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The European Consensus on Development

Introduction

The European Consensus on Development is a landmark agreement between the European Commission, European Parliament and EU Member States, which sets out the common EU vision for development cooperation. CARE has often used the Consensus to hold the EU accountable, reminding them of the strong commitments taken in 2005.

At the same time, we understand the decision of the European Union to revise the Consensus, given that the global context has changed in the last 10 years, and not in the least in the light of the breakthrough agreements and commitments on the Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and at the World Humanitarian Summit. The new Consensus needs to be forward-looking and visionary and remain relevant beyond the next couple of years.

There is a need to ensure better coordination between policies and various strategies of EU foreign policy, yet at the same time the purposes of the various policies need to be respected. And in that sense, there are also risks to revising the Consensus at this point in time. We are concerned that EU institutions might agree to a less ambitious and instrumentalised form of development cooperation in the future, given the all-encompassing attention in Europe to security, counter-terrorism and migration, combined with a rise in xenophobia and extreme-right parties in many member states, and a European Commission focused on economic growth and with a seemingly blind confidence in what the private sector will deliver for development cooperation. Where does that leave the Lisbon Treaty's core focus of development cooperation on eradication of poverty and inequality, and how about the role of civil society?

What we like in the 2005 Consensus and what should be kept:

- Focus on **poverty eradication, sustainable development** and **human rights**
- Strong focus on **aid effectiveness** principles (ownership, alignment)
- Commitment to **policy coherence** for development
- Support to **poor people** in both middle-income and low-income countries, based on objective criteria for resource allocation (needs-based rather than politicised/migration control/security- focused)
- Commitment to spend **0.7% of GNI on ODA**
- Coordination and complementarity among EU-Member States (MS) via **joint programming**

Additional elements we would like to see in the new Consensus:

- Alignment with the **2030 Agenda** by adopting its key principles: human rights, planetary boundaries and leaving no one behind.
- A focus on **sustainable and inclusive growth**, reducing inequalities, rather than on economic growth itself
- More attention to **gender equality,** linking to the commitments made in the EU Gender Action Plan for External Action, the EU Comprehensive Approach on Women Peace and Security and SDG 5.
- Reference to the Paris agreement and hence making an **ambitious commitment to climate change**, increasing work on mitigation and funding for adaptation
- Increased attention for the role of EU development cooperation to address **resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR, reference to Sendai), and fragility**
- A comprehensive and **holistic approach** to **food and nutrition security** and **health** care
- Recognition of the importance of a **multi-stakeholder approach**, especially **involvement of civil society**, including engagement with citizens at the subnational level to define development priorities, monitor progress and hold governments and other duty – bearers accountable (e.g. using social accountability and participatory monitoring approaches)
- **Healthy level of attention to the role of the private sector** in support of development cooperation
- **Healthy level of attention to migration and security**: Development cooperation should be sensitive to but not dictated by migration and security concerns.
- **Increased recognition of European NGO role** including but beyond development education and watchdog role

CARE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

GENDER EQUALITY

The EU's new development policy must be based on a **human rights- based approach.** The policy must **include gender equality and women's and girls' human rights as a core value and principle in all areas of development**. This is critical not only to attain the objective of eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development (art. 208 Lisbon Treaty), but also to be in line with the specific attention to inequalities and the 'leave no one behind' principle of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore gender equality and women's and girls' rights must be integrated throughout the policy, with specific commitments in all development areas, and not just in a few chapters as is the case in the current Consensus. This can be done by making an explicit link to the EU Action Plan on 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020' (GAP). In particular, the Consensus should **emphasise the EU's commitment to the three-pronged approach of gender mainstreaming, targeted programming to enhance gender equality and inclusion of gender issues in bilateral, political dialogue.**

Another key EU document which relates to achieving gender equality in external action is the **EU Comprehensive approach to Women, Peace and Security** (UNSCR 1325 and 1820). It sets out a clear path for EU implementation, yet a lot remains to be done, and this is also relevant for EU development cooperation. "*The greatest, most underutilised tool for successfully building peace is the meaningful inclusion of women*," confirmed the director of UN Women at the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. In the new Consensus, the EU should underscore its support for the **inclusion of civil society, including women's organisations, in national and international peace and security processes, while at the same time ensuring attention to local peacebuilding.**

But as a means to achieve these goals, more attention is needed for enablers, namely participation and funding. Indeed, the EU should commit to **support increased opportunities for local women's organisations to meaningfully participate in development programming**. Too often women's participation is treated as an afterthought or an assumed outcome of community engagement efforts. Social accountability processes can be used to bring women's voices into the design, monitoring and accountability of preparedness, resilience and development programming, in dialogue between government authorities and local communities. For the EU, it is essential that women and women's organisations are systematically included in consultations on programming, for example via targeted outreach by EU delegations in the context of the CSO roadmaps. When that consultation happens, it also needs to be more than a tick-box exercise. CSOs often feel that even when consulted, their views are largely ignored.

On the funding side, **gender budgeting is critical for annual and multi-annual budget cycles**. National development plans and strategies identify development priorities and articulate how these will be implemented, financed and monitored, but often, gender equality commitments are not adequately considered or included during the design, implementation and financing stages of planning (Source: UN Women). Gender budgeting is critical, regardless of the aid modality and funding instruments and mechanisms the EU uses (grants and contracts, budget support and sector support). For all modalities and whether funding is channelled through the countries' national treasuries, business or CSOs, in line with the commitment to gender budgeting in the GAP, the **EU should select partners which are working in a gender-sensitive or gender-transformative manner, and should monitor that via the use of a gender marker through-out the programming cycle**.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE AND SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

From over 50 years of experience, CARE is convinced that a **universal 'right to health' cannot be achieved through direct services alone – large-scale and sustainable change requires that we address underlying and systemic factors, including gender inequality, policy barriers, and power imbalances** that have an impact on health. For instance, maternal and child mortality is mostly preventable, and concentrated in socio-economically disadvantaged populations, where women face the most discrimination and inequality. Unsafe sex for women depends not only on access to and availability of contraceptives, but also on women's ability to negotiate safe sex. Similarly, access to optimal nutrition often hinges on a redistribution of resources within the household and women`s power to make spending decisions. Women are disproportionately affected by systematic social or legal denial of rights through child marriage, interpersonal violence, barriers to education and deprivation of land rights, to only name some examples. Therefore, in its new Consensus **the EU should promote long-term, iterative, participatory and holistic rights-based policies and approaches aimed at changing social norms, attitudes and behaviours.**

The achievement of positive health outcomes for women and children relies on their safe, affordable and confidential **access to the full range of reproductive health services**. Therefore in the new Consensus **the EU should champion sexual and reproductive rights worldwide** as well as promote **scale-up of universal access to voluntary contraception and family planning services.** Family planning could prevent up to 30 percent of all maternal deaths (290,000 women die annually from complications during pregnancy and childbirth), by enabling women to delay their first pregnancy and space later pregnancies at the safest intervals. Spacing of births promotes children's health too and as the risk of maternal mortality is highest for adolescent girls under 15 years old, family planning helps them to delay having a child until they are physically and emotionally ready, and allows them time complete their own education. As a matter of urgency, the EU needs to **invest in Sexual Reproductive Health services in fragile states and countries affected by conflict**. The statistics are stark: 9 of the 10 countries with the highest maternal mortality ratios are countries affected by conflict, yet conflict-affected countries receive 57% less funding for repr oductive health than non-conflict-affected countries. We need to close this funding gap.

Lastly, a key factor in achieving Universal Health Coverage is ensuring **equitable access to quality health services provided by skilled, qualified and competent health staff**. Ensuring health workers are appropriately compensated, skilled, motivated and retained is critical to building strong health systems, and ensuring equitable access to quality care. Specifically, the new EU Consensus needs to **promote investment in and empowerment of frontline healthcare workers**, who are often the backbone of the healthcare system and play a critical role in ensuring coverage of healthcare services in remote, poor and underserved areas.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

In line with the Gender and Development Council Conclusions from May 2015, we expect the Consensus to confirm that "women's economic empowerment is an end in itself and a precondition for achieving sustainable development and inclusive growth". **An enabling environment needs to be created**, notably by removing social and legal barriers to women's control over productive assets- including land and

other natural and economic resources-, by promoting financial inclusion, adequate and accessible social protection systems for women of all ages, and decent work standards including equal pay for equal work.

Through the Consensus the EU should **promote policies that ensure women—and especially the poorest women—have equitable access to employment and decent work**, including by supporting women entrepreneurs, supporting women producers to achieve equitable returns within global value chains, recognising the rights of domestic workers, and improving women's access to savings-led finance and bank accounts.

Clearly the **private sector** can play a key role in women's economic empowerment, including through understanding and **improving the position of women within its direct business operations and across the rest of the value chain**. This includes a commitment to, and delivery on, the ILO Decent Work Commitments, the UN Women's Empowerment Principles, strong due diligence on the rights of women within value chains in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and tracking and publication of gender-disaggregated data. The new Consensus should stress that **all EU development engagement with the private sector should enforce these minimum standards.**

But the **economic empowerment of women is about more than economic advancement.** We need to look beyond the conventional 'economic sphere', beyond counting how many women are in formal jobs, to look at the **voice, agency and control** that women have to make their own decisions about work, about the household and in the community. Women need to have the power to make and act on economic decisions on a level playing field with men, as well as the systems and structures in place to ensure they can succeed. This can only be done by also involving men and boys into efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. As mentioned above, **the EU has an important role to play in promoting human rights-based policies and practices that aim to change social norms, attitudes and behaviours** and contribute to breaking the cycle of inequality and poverty**.**

CLIMATE CHANGE

The SDGs clearly acknowledge that **we cannot deliver sustainable development without tackling climate change, and we cannot tackle climate change without tackling the root causes of poverty**, so this should be explicit in the next Consensus. It will be critical to measure and ensure that progress in one area does not undermine progress elsewhere. This means that how a target is reached is as important as whether it is reached. It also means that financial support in one area should not be provided at the expense of any other.

We expect the European Consensus to **reconfirm the key elements of the COP21 Paris agreement, including the need to urgently bridge the gap between what is needed to limit global warming to 1.5° , as envisaged in the Paris Agreement, and the reality** we are currently heading towards, and where the EU has a large role to play. Keeping global warming below 1.5°C is critical to the achievement of the 17 SDGs, as climate change first and foremost harms those people living in poverty. To achieve the 1.5° limit and the SDGs, the EU has to **increase efforts to reduce its emissions and to promote a low carbon development** and genuinely renewable energy for all, going beyond the

(already met) 2020 target and scaling up the 2030 objectives, thereby remaining a leader in climate action.

The Consensus should also commit the EU to **massively scale-up climate action and financial support to poor countries**. In line with the EU Sendai Action Plan and the Paris agreement, it is crucial for EU development cooperation to **increase the adaptive capacity of vulnerable people and communities**, and promote climate resilience for the poor. As adaptation, just like mitigation, is included in all INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) of developing countries, EU support to this component will be critical.

Furthermore, with climate change impacts hitting harder, the EU Development Consensus must also address the reality of **loss and damage** from climate change impacts. It should envisage the EU playing a stronger role in providing finance for loss and damage to poor countries in line with its responsibility and in relevant international bodies, including the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, and promote work towards viable international frameworks for addressing the growing challenge of climate-related displacement.

The Consensus should also acknowledge the **gender dimension of climate change and resilience building**, as it is starkly missing in the EU Sendai Action Plan. In societies where people are discriminated against based on gender, ethnicity, class, or caste, **being a man or woman is often a decisive factor in determining the levels of risk they face from climatic shocks,** extreme and uncertain weather, and changes in the environment and economy, as well as the resources and options they have to cope with those shocks. This means that the chances of achieving a better life, for many women and girls living in poverty, are threatened by a double injustice: climate change and gender inequality.

RESILIENCE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Resilience means strengthening poor people and communities' capacity to anticipate, absorb and adapt to shocks and stresses, manage growing risks, and transform their lives in response to new hazards and opportunities. It is also about addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability. This implies **working towards a better integration of humanitarian, disaster risk reduction, social protection, climate change adaptation, natural resource management, conflict mitigation and other development actions.** The current El Niño phenomenon is a stark reminder to governments, UN agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders of that need for better integration. It requires the constant analysis of risks, and the ability to learn and change, promoting choice and leadership. CARE therefore does not believe in standalone resilience programming. Increasing resilience is a way of working and approaching hazards and risk, you do not suddenly move into a 'resilience phase', it should be a permanent feature of programmatic thinking.

Building resilience also demands inclusive governance that addresses marginalisation and inequality drivers of vulnerability. Vulnerable populations must be empowered to manage risk and to access decision making processes that impact their futures. This will ultimately lead to investments, services and policies that correspond with their needs and build community resilience. **The new Consensus should therefore emphasise the range of multi-sectoral and integrated approaches required to build resilience effectively.**

In that vein, we strongly applaud that the EU Sendai Action Plan commits to **support the development of inclusive local and national Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies, with active engagement of civil society,** also because it is crucial to combine local, indigenous forms of knowledge with scientific risk data to strengthen resilience. We would like to stress that it is

essential that these **plans are developed *before* a disaster strikes**, rather than waiting for the humanitarian sector to take the lead, **and that these plans take into account long term trends, in particular climate change.**

As resilience building implies building capacity to withstand different kinds of shocks, including from conflict, **the Consensus should stress the importance of conflict prevention and peace building, including local peacebuilding**. Community peace without national reconciliation is unsustainable, and vice versa. In addition, community reconciliation and economic development should be treated as two sides of the same coin, and given equal weight in strategy decisions from national authorities and donors. In CARE's experience, having access to income generating opportunities and increasing skills for greater economic independence, combined with reconciliation efforts in representative peace committees and a strengthening of relations within and between communities and with authorities, increases the ability of communities to withstand the effects of conflict. Indeed, economic resilience, social cohesion and peaceful conflict resolution are mutually reinforceable and together can address the root causes of conflict and instability. However, while we recognise the linkages between security, peacebuilding and development, we **are against the increased use of ODA in support of military or quasi-military expenditures, or the channelling of aid through military actors**. Any misuse of aid in this area can have extremely serious consequences, both for affected people in recipient countries, but also for the credibility and public support for ODA.

Lastly, working on resilience also requires **flexibility from donors,** not just practitioners and governments. In disaster prone countries such as Ethiopia, long-term development programmes must have a kind of '**crisis modifier'**, that allows practioners to adjust development projects quickly to address crises, while at the same time helping to protect development gains.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Hunger and poverty are not accidents—they are the result of social and economic injustice and inequality at all levels. To end hunger and malnutrition, this inequality must be addressed using a **comprehensive and holistic approach to food and nutrition security**. We cannot eradicate hunger and malnutrition by focusing only on increasing levels of food production. Food security – and the right to food - encompasses not only the amount of food available but also access to food (social and economic access), the right kinds of food for good nutrition, and the stability of food supplies and access. Furthermore, gender inequality is a strong determination of a woman's (or girl's) nutritional status. The new Consensus should stress the **EU's continued support to integrated, cross-sectoral approaches that include nutrition-specific as well as nutrition-sensitive interventions, which explicitly target gender inequality.**

Small-scale food producers are crucial for food and nutrition security across the world, yet they often lack access to secure land tenure or to healthy natural resources, financial and extension services, information about weather, post-harvest storage, and markets. As a result, they are highly vulnerable to localised and extensive disasters and economic shocks. **Investing in small-scale food producers and strengthening their resilience are key**.

Despite growing awareness of the crucial role of small-scale food producers, the threat of climate change and environmental degradation, and the challenges of inequality and malnutrition, the global dialogue on food and nutrition security continues to emphasize increases in food production as the solution and an emphasis on increasing commercialization and consolidation of agriculture. **Too little investment is made in approaches to food and nutrition security to address all aspects of what CARE calls a SuPER approach to agriculture and food systems and which we call upon the EU to promote in its new policy: Sustainable, Productive and Profitable, Equitable and Resilient**.

The SuPER approach goes beyond how and how much food is produced to incorporate social justice, gender equality, environmental sustainability, nutrition, and governance: critical elements for just and sustainable food systems. The aim is to strengthen sustainable small-scale agricultural systems to improve food and nutrition security for farmers, workers and consumers. To achieve that, **systematic change needs to happen at multiple levels** to really improve communities' resilience, from household, over community and national to global level, in fields and institutions, at the market and on the table. Many of the dominant paradigms of agriculture – including climate-smart agriculture – pay too little attention to these diverse elements, and risk failing small-scale food producers.

MIGRATION

Well-managed migration and human mobility are recognized in the 2030 Agenda as potential development enablers. Real political commitment is needed to ensure policies provide for a range of safe, transparent and legal channels for migration, both temporary and permanent, with full respect for human rights.

Looking specifically at the role of EU development cooperation, we welcome a **migration-sensitive approach to development cooperation**, such as the one put forward in the 'Lives in Dignity' Communication. This Communication promotes a much-awaited long term investment of political and financial resources by the EU in protracted refugee situations, rather than maintaining a 'short term' humanitarian approach and funding cycles in response to situations of forced displacement which on average last 17 years nowadays. In addition, it makes important commitments such as the point that support from EU programmes will be based on vulnerability and not legal status. **This is the approach we would recommend for the new European Consensus.**

At the same time, we **caution against the use of development cooperation as a tool for migration control**, as promoted by the 'Migration Partnership' Communication. The proposed Partnership Framework would represent a wholesale re-orientation of Europe's development programming towards stopping migration. This is an unacceptable contradiction to the commitment to use development cooperation with the aim to eradicate poverty, as enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. Aid is for the benefit of people in need and to promote human rights, and should not be used as leverage for migration control. EU funding should be transparent and adhere to clearly established principles, such as the Busan principles on effectiveness and the Paris principles of ownership by and alignment to partner countries' strategies. Moreover, in-donor refugee costs should be covered by additional funding, and not by scarce funding for developing countries. In addition, striking 'migration management' agreements with countries where grave human rights violations are committed will be counter-productive in the longer term – undermining human rights around the globe and perpetuating the cycle of abuse and repression that causes people to flee.

Lastly, the rational for using development cooperation for that purpose is based on a wrong premise: that more development will stop people

from moving. It will not. The poorest do not leave. It will give people a greater choice, as it should do, and this includes the choice to leave.

INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

States have the primary responsibility for implementing the 2030 Agenda and being held accountable for it. At the same time partnerships with key stakeholders will be critical to delivering the 2030 agenda successfully. However, there is a risk that the SDGs, like the MDGs, will remain too distant from the poorest and most vulnerable people who have the greatest stake in their success, yet have the weakest capacity to monitor progress and hold governments and other duty-bearers accountable for delivering on their SDG commitments and protecting their rights. Worldwide, civil society organisations (CSOs) are facing more and more risks and restrictions in terms of funding, legislation, participation in development policies and plans and these more. In line with the 'leave no one behind' agenda, the **voices of marginalised communities must be included in monitoring the SDGs and the EU should promote concrete mechanisms to enable this.**

The EU should **encourage partner countries to "glocalise" the SDGs**, or in other words to translate them into contextually relevant national and subnational goals rooted in national development strategies, programmes and budgets. This process should happen **in consultation with national and local civil society**. This implies giving civil society a role in the implementation and, very critically, in the monitoring of the SDGs. This adds value in 3 ways:

1) It adds critically important contextual information on the access and quality of service-delivery, especially by marginalised citizens, improves understanding of the link between inputs and outcomes and can lead to timely action to improve service delivery;
2) It gives local communities a greater sense of ownership;
3) It develops an indigenous accountability mechanism in the form of 'shadow reporting' to triangulate (validate or contest) the official data.

Creating this kind of system will deliver crucial data for the national government and international community, and it will change the incentives of national governments to respond to domestic as well as international priorities when setting development agendas.

To achieve this vision of inclusive governance, the EU should promote citizen-driven, participatory monitoring and accountability mechanisms at the sub-national, national and regional level. Indeed, consultation with civil society is the crucial factor to success in all programming sectors, including health care and SRHR services, Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction or Food and Nutrition Security.

One tested, researched and widely used tool is the **Community Score Card (CSC)**, which is a **tool to assess and improve the quality of services** (eg in a school or a clinic). It is a very straight forward tool: it gets service users to score the quality of services that they received against a set of indicators. It gets service providers to do the same. And then it brings them together to discuss and come up with an action plan to address the identified issues. **Information from community-level processes** like the Community Score Card can be synthesized and analysed **to identify system-wide patterns of discrimination and pervasive, systemic barriers to access, quality and equity of services**, such as

stock-outs of essential commodities or budget shortfalls. This synthesized data can be used in national level advocacy efforts to create policy solutions, and it can be fed into SDG reviews.

However, in moving forward and using CSC for the monitoring of the SDGs, we need to address three main challenges:

- Comparability: we need to standardise and be able to compare data coming from different organisations.
- Quality of data: we need to ensure that data are of high quality and have enough credibility to be taken seriously by National Statistical Offices
- Getting to scale: we need to go from the community level up to the national level, aggregate data and build the bigger picture.

An interesting new initiative in this regard is 'Everyone Counts', a multi-partner initiative led by CARE, World Vision and Kwanu to address the above issues and offer a clear road map to collect citizen- generated data produced at local level by different organisations and aggregate them in a central data hub at national level. The data published by Everyone Counts will ensure that the voices of the most marginalised and disadvantaged people- especially women and girls, who are often left behind - are included alongside data from national statistical departments when monitoring the SDGs.

But it is not just about promoting these approaches in the relationship with third countries. Also within the EU these principles have to be applied. We ask for a **clear recognition of European CSOs' added value as a partner in EU development cooperation**. European CSOs have a role to play beyond development education and being a watchdog, which includes for example innovation and piloting innovative approaches, capacity building, linking local to global movements and direct service delivery where there are no other options. Despite these various roles, we see a clear trend in the EU of increasing restrictions for CSO involvement in both programming and policy making, which urgently needs to be reversed.

Lastly, we would like to emphasise that development cooperation is only one of the policy areas that must be reviewed if the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement are to be achieved. Given the scale and complexity of the global challenges we face and the linkages between them, it is of the utmost importance that the European Union, including the European Commission and the Member States, adopts a comprehensive approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda.

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