

UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Public Consultation on revising the European Consensus on Development

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

(1) Introduction

The year 2015 was a strategic milestone for global governance, poverty eradication and sustainable development. It marked the target date of the UN Millennium Development Goals and a point to reflect on the progress made to date and the challenges ahead in addressing their unfinished business. 2015 also saw a series of landmark international summits and conferences over the course of the year (the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#), the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#), the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the COP 21 [Paris Agreement](#) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) which have collectively re-cast the way the international community, including the EU, will work to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication for many years.

Importantly, and in contrast to the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda, including its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, is a universal Agenda which applies to all countries. It reflects many core European values and interests and provides an international framework for tackling global challenges such as climate change. The EU response to the 2030 Agenda is moving ahead in a range of ways:

- Firstly, as part of EU efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, the [Commission Work Programme for 2016](#) announces an initiative on the next steps for a sustainable European future which will explain how the EU contributes to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals and map out the internal and external aspects of EU policies contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Secondly, the High Representative will present the [EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy](#) that is expected to steer the different EU external policies contributing to the global vision of a more stable, prosperous and secure world. It should set out the strategic direction for the full range of EU external action, and as such will help guide EU implementation of the 2030 Agenda in external action.
- Thirdly, the EU will review its development cooperation policy. Existing leading policy documents (including the [2005 European Consensus on Development](#) and the [2011 Agenda for Change](#)) are currently framed around the Millennium Development Goals and need to adapt to incorporate the 2030 Agenda. Given its direct relevance to the EU's overall relations with developing countries, this review will be carried out in full consistency with the ongoing work on the future of the partnership between the EU and the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, under a post-[Cotonou](#) framework.

Views from this consultation will be used to inform the way forward on the initiatives above and in particular the revision of the European Consensus on Development and other external aspects of 2030 Agenda implementation. The consultation seeks your views on **how development policy, in the context of EU external action as foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty**, should respond to the range of landmark 2015 summits and conferences, and also to the rapid changes happening in the world.

Replies can include views which could apply only to the EU institutions and also to both the EU and its Member States – it would be helpful to clarify this in your response. This open public consultation will run for 12 weeks from 30 May 2016 to 21 August 2016. A brief summary and analysis of all consultation contributions will be published by November 2016 and all individual contributions will also be made available on the consultation website (unless respondents ask for their contributions not to be published).

(2) Information on respondents

- * 2.1 Received contributions may be published on the Commission's website, with the identity of the contributor. Please state your preference with regard to the publication of your contribution.

Please note that regardless of the option chosen, your contribution may be subject to a request for access to documents under [Regulation 1049/2001](#) on public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents. In such cases, the request will be assessed against the conditions set out in the Regulation and in accordance with applicable [data protection rules](#).

- ☐ I do not agree that my contribution will be published at all
- ☐ My contribution may be published but should be kept anonymous; I declare that none of it is subject to copyright restrictions that prevent publication
- ☒ My contribution may be published under the name indicated; I declare that none of it is subject to copyright restrictions that prevent publication

- * 2.2 Are you registered in the EU's Transparency Register?

Please note: Organisations, networks, platforms or self-employed individuals engaged in activities aimed at influencing the EU decision making process are expected to register in the transparency Register. During the analysis of replies to a consultation, contributions from respondents who choose not to register will be treated as individual contributions (unless the contributors are recognised as representative stakeholders through Treaty provisions, European Social Dialogue, Art. 154-155 TFEU).

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

- * 2.2.1 If yes, what is your registration number?

81142561702-61

- * 2.3 Name (entity or individual in their personal capacity)

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

2.5 What type of stakeholder are you?

- ☒ Government institution / Public administration
- ☐ University / Academic organisation
- ☐ Civil society (including Non-Governmental Organisation, specialised policy organisation, think tank)
- ☐ International organisation
- ☐ Private sector or private company
- ☐ Citizen/private individual
- ☐ Other

2.6 Please specify

Platforma is the network of local and regional governments involved in international development cooperation, representing its +30 member organisations (local and regional governments and their national, regional and global associations)

* 2.7 What is your place of residence (if you are answering as a private individual) or where are the headquarters of your organisation situated (if you are answering on behalf of an organisation)?

- ☒ In one of the 28 EU Member States
- ☐ Other

2.8 Please specify

Brussels - Belgium

(3) Context: why a change is needed

The EU and its Member States are determined to implement the 2030 Agenda through internal and external actions as well as contribute to the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, given the strong interlinkages. In this context, our policies, should take into account changing global conditions and trends, to ensure that they remain fit-for-purpose across the time-horizon to 2030.

The global landscape has changed significantly compared to the time of adoption of the Millennium Development Goals. While much has been achieved, with more than one billion people having been lifted out of extreme poverty since 1990, great challenges remain and new ones are emerging. At global level, more than 800 million people still live on less than USD 1.25 a day. The world is witnessing multiple conflicts and security tensions, complex humanitarian and global health crises, deteriorations of human rights, environmental degradation, resource scarcity, urbanisation and migration. Migration flows across the world will continue to have important impacts, and present both a risk and an opportunity. The EU needs to address global security challenges, including tackling the root causes of conflict and instability and countering violent extremism. Climate change can continue to amplify problems and can severely undermine progress. Important changes include demographic trends, a new distribution of wealth and power between and within countries, the continuing globalisation of economies and value chains, an evolving geography of poverty and a proliferation of actors working on development. Projections also suggest important challenges are ahead (for example, continuing unprecedented urbanisation, and other demographic challenges including ageing societies for some and the potential for a demographic dividend for others). Continued attention will be given to a democratic, stable and prosperous neighbourhood. A revision to EU development policy should take into account these trends (including anticipating those that will remain central in future) whilst retaining a core focus on eradicating poverty and finishing the job started by the Millennium Development Goals.

Finally, the EU Consensus needs also to adapt to the Lisbon Treaty, which provides for all external action policies to work within the frameworks and pursue the principles of objectives of Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union. In particular, coherence between the different parts of EU external action and between external and internal policies is crucial.

The EU will need to address these new global challenges, many of which require coordinated policy action at the national, regional and global levels. The 2030 Agenda provides a framework which can guide us in doing so.

3.1 There is a range of key global trends (e.g. changing geography and depth of poverty; challenges related to climate change, political, economic, social, demographic, security, environmental or technological) which will influence the future of development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Which of these do you think is the most important?

It is neither possible nor desirable to identify one sectoral trend as most important to development. The overall trend is the increasing interconnectedness between the worlds' territories, between different sectors of society and between phenomena or events occurring – rooted in increased inequalities within and between territories. Future EU development policies should recognise this and equip all actors in development (including the proper EU instruments) with the necessary means to respond to this complex challenge.

The concept of the sustainable development goals as being fundamentally universal (indivisible and a responsibility of all countries – regardless of their development) encourages even single issue initiatives to monitor their impact and alignment to other goals. From the perspective of local government practice this is natural: a local authority has a plethora of competencies, all interrelated and it is therefore all the more impossible to prioritise one field of responsibility or policy area over the others.

It is therefore undesirable to prioritize one trend in an overall strategy on sustainable development. The recent trend in EU and member state actions to prioritise i.e. security or incoming migration, tying development aid to migration or border management should not be the basis for a new development consensus. Evidently these are important challenges that need answers, but a future development consensus should rather focus on policy coherence within and beyond the direct development policy lines and its budget.

This dominant trend of interconnectedness between territories, sectors and phenomena and the increase in inequalities makes the growing need for integrated policies beyond sectors evident.

The increasingly complex world needs highly capable governments in all tiers of the state: local, provincial, regional, national and multilateral governments. This includes the capabilities to deliver, to interact, to self-renew, to commit and engage (<http://ecdpm.org/publications/5cs-framework-plan-monitor-evaluate-capacity-development-processes/>) other levels of government in order to move towards sustainable and inclusive strategies. At the same time governments must be able to make legitimate decisions based on a democratic mandate. This is particularly the case at the local level: local government is the first port of call for citizens and is often the first experience of many with democracy. Investing in governance capabilities should therefore be a cornerstone of the future EU development consensus and subsequent instruments.

3.2 How should EU policies, and development policy in particular, better harness the opportunities and minimise the negative aspects of the trend you identified in the previous question?

The new Development Consensus should have a central focus on governance (particularly on local governance) and highlight the interconnected nature of all global trends. Eradicating the growing inequalities between and within countries can only be done through drastic measures to guarantee policy coherence for sustainable development. For this highly capable governments are needed. Since most of the worlds problems have an impact at local level, this investment in governance capacities should have a particular local perspective in the new EU development consensus.

Concretely the new EU Consensus on development should:

> Broaden the scope of what is currently understood to be 'Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development' beyond external action. As such it would be more in line with the conceptual approach of the 2030 agenda. The new Development Consensus should build bridges between economic and environmental policies, trade, procurement, etc., in both domestic and external action. Better policy coherence should also include the screening of coherence in actors involved in different lines of action (i.e. decentralisation without involving local governments is hollow and ineffective) and embed international cooperation between peers from the local level up (see 5.5).

> Move towards real multi-level governance and collaboration, by involving different stakeholders and local governments directly in strategy and policy development. Local governments are pivotal actors of their territories' development, as is made evident in the Territorial Approach to Local Development (see 4.3), and should not be seen only as partners for project implementation. Decentralisation processes should receive continued support but must engage local governments and their associations in the process. In the field of decentralisation, European subnational governments and their associations have a meaningful experience to share. Interconnectedness and internationalisation of local strategies are a logical expression of the current state of the world.

> Offer direct support to local governments' capabilities in partner countries to effectively govern their territories in this ever more complex reality will allow them to better respond to the many challenges they face. Local governments in partner countries are often structurally underfunded or overburdened with responsibilities and face limits on governance effectiveness that are often externally imposed (legal limitations, national political instability, ...) and that the EU as can help address as development partner. As a result, local governments in some countries still reproduce the inequalities at territorial level. To take on their legitimate role to create local development and social cohesion local governments should be supported to build their capacities while national governments be enticed to create an enabling environment for the local governments performance. Local and regional governments should receive the overdue recognition from the EU that they play a key role in achieving global and national development goals.

> Include international exchange and cooperation at all levels of action in all stages of policy design and implementation. European partners (private sector, local government, NGOs) have relevant experiences in assisting their counterparts in other continents and can provide support in many relevant fields. Additional to the technical aspects of managing a territory partnerships can deal with issues of local democracy, subsidiarity, transparency and accountability to citizens, ... A longer term approach that includes a focus on learning, on soft skills and on institutional capacities is needed for sustainable impact and requires conducive funding modalities.

(4) Priorities for our future action: what we need to do

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require sustained EU efforts to promote a more just world, including a strong focus on the need to address gender equality and women's empowerment. Peace, inclusiveness, equality and good governance including democracy, accountability, rule of law, human rights and non-discrimination will need particular emphasis. The 2030 Agenda also requires recognition of the close interconnectedness between poverty, social issues, economic transformation, climate change and environmental issues.

To achieve poverty eradication, EU development policy will need to take into account key demographic and environmental trends, including challenges related to climate change, and concentrate effort on least developed countries and fragile states. The EU will also need to strengthen our approach to fragility and conflict, fostering resilience and security (as an increasing proportion of the world's poor are expected to live in fragile and conflict affected states) and to protect global public goods and to maintain our resource base as the prerequisite for sustainable growth. Peace and security, including security sector reform, will have to be addressed also through our development policy, as will the risks and opportunities related to migration flows. Tackling social and economic inequalities (both within and between countries) is a crucial element of the 2030 Agenda as is addressing environmental degradation and climate change. Job creation will be an important challenge in which the private sector has to play an active role. Finishing the job of the Millennium Development Goals requires identifying and reaching those people throughout the world who are still not benefitting from progress to ensure that no one is left behind.

To achieve lasting results, EU development policy will need to foster transformation and promote inclusive and sustainable growth. Drivers of inclusive sustainable growth, such as human development, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and healthy and resilient oceans should be an important part of our efforts to implement the new Agenda as will efforts aimed at tackling hunger and under-nutrition. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require a multi-dimensional, integrated approach to human development. Implementation will also require us to address vectors of change, such as sustainable urban development and relevant use of information and communication technology. Our development policy will have to engage and identify new ways of partnering with the business in order to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth, industrialisation and innovation. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will also require cooperation with partner countries and regions on science, technology and innovation. In all aspects of our external action, the EU will need to ensure that our approaches, including development cooperation, are conducive to achieving the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals and that the EU intensifies efforts to promote pursue coherence between our policies and our internal and external action.

4.1 How can the EU better address the links between achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on climate change and addressing other global sustainable development challenges?

Climate Change and other global sustainable development challenges, such as growing inequalities within and between territories, forced displacements and conflicts, soaring urbanisation and demographic changes, often include a local dimension that must be addressed in order for the response to be effective. These global challenges are equally faced by local and regional

governments in European and partner countries (although not with the same capacity of resilience to exogenous and endogenous changes). Decentralised cooperation and exchange of best practices can be critical to help local and regional governments in partner countries to handle these challenges.

All the Sustainable Development Goals include a local dimension and cannot be achieved without policies designed and led by empowered local governments (e. g.: urban food systems (SDG2), water (SDG6) or electricity (SDG 7) delivery, waste management (SDG12), urban planning (SDG11) and investment in infrastructures (SDG9), access to education (SDG4), inclusive cities for vulnerable populations (SDG10), gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls (SDG5), etc.). It is paradoxical that, so far, local and regional governments have had to work their own way into the design of recently adopted international development agendas (Paris agreement, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the New Urban Agenda), the design of the SDGs or the choice of their indicators where they should have been structurally invited to the global table of negotiations. Equally worrying is the contrast between the many initiatives taken by local authorities to deal with the challenges posed by climate change and the fact that they are not directly targeted by most development or climate related funds (that are most often allocated to national governments, and thus can fail to reach those territories most in need).

The new European Development Consensus must acknowledge that local and regional governments will be the most active contributors to the 2030 Agenda, and therefore provide them with the means, capacities and conducive environment to take this driving role more effectively and rapidly.

Climate change (which can be considered as one of the root causes of conflicts or migrations) is a global challenge with a very strong local dimension: 75% of global CO2 emissions is estimated to originate from cities (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ICLEI: Cities show surge in climate action, <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/green-urban/cities-show-surge-in-climate-action/> , 14/08/2014). With more than 50% of the global population expected to live in urban areas in 2050; and approximately 80% of the developing world's population living in cities by 2030; local and regional governments are in the front line to design territorial strategies that include these four dimensions: resilience, sustainability, adaptation and mitigation - thus achieving the objectives of both the Paris Agreement and the SDG11.

At the same time, territories in the developing world are also the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and also the less equipped to handle this challenge. For instance, in the next 10 years, the global waste production will dramatically increase - up to 2.2 billion of tons - consequently, the cost of waste management in developing countries will be multiplied by five (France diplomatie, appel à projets climat II, <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/action-exterieure-des-collectivites-territoriales/appels-a-projets-et-fonds-en-soutien-a-la-cooperation-decentralisee/appel-a-projets-climat/appel-a-projets-climat-ii/article/appel-a-projets-climat-ii>).

In this context, it is critical to enable local and regional governments in developing countries to acquire the necessary capacities to adapt to these new trends.

Local and regional authorities are therefore also involved in the Global Climate Change Action Agenda (GCCA), originally launched at the Lima COP (which kicked off the Lima Paris Action Agenda - LPAA); It is of crucial importance that cities and regions are present in this process allowing for a structure dialogue at EU (and international level). In this respect, 700 mayors, governors and other local leaders from all continents who gathered in Paris in December 2015 at the Climate Summit for Local Leaders committed to "Advance and exceed the expected goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement to be reached at COP 21 to the full extent of [their] authorities" (Paris City Hall Declaration - A decisive contribution to COP21, <https://api-site.paris.fr/images/76938> , 04/12/2015).

4.2 How should the EU strengthen the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in its internal and external policies, and in particular in its development policy?

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda has shifted the development paradigm from a donor-recipient relationship to a universal Global Partnership. In this respect the EU will have to conduct development-consistent policies both in its external and internal action. Similarly, local and regional governments, as policy makers and implementing stakeholders can align their domestic policy with their international activities; and by doing so participate in the Global Partnership between territories. Local and regional governments are ready to deliver on their legacy of cooperation and solidarity (Key Recommendations of the Global Taskforce for Local and regional governments: http://media.wix.com/ugd/bfe783_10b519f00b4f4102bb5bf1ff717c2cd3.pdf). Therefore, we call on the EU to build on European local and regional governments' experience in pushing for SDG-related policies (see 4.1 above) to reach the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Finally, the EU must put Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development at the core of its internal policies and have it reflected in the ongoing revision /review of the Multi-annual financial framework. At the same time the EU must support the local and regional governments who adopt PCSD through its three dimensions (see answer 4.5) One way of doing so and linking the internal and external aspects of sustainable development can be an increased cooperation between DG DEVCO and other DGs – DG REGIO in particular. For instance, it would be interesting to strengthen the transversal international dimension in the Partnerships of the EU Urban Agenda (pact of Amsterdam) by involving local and regional governments who shared their innovative urban policies in the framework of their international cooperation. Such an initiative could also enrich the work of the Policy Forum on Development (see 6.3). On another front it is advisable that, in line with the new Global Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy, the international dimension of the New European Covenant of Mayors 2030 is strengthened, by fostering climate related decentralised cooperation between cities in the world.

4.3 What are the main changes you would like to see in the EU's development policy framework?

The main change in the EU development policy should be to put local and regional governments in partner countries in the driving seat to design and implement development policies that are adapted to the different territorial contexts and realities – including the recognition of international action of European local and regional governments and their associations as a fully-fledged partner of EU external action in both design and implementation. Funding modalities should be adjusted accordingly to allow effective access to funds by local and regional governments and their associations (see also

6.1). Programs for administrative reform should ideally include decentralisation and measures to create an enabling (legal, administrative, cultural, ...) environment for local government actions. In these processes local and regional governments or their associations should be structurally involved from the design phase.

In this respect the Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD), should be adopted by all Delegations of the European Union (DEU) as a methodological framework to implement EU development policy and programmes in partner countries. This approach currently being elaborated by the Unit CSO-LA of DG DEVCO, implies empowering people through democratic participation of all stakeholder in their own local governments: it puts local governments in partner countries center stage while also investing in governance capacities at territorial level and increased quality (depth) of decentralisation at national level.

A territorial approach is relevant to better address inequalities within countries since local and regional governments are best placed to identify inequalities in and between territories if and when they are empowered to do so (meaning: strong governance capacities at territorial level and an enabling environment at national level to avoid the replication of existing inequalities). The implementation and delivery of many development objectives fall within local governments' sphere of influence and the EU must recognise the key role they play in achieving countries' objectives and the global goals.

The role of decentralised cooperation should be made more explicit in this TALD strategy to allow for support between peers in EU and partner countries in favour of service delivery, local government management, institutional innovation and decentralisation, capacity building on technical and governance aspects, exchange of best practices on territorial policies, engagement of civil society and management of EU funds. As a matter of fact, TALD as a methodology to capitalize on the potential of a territory by bringing actors within, around and outside different tiers of government together, is very similar to the "approach already often adopted in decentralised cooperation in which local administration, civil society and citizens of all partner territories are involved (i.e. the Association of Flemish Municipalities designed a conceptual framework of multi-stakeholder cooperation as the basis of municipal international partnerships).

Embedding decentralised cooperation in TALD will be helpful in raising the awareness of EU Delegations on the potential of partnerships between EU and partner countries' local and regional governments and their associations to implement development programmes. A survey conducted by PLATFORMA during summer 2015 with all the EUD working in developing countries showed that most identify the CSO-LA thematic programme as the sole relevant instrument to work with local and regional governments, while many other sectors of development cooperation include a "hidden local dimension": social sectors, rural development, agriculture and food strategy, private sector development, employment creation, energy, governance, justice sector reform and rule of law. All this sectors are dependent on local level dynamics that the EUD need to address in order to achieve results on the ground.

Finally, the force of women's economic empowerment on the well-being of local communities is an area where development assistance is found to be lacking. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), global development assistance with a gender-focus goes primarily to social sectors such as health and education, and remains low in the areas of economic empowerment, banking, and public procurement. Greater emphasis should be placed at the local level on gender-sensitive development initiatives centred on infrastructure, economic empowerment and production. The EU should be attentive to the existing disparities in application of gender perspective.

4.4 In which areas highlighted above would you expect to see greater consistency between development policy and other areas of the EU external action in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

Many dimensions of the EU external policy can have an impact (positive or adverse) on local and regional governments in partner countries. Given the transversal nature of the 2030 agenda and the key role for local and regional governments in achieving the goals, the EU should pay specific attention to:

- International trade and investment policy: while trade and international investment policy can support the economic development of partner countries a systematic impact assessment of international trade agreements –and in particular of the Economic Partnership Agreements with developing countries– is needed. Such assessment should specifically address the development impacts on territories and local communities. This should include a dialogue in which local governments can take an active role and that is based on geographically disaggregated monitoring data to assess positive and negative impacts in different territories. As such it will help create a better understanding of development inequalities within countries, which is particularly relevant because it is at the local level that impacts of global processes and trade relations are felt: both their direct effects on economic development as their potential indirect impacts on local government functions (governance, infrastructure, service delivery, ...) and society overall (social cohesion, wellbeing, gender equality ...). It is particularly important that this aspect be enshrined in the new cooperation framework between the EU and ACP countries after 2020.
- Migration, human mobility and forced displacement are currently in the spotlight. There is high need to concentrate the efforts on tackling root causes of migration, that is, economic and human development – especially at territorial level to better address inequalities within countries – and the effects of climate change. Local and regional governments in Europe and in countries of destination outside of the EU often face similar challenges when it comes to integrating refugees and can build on the exchange of experiences. At the same time, the existence of decentralised partnerships

with local and regional governments from countries of origin can also facilitate integration of migrants in European society (For example: A study in Antwerp (Belgium) shows positive impacts of migrant communities involvement in local international development policies: https://assets.antwerpen.be/srv/assets/api/download/12439f6f-8d01-42d5-a061-fd7dd901039b/Diaspora_en_ontwikkelingssamenwerking.pdf): if citizens are engaged with partner communities, they might be more inclined to welcome refugees.

- Peace and Security are global challenges in which local interventions are absolutely necessary elements in a sustainable strategy (see also 4.7). There is a dire need for multilevel dialogue and coordination to respond to these challenges. Local governments can facilitate peaceful dialogues between communities, thus reducing in-country or cross-border conflicts. They also play an important role in state-building from the grassroots level, contributing to stability. In some cases, a local approach to peace-building – through mediation between different communities, enhancement of the role of local governments in community building and reconciliation, community policing, etc. – can prove to be the most efficient solution. The EU Development Consensus should recognise this and set ground for support programmes.

- Culture in external relations is also a field where local and regional authorities are particularly important (VPHR Federica Mogherini Speech at the European Culture Forum 2016 in Brussels, <http://www.federicamogherini.net/my-speech-at-the-european-culture-forum-2016-brussels/?lang=en> , 20/04/2016), and the World Cities Culture Report 2015 showed that cultural investment in cities can bring excellent returns in terms of growth and in poverty reduction. Culture is one of the best developed local government competencies in Europe and it often is part of decentralised cooperation to foster relations and mutual understanding between communities. We insist that all aspects surrounding decentralised cooperation be supported in the framework of the New European Development Policy. The Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) programme could help foster territorial cultural partnerships by supporting peer exchanges with partner countries.

4.5 In which areas does the EU have greatest value-added as a development partner (e.g. which aspects of its development policy, dialogue or implementation arrangements or in which category of countries)?

The European Union is a unique actor for development cooperation in many aspects. A particularly important one is its capacity to engage directly with the variety of stakeholders involved in development cooperation; not only Member States and their development agencies, but also civil society organisations and local and regional governments and their associations. Throughout its development policy (and not only through the CSO-LA thematic programme), the EU must build on the efforts made by a variety of

stakeholders working at the territorial level in direct contact with the local population in partner countries.

In the same time the new European development policy must acknowledge the international action of local and regional governments as a fully-fledged partner of the EU's external policy. It must also adopt a multi-stakeholder approach when designing bilateral programmes of development with partner countries, taking into account all relevant stakeholder – for instance involving local and regional governments through their national or regional associations in partner countries. To this end all EU development actions should include a screening to identify the “hidden local aspects” (an interesting first reference to this in EU documents is to be found here <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/public-public-sector-reform-decentralisation/document/session-33-document-how-set-projects-support-local-development-and-decentralisation>) (see also 4.3 and 6.1).

The local and regional governments and their associations that are members of PLATFORMA have emphasised the crucial role of Europe and European stakeholders to promote the shared values of human rights, democracy, gender equality or the rule of law throughout their external action. The new EU Development Consensus must refer to and mainstream the principles enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Council of Europe, European Charter of Local Self-Government, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168007a088> , 15/10/1985) in the new European Development Consensus, with the objective to empower people through their participation in the conduct of public affairs at the local level.

Finally, given the number of competences it has gained over the years in sector such as trade, the EU is better placed than any single EU Member State to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal 17.14: “enhance policy coherence for sustainable development” through the implementation of PCSD in its three dimension, and at all level:

- Horizontal PCSD: implementation of PCSD in the other internal and external policies of the EU, and throughout DGs; the EU should also incentivise Member States and local and regional governments to also adopt PCSD throughout national, local and regional policies
- Vertical PCSD: the EU can align the development objectives of its Member States along the general principles of the New Development Consensus, the driving principle should be a bottom-up dialogue and alignment with local priorities for a development that is better adapted to territorial needs and potential.
- International cooperation at all levels (EU, Member States, and decentralised cooperation) to design and implement the driving principles of PCSD.

4.6 How can the EU refine its development policy to better address inequalities – including gender inequality – in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

Inequalities exist and prevail at all levels of society and can only be tackled in a multilevel approach and through highly capable governments able to deliver and to engage and interact with multiple stakeholders in their territories. In-country inequalities are among the more destabilising societal trends of this time. Hence the selection of development partners should not be limited to country indicators: in several middle-income countries inequalities remain very high (see also 5.4).

A territorial approach is relevant to better address inequalities within countries since local and regional governments are best placed to identify inequalities in and between territories. The implementation and delivery of many development cooperation policies fall within local governments' sphere of influence and the EU must recognise the key role they play in achieving countries' objectives and the global goals. PLATFORMA emphasises the place of local and regional authorities have in tackling inequalities, both in a broad sense (social, economic, educational, racial) and, more specifically, concerning gender inequalities.

Once inequalities are identified, decentralised cooperation can come into play, indeed the survey with EU Delegations conducted by PLATFORMA in 2015 showed that some EUD identified European local and regional governments as reliable partners, bringing an institutional guarantee of good governance. Tackling inequality is largely a governance issue that needs investment in governance capabilities in all tiers of government to increase social accountability towards and participation from all segments of society (see also 7.2).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies gender equality (SDG5) as a stand-alone goal and as a cross-cutting issue. It is imperative that a gender perspective (i.e. how policies can impact women and men differently) be mainstreamed in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of policies and budgets across all 17 of the sustainable development goals.

As mentioned above, empowered local and regional governments are best placed to identify inequalities in and between territories and therefore represent a reliable and effective partner for the implementation and delivery of SDG5: achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. In order to properly monitor the effects of European Development Policy and the achievements of the 2030 Development Agenda (in particular SDG5), timely, reliable, and comparable data disaggregated by gender, age and geographical situation will be needed. Additionally, European Development Policy should take action to build up the capacity of local governments and allocate financial resources for initiatives that focus on gender equality.

Women's political and economic empowerment have been identified as key factors in reducing overall inequality and are preconditions for sustainable development. Women's inclusion in decision-making processes at the local

level (e.g. on water management boards) should be a key goal in all EU external actions.

In addition to the question of women's political and economic empowerment, EU development policy should focus efforts and increase cooperation with local and regional governments in the following areas with a gender dimension that fall within the duties and responsibilities of local government: effective access to education for girls and women, access to land and finance, universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, a gender-sensitive built environment (infrastructure, transport, etc.) and public safety (preventing gender based violence and protecting and providing assistance to survivors). Progress in these areas will contribute to the realisation of more resilient, sustainable, adaptable communities across the globe.

4.7 How can the EU development policy make a stronger contribution to the security of people? How can EU development policy contribute to addressing the root causes of conflict and fragility and contribute to security and resilience in all the countries where we work?

Indeed, EU development policy can have an important contribution to ensuring peace and security of people in partner countries. There are however some worrying trends in the European approach to security/development nexus recently, as reflected by the new Partnership Framework with third countries. Diverting European Development Fund resources towards projects pursuing security objectives, such as border management and control, subjects long-term global objectives to shorter-term concerns. Instead, development cooperation must address a well of long-term global issues such as climate, inclusive economic growth and poverty, all of which have a direct impact on people's security and can only be properly addressed if governments are empowered and capacitated to act.

In order to effectively address these root causes of conflict and fragility, local and regional governments should play a crucial role. Problems such as land grabbing and the fight for resources between communities must be addressed at the local level but cannot be done so in isolation: there is a dire need for multilevel dialogue and coordination. Local governments can facilitate peaceful dialogues between communities, thus reducing in-country or cross-border conflicts. They also play an important role in state-building from the grassroots level, contributing to stability. In some cases, a local approach to peace-building – through mediation between different communities, enhancement of the role of local governments in community building and reconciliation, community policing, etc. – can prove to be the most efficient solution.

This, however, is not a given in all contexts: local and regional governments not seldom reflect the local imbalances of power at the basis of conflict and need a well capacitated staff and political leadership to be able to act on

its potential to contribute to peaceful societies. The EU Development Consensus should recognise this and set ground for support programmes.

Moreover, there is evidence of the positive impact decentralisation can have on development, through the strengthening of local governance if and when investment is made in local governance capabilities. It can also help in the fight against corruption by improving the government's capacity to deliver services while being also more transparent and accountable to local constituents. Local authorities' policies towards local businesses can have a significant impact in creating a more favourable investment environment, facilitating the creation of jobs and promoting the local economic development of a territory. They are also key in reducing the vulnerability of crisis-affected populations and promoting their self-reliance by improving the delivery of services such as education and health, upgrading slums and deprived urban areas and designing participatory and integrated urban strategies. An increased attention for the place of women in crises affected societies and in peace-building will assure progress in this fundamental field and help societies move towards inclusive, safe living situations for all.

Funding city to city or region to region partnerships can help achieve this objective of strengthening people's security and well-being at individual and society level. European local and regional governments can provide valuable assistance to local and regional governments in fragile contexts when addressing the triple challenge of creating employment, building resilience, and improving governance. This type of partnership ensures ownership of local governments and local populations of the programmes implemented in their territories.

4.8 How can a revised Consensus on Development better harness the opportunities presented by migration, minimise the negative aspects of irregular migration on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and better address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement?

A majority of displaced populations in protracted situations are located in urban areas, which makes communication with local governments essential for the success of external assistance. Local governments must be engaged from the project inception phase, through participation in needs assessments (ideally taking the form of community discussions), and be sustained throughout the implementation of the project via their participation in steering committees with supervisory roles (See PLATFORMA position paper on forced displacements strategy: http://platforma-dev.eu/event.php?parent_id=19&page_id=683).

Indeed, LGs can again play an essential role in providing temporary residents and migrants with information on the local labour market and facilitating the matching of skills with the demand from local SMEs. It is also important to keep in mind that local authorities with strengthened prerogatives in service delivery can become important sources of employment and, hence, of livelihoods.

If the latter are to develop their full potential as partners in helping forcibly displaced populations, the EU must complement immediate assistance to hosting local and regional governments' capacities (funds, staff, facilities, ...) with further encouragement of host national governments to start or enhance decentralisation processes that lead to increased local competences in policy design, service delivery and fiscal matters. The limited competencies local and regional governments have in a number of partner countries can represent an obstacle to the resolution of protracted crises. In order to push for this greater decentralisation, the EU should make use of the variety of external assistance programmes and instruments at its disposal and take advantage of the process of revision in place to adjust them accordingly, always including empowerment of local governments as inherent part of all decentralisation processes. On top of competencies, the capacities of hosting local and regional governments should be strengthened. In this regard, partnerships with European peer local and regional governments must be considered.

(5) Means of implementation: how do we get there?

The principle of universality underpinning the 2030 Agenda will require a differentiated approach to engagement with countries at all levels of development. Official Development Assistance will continue to play an important role in the overall financing mix for those countries most in need (particularly the Least Developed Countries). The EU and its Member States should continue to progress towards achieving their commitments. However, in all countries our development cooperation will need to take account of other sources of finance, including by leveraging other (non-Official Development Assistance) sources of finance for poverty eradication and sustainable development. The delivery of the 2030 Agenda means that our work helping countries raise their own resources (domestic resource mobilisation), the provision of aid for trade, blending* and partnering with the private sector should be priority areas of focus. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, provides a framework for our efforts, including for our work supporting the right enabling policy environment for sustainable development in our partner countries. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should be closely coordinated given the strong interlinkages. Engagement with middle income countries, notably the emerging economies, will be important to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, considering the role they can play in promoting global public goods, what they can achieve within their respective countries on poverty eradication and sustainable development, and the example they can set within their regions as well as their role in regional processes. Here differentiated partnerships can play an important role (examples include different forms of political, economic, and financial investment as well as cooperation in science, technology and innovation). Specific attention and focus should also be given to Least Developed Countries, as acknowledged by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

The EU's implementation of the 2030 Agenda provides an opportunity for enhancing consistency between the different areas of the EU's external action and between these and other EU policies (as outlined in the Lisbon Treaty and in [EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crises](#)). The EU will continue to pursue [Policy Coherence for Development](#) as a key contribution to the collective effort towards broader policy coherence for sustainable development. In our external action, the EU needs to consider how we can use all policies, tools, instruments at our disposal coherently in line with the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda.

* Combining EU grants with loans or with equity from other public and private financiers with a view to leveraging additional resources.

5.1 How can EU policies, and EU development policy in particular, help to mobilise and maximise the impact of the increasing variety of sustainable development finance, including in particular from the private sector?

Despite the number of funds devoted to sustainable development, these are generally closed (either 'de jure' or 'de facto') for local and regional governments' direct access. Donors continue to channel their contributions mainly through large international consultancies, national governments or international NGOs. These actors, however, do not always have a good understanding of local dynamics and often fail to coordinate adequately with local actors, including subnational authorities. This lack of coordination can substantially weaken local governance structures and negatively impact the sustainability and effectiveness of the action.

In order to maximise the impact of sustainable development finance, EU development policy should target local and regional governments more directly, through small-sized and bureaucratically simplified tenders and grants that the latter are able to manage effectively.

Public-private partnerships can, as it has been proven in the past, help mobilise private sector finance. This is also true at the local level, where local governments could team up with private enterprises to improve the delivery of services. Though local public-private partnerships can have an important value-added to local development, they are no panacea. A balance needs to be built between the different interests of the private and of the public partner. Local governments are democratically-elected entities which are first and foremost accountable to their citizens. They must therefore be in the driving seat when priorities are set, roadmaps designed and partnerships monitored. Empowered local and regional governments with the capacity to interact and engage with multiple stakeholders at multiple levels are best placed to warrant that development is inclusive and really 'leaves no one behind'.

5.2 Given the evolving availability of other sources of finance and bearing in mind the EU's commitments on Official Development Assistance (e.g. [Council Conclusions from 26 May 2015 on "A New Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015"](#), and inter alia, paragraphs 32 and 33), how and where should the EU use its Official Development Assistance strategically and to maximise its impact?

Given the above-mentioned relevance of local and regional governments in development, the EU could maximise the impact of its ODA by applying a territorial approach to its actions (see also 4.3). Territorial impact assessments should be carried out before launching a project, thus giving the possibility to readjust EU programmes according to the assessed negative or positive impact. Moreover, the evaluation of finalised programmes should also have a strong territorial component and actively include the local governments' perspectives based on disaggregated data by territory, sex and age.

This territorial approach should include, whenever possible, direct funding to territorial stakeholders such as local and regional governments. Local and regional governments in partner countries have had traditionally little access to EU funds, most of which are channelled through international agencies and NGOs, often without much coordination with local governments. The EU should define ways to improve access for local authorities to different funding opportunities (including budget support, direct grants, pool funding, etc) and should consider smaller-sized grants and sub-granting schemes, which are much better adapted to local and regional governments' capacities and increase the likelihood of successful implementation. All this should be accompanied by investments in local governance capabilities, particularly those of the local finance- and planning departments.

Decentralized cooperation should be included as a modality for programmes targeting local authorities in partner countries. As previously said, European local and regional governments and their associations have substantial expertise to offer to their counterparts in partner countries and the EU should tap into their knowledge and experience.

5.3 How can the EU better support partner countries in mobilising their own resources for poverty eradication and sustainable development?

Fiscal decentralisation ensuring local and regional governments' access to their own revenues, accompanied by improved capacities in local tax collection, is crucial for mobilising additional resources at the local level. These could be then used for poverty eradication and sustainable development. This could be done through diversified taxation and added-value capture mechanism.

Moreover, the EU should work together with national governments in partner countries to facilitate the access of local governments to public and private finance via bonds, loans and public-private partnerships. As proposed by the Global Task Force of Local and regional governments (Key Recommendations of the Global Taskforce for Local and regional governments: http://media.wix.com/ugd/bfe783_10b519f00b4f4102bb5bf1ff717c2cd3.pdf), it would be desirable for national governments to devote a minimum of 20% of their resources to local governments.

The value-added of decentralised cooperation in this regard is clear. Through peer-to-peer learning European local and regional governments' substantial experience in managing their own resources could be used to support the capacities of local governments in partner countries in this area.

5.4 Given the importance of middle income countries to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, what form could differentiated partnerships take?

Partnerships with middle income countries should retain a strong territorial component. Inequalities between territories and between people within territories are particularly significant in middle-income countries. In China for instance regional inequalities explain the largest share of total inequality (<https://www.odi.org/publications/1949-inequality-middle-income-countries>). The same goes for Brazil. Fighting inequality should constitute the primary target of EU's external action in these countries.

In this context, local and regional governments with clear powers and responsibilities can contribute positively to the reduction of inequalities by for instance introducing progressive local taxation. National governments in middle income countries typically receive much greater revenues from taxation than low income countries. This is an opportunity for achieving the 20% target of national resources devoted to local governments, which would increase local and regional governments' capacities to deliver quality public services. The partnerships should be developed on the basis of a multi-stakeholder dialogue, in which not only national governments are involved but also local authorities and civil society.

As previously said, decentralised cooperation between local and regional governments in EU and partner countries can be key in building the capacities of local governments in living up to the tasks allocated to them. In case of middle income countries, the potential for south-south and triangular cooperation is promising and should be supported as it will allow EU Local and regional governments to benefit from their peers' experiences. National and Regional Associations of local governments are best placed to facilitate such complex relations.

5.5 Given experience so far in taking into account the objectives of development cooperation in the implementation of EU policies which are likely to affect developing countries (e.g. [Policy Coherence for Development: 2015 EU Report](#)), how should the EU step up its efforts to achieve Policy Coherence for Development, as a key contribution to the collective effort towards policy coherence for sustainable development? How can we help ensure that policies in developing countries, and internationally contribute coherently to sustainable development priorities?

The EU should broaden the scope of what is currently understood to be ‘Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development’ and consider it beyond external action. As such it would be more in line with the conceptual approach of the 2030 agenda. The new development consensus should build bridges between economic and environmental policies, trade, procurement, etc. both domestically and externally, EU actions should always be coherent with the basic principles and values of the European Union, amongst which also subsidiarity, local democracy and local self-governance.

As entities in charge of basic services delivery and the development of inclusive societies, local and regional governments are key stakeholders for the implementation of development policies and in particular the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. Hence, EU Delegations should systematically involve local and regional governments, through their representative platforms and associations, in the definition of recommendations, and orientation of PCSD in the framework of joint programming. The same must apply in the conduct of impact assessments, since programmes are always implemented and have direct consequences at the local level. It is worth mentioning here that a number of SDG campaigns and roadmaps have been launched in EU Member States and in specific third countries (such as Brasil) to ensure that local governments are being involved in strategies at national level to achieve the SDGs. These initiatives could also be replicated in partner countries.

The EU must reaffirm its intention to exclude public services in free trade agreements in order not to impede on local and regional government’s ability to organise, support, finance and deliver quality public services. Moreover, the negotiation and implementation of trade agreements should be a process including all territorial stakeholders for development in the partner countries affected, and especially civil society organisations and local and regional governments).

European local and regional governments can significantly contribute to PCSD in EU external action, including in external trade. European local and regional governments are public buyers and consumers, and as such they can influence the global market towards and foster fair and sustainable trade. The EU should therefore support initiatives such as “Fair Trade Cities”, by, for instance, establishing an “EU City for Fair and Ethical Trade” award, as suggested in the European Commission’s communication on “Trade for all – Towards a more responsible trade and investment policy” (http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/october/tradoc_153846.pdf).

(6) The actors: making it work together

An important feature of the new Agenda is that all governments, developed and developing, will need to work with a wide range of stakeholders (including the private sector, civil society and research institutions) to improve the transparency and inclusivity of decision-making, planning, service delivery, and monitoring and to ensure synergy and complementarity.

The EU must continue to work collaboratively with others and contribute to a coordinated approach. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda puts national plans for implementation (including associated financing and policy frameworks) at the centre. To maximise our impact, EU development policy should be based on a strategic and comprehensive strategy for each country, which also responds to the country-specific context.

Our partner countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda will inform our overall engagement and our development cooperation dialogue with them and will help shape our support for their national efforts. The EU should also help partner countries put in place the necessary enabling policy frameworks to eradicate poverty, tackle sustainable development challenges and enhance their policy coherence.

There is a need for a renewed emphasis on the quality of development cooperation, including existing commitments on aid and development effectiveness made in Paris, Accra and Busan* and through work with the [Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation](#).

An updated EU development policy should also provide a shared vision that guides the action of the EU and Member States in development cooperation, putting forward proposals on how to further enhance coordination, complementarity and coherence between EU and Member States. Strengthening [Joint Programming](#) will be an important part of this. Improving the division of labour between the EU and its Member States in order to reduce aid fragmentation will also contribute to increased development effectiveness.

* See [Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action](#) and the [Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation](#)

6.1 How should the EU strengthen its partnerships with civil society, foundations, the business community, parliaments and local authorities and academia to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (including the integral Addis Ababa Action Agenda) and the Paris Agreement on climate change?

Given the complexity of this interconnected world, the EU should indeed further strengthen its partnerships with a multitude of actors. This starts by recognising the relevance of each partner and empowering them to cooperate and deliver – always remaining vigilant not to allow one partner to take over the legitimate role of another stakeholder (i.e. foundations – NGO's; multilateral agencies – local governments, ...).

An instrumentalist framing of partners to be implementers of centrally decided policies should not have a place in the New Consensus on Development. This is of particular importance when considering local and regional governments: they are part of the state, they are democratically legitimate, and they are policy-makers in their own right. As such they can contribute much to the objectives captured in the global agreements but only when a proper 'localisation process' happens "ex ante" and "ex post". Local and regional governments should be directly involved (in relevant cases through their national or regional associations) in the design of policies, as well as in programming, implementation and monitoring.

Concretely:

- (a) The EU should include the local government voice structurally when designing policies and not treat them as any other stakeholder,
- (b) The EU should encourage its Member States to include local and regional governments in national delegations to the global tables (such as SDGs monitoring, Habitat III or Development Effectiveness process).
- (c) The governing structures of the Association Agreements with partner countries should include representatives of local governments via their associations

The local government perspective will, as a result, become embedded in the process. Implementation at sub-national level of agreements signed between national states will consequently become less complicated. The new consensus on development should include the commitment to analyse all global agreements and national strategies on their link to the local dimension - recognising that there are many 'hidden local dimensions' (an interesting first reference to this in EU documents is to be found here <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/public-public-sector-reform-decentralisation/document/session-33-document-how-set-projects-support-local-development-and-decentralisation>)

The importance hereof is made evident in the initiatives by non-party stakeholders to the UN negotiations such as the UN Habitat III process or the UNFCCC. Particularly exemplary is the local leaders' declaration signed in Paris, December 2015 (https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/climate_summit_final_declaration.pdf).

Furthermore:

- (d) EU should facilitate access for Local and regional governments in partner countries to funding opportunities by designing them not only according to an EU administrative logic, but aligning the modalities of calls for proposals, tenders or direct grants, to the institutional and legal frameworks that local and regional governments need to comply with,
- (e) the EU should support the collection of disaggregated data for monitoring purposes and facilitate institutionalized national dialogues between central governments of partner countries and their respective local and regional

governments that monitor progress – respectfully for each partners’ autonomy and mandate (see also chapter 7).

EU development partners, including local and regional governments (and their associations) can however not always take on their responsibilities in an effective way because of limited resources (financial and human) or because of a limited ‘enabling environment’ (legal, political, ...) for action. To effectively engage with partners, the EU development policy should monitor and positively influence the enabling environments for these partners to work in third countries by putting forward basic EU values of subsidiarity and local democracy. It should also facilitate and fund exchanges between different types of actors and between peers across countries (including with EU based peers) that allow effective capacity building to deliver on their responsibilities and eventually also participate in policy design at different levels.

6.2 How can the EU promote private sector investment for sustainable development?

The EU development policy should take a broad perspective on the support to private sector investment and look beyond direct interactions with the private sector. Investments need an enabling policy context including capable and effective governments at all levels that can assure a safe investment climate (both financial, legal and physical safety) and give guidance so that private investment has the greatest societal benefits.

Priority should be given to endogenous growth, including the promotion of a national private sector that is capable to invest in sustainable projects that create decent work and contribute to societal development. In this regard special attention to SME development and particularly to cooperatives as business model that includes social progress is needed. Increased vocational training facilities for underprivileged youth is crucial. As local economic development planning and education (formal or informal) are a local government competency in most countries the EU development consensus should also recognise and support the local government role.

In the case of direct foreign investment, the EU should parallel all initiatives with support to governments' and civil societies' capacity building to design bankable projects and to manage and monitor these complex global interactions for the benefit of societies at large.

For this, national economic, educational and employment policy frames need to be designed that include local governments from the design phase and in the implementation and monitoring. Investment in local governments capabilities to engage, commit and deliver is also crucial. Local governments stimulus to private investment is best in a context where there is also an open dialogue with civil society, labour and citizens' movements in the territory. Support to local governments is, hence, crucial. That support should include facilitation of exchanges and peer-learning between local and regional governments in partner countries with their counterparts in their region and in the EU. Local governments have similar challenges wherever they are situated and are ready to support and learn from each other.

6.3 How can the EU strengthen relations on sustainable development with other countries, international financing institutions, multilateral development banks, emerging donors and the UN system?

In all its relations with other actors, the EU should take a multi-level and multistakeholder approach. In its own practice it has facilitated a positive evolution towards effective multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder interaction. Albeit not perfect (i.e. the black box between consultation and draft decision remains - and frustrates many stakeholders) it is an interesting experience to be considered when interacting with partners. It will be an important contribution to sustainable development when the EU

takes its international partners on board of this multi-level and multi-stakeholder involvement that recognises the legitimacy of democratically elected governments but looks beyond the national state as sole bearer of that legitimacy.

Concretely:

(a) The EU should push to include the local government voice structurally in its relations to other actors (bilateral or multilateral).

(b) The EU should encourage its Member States that are member of multilateral organisations to include local and regional governments in national delegations to the global tables (such as SDGs monitoring, Habitat III or Development Effectiveness process).

(c) The governing structures of the Association Agreements with partner countries should include representatives of local governments via their associations

PLATFORMA, as the European representative of local and regional governments, was involved in the Structured Dialogue (Structured Dialogue for an efficient partnership in development (2010–2011) that resulted in the Budapest Declaration which recommended the EC to enhance dialogue at all levels and establish a regular space for dialogue with Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/f/fb/Joint_Final_Statement_May_2011.pdf , 19/05/2011) which resulted in the Policy Forum on Development (PFD). It is an opportunity to gather with EU institutions and civil society organisations. The PFD setup has great potential but PFD stakeholders should be even more involvement in discussing the design and implementation of EU development programmes and instruments with different EU DGs and DEVCO units to truly achieve the links between different policy aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The EU, its member states, private sector, civil society and local governments have relevant experiences to offer to partner countries or international organisations. Sharing experiences on local development, territorial development or regional cohesion in economic development will be a meaningful contribution to most partners. Because of the advanced decentralisation in most EU member states, local and regional governments (and their associations) should be awarded a central role– their experience can strengthen the EU position in these relations, but only when the EU recognises their expertise, autonomy and legitimacy.

In the design of partnerships with multilateral institutions or in negotiations on global agenda's (such as UNFCCC, SDG, Habitat, ...) the EU should encourage member states to make local and regional governments part of the national negotiation delegations. As such local and regional perspectives will have better chance to be included in the outcome documents – facilitating the “ex post” localisation of the global agenda's. (see also 6.1). Wherever possible, the EU and the UN system should rely on national and subnational actors (and their peers in the EU) to implement their programmes rather than on international organisations, which often weaken local dynamics and capacities.

6.4 How can the EU best support partner countries to develop comprehensive and inclusive national plans for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

A national plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda can only be comprehensive if it is also inclusive in its identification of and interaction with partners. The EU is quite unique in its practices to work with national governments while maintaining support to subnational governments and civil society organisations (as is common practices within the EU and its member states). This look beyond the national state is very important and should be embedded in the EU interaction with partner countries: a national plan for the implementation of the 2030 agenda that is exclusively designed or implemented by national governments should not be the object of EU support.

A key contribution from the EU to the implementation of the 2030 agenda is its experience with effective and qualitative decentralisation. The EU development actions should have as an objective to empower local and regional governments to be pivotal players in their territories' development and as such effectively contribute to country strategies in design, implementation and monitoring, in line with the recommendations of the roadmap on localizing the SDGs (https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/roadmap_for_localizing_the_sdgs_0.pdf). Fostering dialogue at national level with local government associations and facilitating peer exchanges on best practices between associations of different countries in the region and from the EU is a very effective means to this end. It will contribute to elevate the quality of decentralisation processes.

6.5 What are the best ways to strengthen and improve coherence, complementarity and coordination between the EU and the Member States in their support to help partner countries achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development?

Coordination is best informed by the practitioners from the field. EU Delegations should take a central role in identifying them and building a transparent overview of actors. Additionally, Local and regional governments' international action and NGO's or academic institutions on the ground are often very effective in signalling contradictions, incoherencies or overlap between EU and member states programs. Therefore, EU Delegations should be capacitated to pay specific attention to these actors and to look beyond national state interventions. EU local and regional governments' experience in international action should be valued and included to assess coherence as they interact with EU member states, partner countries governments and EU Development Policies. Regional networks of local and regional governments such as PLATFORMA or its member organisations AIMF, CLGF, CPMR or regional branches of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) are particularly well placed to identify coordination opportunities.

Involving local governments through their representative associations should become standard practice: they can introduce hands-on experience in joint programming and facilitate access to factual disaggregated information. It can also strengthen the relation of local and regional governments with their member state ministries or agencies which, in turn, will contribute to more effective (because: more localised) programs. Furthermore, local and regional governments are already engaged in processes to unlock the potential of decentralised cooperation and build on project implementation and technical assistance to increasingly take the role of policy designers and partners in global negotiation processes. (see also 6.7)

6.6 How can EU development cooperation be as effective as possible, and how can we work with all partners to achieve this?

There is a need for drastic measures to achieve policy coherence for sustainable development: coherence between partners, sectors and tiers of government within countries and between development partners. Effectiveness of EU development policies depends on the identification of the right level of intervention of the best actor to support at that level. The EU should invest more in applying the principles of subsidiarity in its development policies and work with the most local of possible partners. It should more strategically and more coherently put local and regional governments in pivotal positions for their territories' development and include local governments in dialogues across tiers of government (national and supra-national) (For more see the PLATFORMA publication on development effectiveness from the local perspective: http://www.ccre.org/docs/Development_effectiveness_at_local_regional_level.EN.pdf).

Effectiveness should include a critical revision and simplification of the administrative management of financial support. Project-based or results-based approach might not be appropriate when policy issues are at stake. Rather, process-based commitments should be promoted as a means to consolidate democracy and governance.

Participating in processes to access Grants and in Calls for Proposals is costly for EU development partners. EU rules and regulations are complex and not always compatible with national laws development partners need to abide by. This is particularly the case for government bodies participating in EU funding. Local governments are bound by strict national laws on finances, approval, transparency – including particular timeframes for each. The fact that the EU often ignores this in its Calls for Proposal is a practical challenge (i.e. 3 month period between publication and close of process is too short in a context where the approval of local and regional legislative assemblies' needs to be sought). In the most problematic of cases it ignores the legitimacy of this government actor to be able to govern along national frameworks and based on a local democratic mandate – not the administrative guidelines of an external partner.

The complex micro-management of awarded grants strongly limits effectiveness and efficiency of implementation and creates large overhead costs for EU and its partners. The EU has taken important steps forward in politically recognising a number of development partners in 6 year strategic partnerships. This should be extended beyond the current partnerships and also trickle down to implementation criteria adjusted to the type of actor that is targeted, so that the funds can be used more flexible and more effective to achieve the goals agreed upon.

6.7 What further progress could be made in EU Joint Programming, and how could this experience be linked with other EU joined-up actions in supporting countries' delivery of the 2030 Agenda?

As mentioned in the Council's conclusions of the 12th of May 2016 (S10) the cooperation between development actors coming from European Member States must be enhanced in the Joint Programming. It could be used to better capitalise on the added value of the diversity of European development stakeholders present in partner countries (for instance local and regional governments or their associations involved in decentralised cooperation, technical assistance or peer-to-peer capacity building).

In this respect the European Union delegations should involve representatives of European local and regional governments that are active in the country in the strategic discussions on the orientations of development programmes. This will enable EUD to better assess the challenges at the territorial level, to design strategies that answer local specificities; and thus answer the systemic issues included in the Global Partnership (SDG 17) of the 2030 Agenda (policy and institutional coherence and multi-stakeholder partnerships). (see also 6.5)

(7) Keeping track of progress

The EU will need to contribute to the global follow-up and review process for the 2030 Agenda. Keeping track of progress in a systematic and transparent way is essential for delivering the 2030 Agenda. The EU is actively contributing to the setting up of a Sustainable Development Goal monitoring system at global, regional and national level. Demonstrating results and impact from our efforts and the promotion of transparency will be important priorities for EU development policy, as part of a wider move to strengthen accountability, follow-up and review at all levels.

7.1 How can the EU strengthen its own use of evidence and analysis, including in the development field, to feed into its regular review on the Sustainable Development Goals to the UN?

Given the role of local and regional governments in implementing and delivering the Sustainable Development Goals, the EU must invest in collecting disaggregated data by territory in consultation with local and regional governments through their representative associations. This will enable a better and more accurate understanding of inequalities within countries (SDG 10):

When negotiating global agenda's or designing EU policies setting up of a strong review and follow-up mechanism to monitor the appropriate implementation of the specific agenda is essential. However, a unilateral development of binding indicators for local governments will be counterproductive and not particularly efficient. The EU should ensure that the indicators that will be used to monitor implementation are designed in close cooperation with local authorities and constitute a tool for self-assessment on a voluntary basis. In Europe, we have a broad range of indicators that were developed in the last years, such as the ones in the Urban Atlas or the Reference Framework of Sustainable Cities (RFSC) that can serve as inspiration when engaging with partners in other countries. These indicators must be adopted at the local level in an open and transparent way but this can only be done when local governments had the chance to participate with their experiences and available data in the design thereof.

7.2 How can the EU help to ensure the accountability of all actors involved in implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the private sector? How can the EU encourage a strong and robust approach to the Follow Up and Review of the 2030 Agenda from all actors?

Accountability at the local and regional level is complementary to accountability at national level. Local accountability contributes to building a democratic and good governance culture in a country. We define local accountability as the ability of a local governments to engage its citizens and civil society organisation in the design of territorial policies; thus empowering the citizens through their own local governments. This needs empowered and capable local governments to not replicate existing inequalities.

The EU should take a stronger focus on strengthening local and regional governments capacity building in order to provide them with the means to be accountable actors of territorial development.

In addition, European local and regional governments can also support their partners through decentralised cooperation and exchange of best practices on local accountability and good governance, management of EU funds and engagement of civil society stakeholders. Compared to partnership with international/non-local NGOs which can be perceived as depriving local and regional governments from their legitimate ownership of decision making process, peer to peer exchanges can prove to be more effective and rewarding for local and regional governments in partner countries as it includes a dimension of mutual political recognition of the partners.

The current process of follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, as implemented by the UN through the High Level Political Forum, does not include a real participation of local and regional governments. The European Union, through its delegations in partner countries, and the governments of member states should help installing multi-stakeholder fora, including all development actors: local and regional governments, civil society organisations, other European or international partners or donors. This will create a more accurate process for follow-up and Review that engage all actors.

7.3 How should EU development cooperation respond to the regular reviews on progress of the partner countries towards the 2030 Agenda goals?

The EU must allow for regular adjustments of its programmes and instruments, through consultation and stock-taking of the progress made and shortcuts identified by territorial stakeholders (including local and regional governments and civil society organisations through their representative associations).

Country progress reports should be the starting point of mid-term updates but should simultaneously be assessed on their accurateness at disaggregated level. Many indicators will only show real progress or decline when disaggregated to territorial datasets. Most importantly: inequalities within national contexts can only be made evident when data is available by territories. Local and regional governments should receive critical roles to collect and analyse data according to their experience and should be empowered to participate in the design of strategies that will progressively eradicate inequalities within and between territories.

EU development policies and programs should incentivise national government partners to work closely with local and regional governments to this end: it requires governance capacities at territorial level and an enabling environment for the empowered local and regional governments to contribute to national strategies.

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