiary legislation for the Trust Bill. The proposed regulatory framework, as reflected in the Trust Bill and the NGOs Policy Guidelines and Regulations (2007), if implemented, would stifle and constrict civil society in Ghana and the rich contribution it is making to the development process in the country. Many associations came together under the platform of the Ghana Association of Private Voluntary in Development (GAPVOD) and wrote to the Ministry expressing concerns about including NGOs/CSOs within the Trusts Bill. The NGO Joint Position Paper against the proposed Trust bill reflects the worries of the NGO/CSO community and pushes for further consultation with government on the latest version of the Bill: The Trusts and Non-Profit making Civil Society Bill. For CSOs community: (i) the Legislation regulating them should be separated from the Trust Bill; (ii) the NGO Policy guidelines and regulations should be enabling, not constricting; and (iii) the new Regulatory Framework should be based on the *Draft National Policy for Strategic Partnership with NGOs/CSOs (2004)*. To be sure their concern are taken care of, they have formed a technical committee with the role of defining an advocacing for strategy to ensure the revision of the bill.

- *Access to information*

Research quality of CSOs may also depend on their access to information. Information is necessary regarding the quality of CSOs' strategies/policies formulation and mission of monitoring government actions. Unfortunately, in most of the countries, the quality of information is questionable. Sometimes, government services are not organized to collect or to disseminate of information. There are cases also where civil servants are not allowed to disclose official figures or can be punished if they do so even when there is no formal prohibition to do so. There are cases also where, information may be available and access to it may be allowed but CSOs are not aware of that. In all cases, CSOs must be proactive in information collection; they have to put pressure on the governments to be more transparent in communication of the official figures: The time when citizen or CSOs trying to get information are in danger or under intimidation seems to be something of the past.

In this perspective, CSOs can:

- Put in place a system/mechanism of communication and information sharing on aid management and policies between them;
- Put in place mechanism and share experiences in information and research on policies and aid management from government services and donors;

- *Relations with other aid stakeholder*

The relationship between CSOs and their partners is not often good to promote CSOs involvement in aid management.

Relation between CSOs

Lack of coordination and competition between southern CSOs is of great concern to their efficiency. In addition, some of southern CSOs have been created by CSOs from developed countries to implement programs/projects for which the latter have been given fund for. If the programs/projects implementation has been a success, one can say that the CSOs have been active in resource mobilization. To make sure that the programs/projects will be well implemented, the southern counterpart must have the necessary capacities to do so. In this circumstance the former help for the capacity building of its counterpart. The relation with northern CSOs is also a way through which southern CSO may be exposed to donors and improve its visibility and participation in policy dialogue.

However, there are cases where the southern CSO, in desperate need for funds or activities may be in situation where it implements programs/projects which objectives are different form its own. This is the case of the Cambodian example given in the last section. This Northern CSO may also take control of its counterpart. On another point this sort of relationship may handicap cooperation between CSOs in a developing country. In fact, there are cases where northern CSOs' southern CSOs partners can hide themselves from efforts for activities harmonization/coordination by pretending that the rules imposed by their counterpart do not allow for that.

In some countries, CSOs have tried to find solutions to some of these constraints. In Mali, each regional structure of the Association des Organizations Professionnelles Paysannes du Mali (AOPP) organizes each year a regional meeting for all technical services, NGOs and associations in the region. These meetings are intended to give opportunity to each organization to share their experiences from their activities of the year and to discuss possible collaboration for the coming year. After experiencing and documenting the adverse effects of the competition between them, the two NGOs federations in Togo succeeded in: (i) putting in place a common secretariat; (ii) working together to formulate a framework of partnership between civil society and government to design the legal and regulatory framework which will govern CSOs activities in the country; (iii) implementing common projects.

If for objective reasons it is understandable that northern CSOs do not have confident in southern CSOs due to the weak capacities of the latter, the former must engage in capacity building of their southern counterparts. To reduce the influence of the northern CSO on its southern counterpart's objectives, it is advisable that the two institutions work together on the strategies, programs and projects to be implemented together, with greater responsibility given to the southern association in the definition of objectives.

Relations with Governments

Even if developing countries governments' perception of CSOs contribution to policy dialogue has improved, there are still constraints for better CSOs implication in aid management. In fact, in many cases, governments rely on individuals from CSOs but not

formally on these organizations, which make these sorts of relations rather unsustainable. Division and heterogeneity of CSOs and weak capacities of southern CSOs have been often used by government as reason to limit their participation in policy dialogue. Up to very recently, to design or implement development policies, most of the Governments also think that there is no need to consult with CSOs and with groups their represent. This argument have been mostly used in the cases of policies supported by multilateral and bilateral donors because they thought that discussing policies issues with population may increase delays in policy adoption and implementation. However following the Paris Declaration, there is tendency to improve beneficiaries and CSOs participation in policy dialogue. This is the case in much of PRSP adopted in many SSA as medium term policy document. But in many cases, the population and CSOs' participation in policy dialogue is not often real and effective and may be seen as fake. Often CSOs are invited in workshop to validate documents or to approve consultants TDRs. Documents for meetings are not sent in time to CSOs to enable them to have substantive contribution in the meetings even if they have human capacities to do so. If civil servants in high position in public administration may constitute obstacles to good relationship between CSOs and governments in aid management, there also cases where the constraints come from the CSOs themselves.

Partially due to their weak capacities, CSOs may have deficiencies in making known their findings to policymakers and the public. Policymakers can be unaware of the research of CSOs. Also one has to be conscious that policymakers may not have complex technical training. In such a case, they will not be comfortable with complex technical reports with excessive statistics; these reports may not be used in policy making process. There is therefore a need for CSOs to have an efficient communication and dissemination strategy and a better targeting of their audiences. In addition to the technical reports with scientific language, there may be a need to transmit to policy makers, clearer and more concise reports which will be accessible in time for policy discussion and decision.

The Ghana NGO/CSO Standards for Excellence Project being implemented by the CSO community itself is a way of improving the quality of the credibility of CSOs and enhancing their relation with government.

Relations with donors

Objective of projects cycles duration and transaction costs reducing have been used by donors to limit CSOs participation in policy dialogue. For donors, « the distribution between each part of the population of cost and benefits of policy reforms are results of negotiations between the components of the society. These negotiations may take time and may give sub optimal policy solution, which is an argument for not using democratic process in policy design and implementation. »[2]

If donors have found latter that beneficiaries participation is a precondition for policy success, their bad perceptions on CSOs capacities, are still constraints for the improvement of their relationship with these organizations and they still discuss and consult them only rarely on policy issues. They often also rely more on CSOs from their counties or northern CSOs to channel their aid or implement the programs/policies they finance even though northern CSOs subcontract these implementations to southern CSOS. Moreover, donors often do not fund the

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[2] Haggar et Webb (1994, p. 31)

whole CSO program; they are interested in some specific activities. It is therefore possible that CSOs get funding for separate projects without consistency between them. It is difficult in this case to help CSOs have a global vision of the development perspective of the group or region for or in which they are operating. This also put a burden on their meager human capacities because they have to manage disparate projects and comply with different donors conditions with different agendas.

One adverse effect of PD implementation is the fact that for developing countries government benefiting of budgetary support, there is a significant aid reduction to CSOs. If budget support imply more appropriation and alignment for aid efficiency improvement, it is important to make sure that there is an effective participation of the disadvantaged population in policy design and policy agenda and dialogue. Donors must make sure that CSOs' capacities in advocacy and policy design are enhanced. In fact, if support has been and is still given to government to build their capacities in policy design and management, there is no reason not to be able to do so for CSOs. It is worth mentioning the experience of G-RAP in Ghana. The Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP) is an innovative program aims at supporting civil society engagement with the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, as a complement to the central feature of the new architecture of international development assistance - multi-donor budgetary support (MDBS). GRAP is intended to help research and advocacy organizations to overcome some of the constraints they face, in providing these organizations with more predictable funding base as well as consolidating their autonomy by strengthening their institutional capacity to create more political space for them to engage in the policy process. As for governments, in this case, multi donors have contributed to a sort of budgetary support fund. However, GRAP has not been found very successful as it has favored elitist associations and financed programs not necessary in line with the concerns of the grassroots and poor communities.

CONCLUSION

In close relation with the disadvantaged groups of the society, CSOs are in better position to target policies which take care of the concerns of these vulnerable groups, and to target the beneficiaries of such policies. In so doing, CSOs can have a significant role to improve aid efficiency. Following workshops organized for example in West Africa, it is found that CSOs in the region want to be involved in aid management for better implementation of Paris Declaration on aid management. However, due to constraints related to their weak institutional, technical, human and financial capacities and some shortcomings in their relations with the other stakeholders in aid management, their contribution in aid management is limited. To make better use of CSOs as an actor in improvement of aid contribution to achievement of MDGs in SSA, it is therefore necessary to help them find solutions to these handicaps.

For this it is recommended to southern CSOs to:
- be more credible through: (i) improvement of their financial autonomy by improving mobilization of resources from their members; (ii) more accountability and transparent management; (iii) better internal governance by improving new leadership following democratic election; (iv) implementing peer review mechanism;
- improve their knowledge of the needs of the disadvantaged groups through the use of credible intermediaries;
- improve the capacity of their members;

- form common platform that will address their issues;
- organize themselves and get access to current information that concerns them;
- be strong at the grassroots levels;
- Improve their internal control mechanisms.

To improve the quality of southern CSOs participation in aid management efficiency, northern CSOs, should:

- Strengthen the capacities of their local partners to influence donor and government policies;
- Consider their southern counterparts as true development partners;
- Support the mutual exchange of experience and knowledge among all CSOs;
- Commit to relationships with local partners that extend beyond the normal 2-3 year project cycle;
- Show greater inter-agency coordination in their work.

Governments should:

- Recognize explicitly that CSOs can play decisive role in improving policies and beneficiaries of these policies targeting;
- Establish institutional framework for formal and effective policy dialogue with CSOs;
- Adopt improve legal, regulatory and institutional framework of CSOs with active participation of these organizations;
- Contribute to the enhancement of aid coordination in involving CSOs in the framework to be established for that purpose;
- Design and implement a capacity building program for CSOs with active participation of these organizations;

Donors must:

- Explicitly recognize that CSOs can play decisive role in improving policies and beneficiaries of these policies targeting;
- Convince government in developing countries of the benefit of CSOs participation in aid management;
- Implement capacity building program for CSOs with active participation of these organizations;
- Even in budget support countries, continue to make financial resources available for CSOs activities.

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