

# **Promoting Good Governance and Effective Monitoring**

## **Mechanisms for Development**

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Delivered at the **Informal Interactive Civil Society Hearing of the General Assembly in Preparation for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (UNLDC-IV)**

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Kia ora. I would like to thank the Presidency of the General Assembly for holding this hearing, my thanks to both co-Chairs, and to express appreciation to the government delegates and CSOs who are attending today.

I am head of Oxfam New Zealand, but here speaking on behalf of Oxfam International, an international NGO. Oxfam works in many of the LDCs and we are committed to working with others to end the injustice of poverty. I am honoured to serve on the Civil Society Steering Committee for this conference.

As a personal aside, it is great to see strong Pacific island voices here today in the hearings. Thanks to Roina Vavatau and the representative from the Solomon Islands for their contributions.

I am responding specifically on the issue of 'the role of civil society in building support for equitable and sustainable development'.

In the draft Programme of Action, there is much that is inspirational to give hope to people who are suffering in the Least Developed Countries - to create job opportunities, promote food security, raise the level of human development and to promote human rights. These are important aspirations and we should work together to engage the wider public in the importance of these aims.

But we need to recognise that the Programme of Action will not be achieved by governments alone. It is only when there is a harnessing of the other agents for change – NGOs, women, youth, teachers, farmers, workers and the private sector – that there will be progress. The Programme of Action does not belong to governments. It belongs to all the people of all the LDCs. Ownership must be theirs as well as yours.

Education, awareness raising and campaigns by civil society have built strong international movements for debt cancellation, climate justice, more and better development assistance, education for all, equitable trade rules and control of arms trafficking to name a few of the international campaigns. Civil society can help shape public opinion to support the aims that governments are negotiating here in the UN.

As we have heard from Roberto Bissio of Social Watch, civil society also has a key role to play in holding governments to account for the delivery of their commitments. This means all governments. Good governance and accountability is an issue for all, not just for LDCs. As civil society we do not hesitate to hold donor governments to account, major developing countries and LDCs themselves, as well as international agencies.

But our role is also propositional. We appreciate opportunities such as this to be able to remind delegates of the reality and the urgency of tangible actions that will make a difference to the lives of women, men and children who live in poverty, marginalization and vulnerability. We commit ourselves to work collaboratively to make proposals that will improve policies and practices.

We therefore call on you to work with civil society as full partners. We play a crucial role in building support for the Programme of Action and ensuring it is implemented. We want to play a stronger role in policy formulation. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in a dialogue here today and hope that you will engage with civil society in each country as this Programme of Action is driven through to implementation.

There are three key things that all governments can do to honour this spirit of partnership:

- In follow up processes, involve civil society meaningfully; not just in formal consultations but in policy options and formulation. This should be a part of broader policy of allowing the political space for an independent civil society and building their capacity.
- Commit to enhancing openness and transparency in the follow up actions, publishing your plans and progress reports; and inviting input from civil society and through Parliamentary processes
- Be accountable in these negotiations. We call on governments to come with proposals. Nothing should be off limits. You need to agree an early harvest on trade policy, and not refuse to talk about WTO negotiations; agree action on climate change finance, not wait for UNFCCC negotiations; set human development targets, before MDG post-2015 processes. We cannot settle for an empty 'programme of inaction'. Governments must be accountable for their contribution to ending the suffering of millions of people in LDCs.

There are challenges ahead, But also opportunities. We wish you all well in the crucial negotiations that will take place over the next week. We hope you will elevate your vision and overcome the obstacles. Civil society will be your partner in doing so.

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On behalf of Oxfam International