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With the contribution  
of the Non State Actors  
Programme of  
the European Union



## 1. Trade unions are actors in development

At the Runö Education Center near Stockholm, the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network gathered for its first ever international trade union development cooperation conference. The conference, bringing together some 100 trade unionists and guests from all corners of the world, highlighted the trade union commitment to social and sustainable development.

### OPENING SESSION

In her introductory speech Ms **Wanja Lundby-Wedin**, president of LO, underlined the embedding of social justice and fair development goals in the daily life of trade unionism, here and in the south, yesterday as well as today. She referred in particular to the trade union movement in order to underline that solidarity is the first name the movement has always given to development cooperation.



[Link to speech \(pdf\)](#)  
[Link to video extract](#)



**Tomas Brundin** addressed the conference on behalf of the Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation and presented the recently adopted policy in Sweden on Civil Society in Development.

The policy, entitled "Pluralism", gives a central role to civil society organisations in development cooperation and in particular to unions.

They are not only instrumental for bringing services and relief to people, they are in the first place actors for development strategies and therefore

democratic ownership of the guarantees for sustainability.

[Link to SIDA and Civil Society \(pdf\)](#) [link to video extract](#)

*"creating an environment at the national and international levels that is conducive to the attainment of full and productive employment and decent work as a foundation for sustainable development"*

UN Summit Heads of State 2005 Outcome document §47

**Guy Ryder**, welcoming the participants as general secretary of the ITUC, expressed the willingness of the ITUC as the new international, pluralist and inclusive trade union movement to engage strongly in the challenges of development cooperation. If the matter has been absent in the international trade union strategy so far, the next Congress will address the development cooperation policy of the trade union movement as a key element in its overall approach towards new trade union internationalism.

Guy Ryder underlined that it is very necessary to allocate ODA and national funding to development cooperation initiatives. Therefore, national governments have to make an effort to comply with international obligations in this sense (0,7 % of GDP). Civil society organisations, which receive financial support to implement cooperation projects, have to demonstrate their own effectiveness. Also trade unions nowadays have this important task. They have to demonstrate their own development effectiveness in terms of results and contribution to development of countries in need.

[Link to video extract](#)



GUY RYDER



ANITA NORMARK

BWI general secretary **Anita Normark** who chaired the opening session, underlined the importance of the development cooperation and international solidarity as a cornerstone for the actions of the international trade union movement at large, including the Global Unions.

[Link to video extract](#)



NIKHIL SETH

Addressing the Conference through a video message, **Nikhil Seth**, director of the UN Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, stressed the contribution of the ITUC towards the UN Development Cooperation Forum and spelled out the main activities of the DCF for the months to come, including the second Development Cooperation Forum in 2010.

[Link to message \(pdf\)](#)

[Link to video message](#)

**Koos Richelle**, director general of AIDCO (EU Commission) and co-chair of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (AAA implementation OECD/DAC), delivering the key note speech on behalf of EU Commissioner Karel De Gucht, challenged the audience with a provocative reading of the current challenges for development cooperation.

"We, [the development cooperation actors, red.], stopped thinking in the mid '90s", he said and stated that since, it is all about implementation: from the MDG's, over Monterrey, Paris Declaration and AAA; it is all about how we deliver or would like to deliver. And he added that we have not been successful at all in improving delivering. On the same line, he also criticised the many "coherence" quests that are popping up recently as signals of lack of initiative and creativity with regard to workable implementation strategies rather than genuine innovative ways of improving development cooperation.

Also in the answers he gave to the many questions he referred to the important expectations and thus responsibility that lies with CSOs in the field of development cooperation.

[Link to video extract](#)



KOOS RICHELLE

**THE FIRST PANEL DISCUSSION**, which was moderated by Gemma Adaba (ITUC New York Office) on 'Democratic Ownership and Decent Work: Key Contributions for Development Policies' brought together a broad range of development specialists from

the EU Commission (**Lluis Riera Figueras**); the ILO (**Dan Cunniah**); the CSO-Better Aid platform (**Cecilia Alemany**); the ITUC Asia-Pacific region (**Noriyuki Suzuki**); the development Committee of the EP (**Gabriele Zimmer**). The discussion illustrated the need for a socially oriented development model and considered especially the fundamental importance of the decent work agenda. For the trade union

movement, but also largely shared by other social movements such as those of women's organisations, decent work has to be, as are respect for human rights, gender equality and defence of ecological values, a cross-cutting issue for development.

[Link to video extract](#)



LLUIS RIERA FIGUERAS - GABRIELE ZIMMER - CECILIA ALEMANY -  
GEMMA ABADA - DAN CUNNIAH - NORIYUKI SUZUKI

**THE SECOND PANEL DISCUSSION**, which was moderated by **Ana Nitoslawska** (CLC-Canada), addressed the role and contribution of trade unions as actors for development. Civil society specialists took the floor to emphasize the role of civil society at large (Mr. **Aristotelis Bouratsis**, Director Thematic Operations Unit, EuropeAid, European Commission; **Eva Christina Nilsson**, vice president of CONCORD; and **Lena Ingelstam**, director Civil Society Unit from the Swedish International Development Agency - SIDA).

Both **Peter Hellberg**, president of the LO-TCO Board, ([speech pdf](#)) and **Adrien Akouete Beleki** (ITUC Africa) underlined the role of trade unions both as part of the broader civil society as well as their specific contribution to development as social partners.



[Link to video extract](#)



Concluding a long day of discussions and sharing of ideas, **Sture Nordh**, president of TCO, shared his views on the importance of cooperation among our organizations in the civil society as well as the need of the trade union movement to modernise in order to survive. We have to develop and improve our solidarity and our cooperation, the two most important tools we have to reach our goals.

[Link to speech \(pdf - Swedish\)](#) [Link to video extract \(Swedish\)](#)

[Link to interventions of several participants](#)

#### **ECHO'S FROM THE WORKING GROUPS MEETINGS.**

Asked to reflect upon ideas and priorities for work of the Trade Union Development Network in the light of the discussions at the conference, three language-groups met and reported back to the plenary.



TUDCN should play an important **coordinating role**, with civil society at the international and the regional level, working with relevant organizations such as Better Aid, the Open Forum and the GSEG (UN) all of which can support trade union development. But also and even more so, coordination is important as a network between the regions, the partner organisations (National Centers, SSO, GU, etc.) and with specific countries. We should have a strategic framework for coordination generally also within regional organisations. We should ensure that the TUDCN is a light touch and open network with ITUC playing a facilitating role.

On **policy and principles** we should be speaking with one voice as a trade union family (including GUFs) and share a common vision and philosophy on development cooperation. The network should be leading on TUD policy space and lobbying, not only with the EU but also IFI, UN and development banks. The decent work agenda and the reinforcement of its four pillars should be the main targets of our development efforts. Our development agenda should enable the full enjoyment of workers rights at the national level. The TUDCN should also pay attention to the specific dimension of South-South cooperation.



Spanish-speaking group

The groups focused on **practical ideas** such as the need for the TUCDN to focus on sharing of information; educating national organizations on international development issues and promoting of understanding about future development issues; setting up of informal workgroups to prepare policy and exchanging baseline information/setting up a database on development issues at the national level. We should also have practical

tools for ensuring that development work is not separated from normal trade union work. The group also suggested that we should have models to improve Global Unions/SSO annual meetings especially at the regional level and work on tools for monitoring and measuring impact. We should sensitise large donors on trade union development issues;



French-speaking group

mainstream our ideas and have a package on policy issues to ensure trade union organisations are giving similar messages.

The groups also mentioned a number of **other concerns** such as the need for the network to continue even if EU funding is not available; the attention to the informal economy; the need for TUD to bridge differences between trade union organisations at the national level that have varying political positions; identify how to work with middle income countries; prevent overlap and duplication; the need for internal solidarity, with the stronger organisations supporting those with few resources and the challenge of dealing with our own attitudes to development work (trade union development effectiveness).

## **TUDCN CONFERENCE OUTLINES/POSSIBLE LINES OF ACTION FOR IMPROVED TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

Following the panel discussions and the working groups and plenary discussions at the conference, a number of points for further action and reflection crystallised out of the debates. The network will take them as a basis for preparing further policy positions and as an input into the congress debate on Trade Union Development Cooperation in 2010.



### **Decent work in all development policies.**

The case should not need to be made any more. At all levels of the UN as well as at the national and European level, “decent work for all” is a recognised development objective. It has explicitly been added to the MDG as a strategic option to combat poverty. However the rights-based approach of the decent work agenda should also be put on the agenda when discussing development coherence within the EU or within the OECD-DAC Working Party, the UN or within any other

international policy setting institutions. We demand the inclusion of decent work as one of the fundamental cross-cutting issues in development.

### **Democratic ownership has to be a priority strategic objective in development.**

The ITUC has taken up the challenge to take the democratic ownership agenda further. Its experience of promoting social dialogue and its longstanding cooperation within civil society platforms does allow us to convene the many actors-in-democracy, including parliaments, employers and civil society to the table with governments and international institutions to strengthen the participative processes and enlarge the focus from the technical aid related issues to include all dimensions of social and sustainable development that is based on recognition and respect of internationally agreed and shared commitments on human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability and decent work.

### **The approach to cooperation programmes should be “actor”-based and respectful of the “Right of Initiative” of the Civil Society Organisations.**

Donor governments and especially the EU have recognised that, in the interest of in-country development and whilst underlining the importance of the work of many NGO's, it is important to bring in other actors and to enlarge the non-governmental channel to a broader civil society approach (some call that also Non-State Actors). More actors did indeed enter the scene such as the trade unions, political foundations, cooperatives, local authorities, etc. However, whilst the scope of the actors was enlarged, the implications of that choice on the way of working were not taken forward.

- The NSA programme should be based on framework agreements with actors in line with the rational of **“NSA Right of Initiative”** and thus of an actors based planning, monitoring and evaluation approach.

- Trade unions do have their own, democratic set-up that includes adoption of workplans and permanent monitoring and adjustment of their actions according to the changing economic, political and social realities they are confronted with.
- Framework agreements should encompass all dimensions of our approach for trade unions: policy preparation; advocacy; capacity building and training; research; and publicity/visibility..
- Long-term cooperation strategies and agreements should emphasise more the monitoring of progress and allow a better impact measurement.

**The international dimension of civil society actions and organisation has to be recognised.**

Trade unions and some other civil society movements have an established and recognised record of international representation and representativity. The international dimension, as recognised by the ILO Convention 87 is a constituent part of the trade union existence and actions. The current transnational development cooperation architecture does not recognise the international space for the trade unions (and other I-CSO) to act and deliberate on their cooperation policies out of their own right.

National conditionalities, be it in donor countries or in southern countries, are forcing the internationally organised movements to reduce their cooperation to the addition of bilateral-defined priorities, conditions and policy decisions. It is a paradox that, whilst cooperating transnationally under the Paris Declaration, states have not yet acknowledged the international dimension of the right of initiative and the need to have and to recognise the independent international area of action for civil society and to support this independent setting of policies, priorities and actions by international actors out of their own right.

**The Aid Effectiveness Agenda should also apply to the state support for CSO.**

Whilst we recognise the need to define the contribution of CSO to aid effectiveness under the par.20 of the AAA, we do feel that from an enabling point of view, the same orientations that do apply for bilateral state-to-state cooperation, could, as a first step also be taken into account for the state-to-CSO cooperation by the donors.

- Ownership: respect of our self-defined policies, based on our right of initiative;
- Framework and actor based agreements that allow the use of “in-CSO” systems;
- Untied aid and alignment on the CSO policy, also internationally;
- More transparent and predictable support to CSOs based on long-term engagements;
- Budget support rather than programme or project support to allow social movements in the south to sustain their core-business whilst developing their own resources.

**We demand co-management structures for policy development and implementation**

The ultimate consequence of recognising the role of civil society in a democratic society is involving it in the decision-making as part of a pluralist and multi-actor participatory democracy. As trade unions we have been able to establish solid traditions in social dialogue with employers and governments. That social dialogue has in many ways been seen as complementary and, in the areas of “work” as normative for the democratic decision making in our societies. We, as a social partner, have been able to construct an internationally based normative system in the world of work.

In a similar approach, responding to the challenges of today's globalised world, the development cooperation world should be able to allow representative and experience-based actors to sit at the decision-making table.

## 2. European Development Days

From 22 to 24 October, the European Development Days (EDD) took place in Stockholm, Sweden, on climate change, the economic crisis, democracy and citizenship for the 21st century and all other subjects related to development. It is the main annual development event in Europe bringing together the whole development family. Here civil society can talk with heads of states, international organisations, the private sector, parliamentarians, etc., for a stimulating debate on development issues, and development professionals can exchange their views, synergise and benchmark about positive experiences. The EDD are a participatory event organised by the European Commission, the presidency of the EU but also all stakeholders (NGOs, parliaments, local authorities, etc.) willing to organise their own event.

**Boèvi Kouglo Lawson Body** (senior economist and coordinator of the project 'Strengthening Economic and Social Policy Interventions' of the Regional African Organisation of ITUC, ITUC -Africa) participated in this event on behalf of the ITUC.

### THE ROLE OF TRADE AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC TURMOIL

was the issue debated in the panel where our representative took part, together with other relevant speakers such as: Mary Robinson (president of Ethical Globalisation Initiative); Alonzo Fulgham (acting administrator USAID); Ewa Björling (Swedish minister for trade); Hans Enocsson (national executive General Electrics); Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (managing director World Bank).

Wide consensus was reached on the concept that trade and private sector can play a crucial role for economies in development, providing new chances for the people leaving in poor countries. As Ewa Björling said "we need private sector in development as Governments do not create jobs", complementarily to Fulgham's message on the need to transform aid into trade, "building stronger business communities in developing countries".



While innovative forms of entrepreneurial opportunities are surely to be supported, however we have to pay serious attention to the conditions necessary for real and sustainable economic development. Bridging the divide among private sector, governments, and civil society organisations, as Robinson underlined, is the way forward for innovative approaches to cooperation schemes with developing countries.

"Trade unions are indeed key players in this sense, through the social dialogue with governments and employers" stated Lawson-Body. Traditionally, trade unions have been engaging in protecting the rights of workers, which becomes even more crucial in relation to trade agreements and foreign investments in global crisis. This is true both vis-à-vis governments' economic strategies and employers' plans. Still today, for example, health and safety conditions of workers employed by multinationals in Africa are far from being acceptable. That is why effective political dialogue with trade unions is to be supported both at regional and international level.

Finally, Lawson-Body concluded that socially responsible investments and trade agreements cannot represent the "panacea" for Africa's development at the moment. Indeed, these are technical instruments which are not adequate to tackle the "governance weakness" in some African countries. In other words, "we need self-standing local political strategies promoting local entrepreneurial development, not always relying on foreign investments".