



HUMAN RIGHTS AND AID EFFECTIVENESS: KEY MESSAGES ON ALIGNMENT

Introduction

There is growing recognition that human rights and gender equality are functionally essential to achieving the overall goals of the Paris Declaration as well as being agreed objectives of development in themselves. Human rights, including the rights of women to equality and non-discrimination, are part of a universal value system, codified in international treaties to which all countries have subscribed. They provide a shared normative framework for dialogue between donors, partner countries and civil society on priority-setting and aid processes.

KEY MESSAGES

Donors:

- Support the alignment of development programmes with partner governments' human rights commitments in international treaties, national constitutions and legislation.
- Recognize the importance of human rights issues, including rights to meaningful participation, non-discrimination, information, accountability and transparency, in alignment processes.
- Support the capacity of national institutions to track the impact of development policies and aid on different groups of people.

Partner countries:

- Ensure that poverty and sector policies and programmes are aligned to human rights standards and rights identified in the constitution and other national legislation.
- Establish the right to information in legislation and in practice to enable public monitoring of budget and development processes.
- Prioritize action to track budget allocations and disbursement to poor and disadvantaged groups.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND ALIGNMENT: LINKAGES AND PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Donors and partner countries should ensure that development policies and programmes are aligned to international, regional and national human rights commitments and that human rights inform development priorities as well as triggers for disbursement. Human rights standards and principles are established in international human rights treaties which are legally binding on countries that sign and ratify them. National constitutions draw on civil and political human rights and many contain economic and social rights or directive principles.

Explicit alignment of development policies and service standards to human rights gives people clear tools for holding governments to account for their commitments. Where policies have been aligned to human rights standards, it has helped to increase confidence that resources will be used to support pro-poor development.



Kenya: Increased alignment and harmonization in the water sector. The Kenyan Ministry for Water and Irrigation has used international human rights standards on the right to water and sanitation as an explicit basis for pro-poor sector reform, guidelines and regulation of private water providers. These standards on availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of water supply have helped the Ministry of Water and Irrigation to develop a coherent approach to a previously fragmented sector. Using human rights standards has contributed to improved service supply and, in turn, strengthened donor confidence and increased donor alignment and harmonization around the sector reform programme.

Processes of alignment should take into account the extent to which national policy and budget processes are responsive to all groups of people, including the marginalized and vulnerable. This requires national capacity to track the impact of development policies, and their translation into budget allocations and expenditures, on different groups of people.

Governments' commitment to human rights standards and principles of meaningful participation, information, accountability, transparency and non-discrimination, enables public monitoring of budgetary processes, which are at the core of alignment to national systems of public financial management. Engaging civil society in budget processes can strengthen assurances that public finances will be used for nationally agreed priorities and lead to improved development results on the ground.



India: Social audits in Rajasthan. In the Indian state of Rajasthan, a network of civil society organizations called the Rozgar Evum Suchna Ka Adhikar Abhiyan has been conducting social audits of large-scale poverty alleviation projects implemented under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). The 2005 Right to Information Act has made public scrutiny of the NREGA possible. The Act enables civil society organizations to access relevant information about allocation and expenditure of resources. This information is consolidated in an accessible form and then verified through public meetings with stakeholders. In addition to ensuring that allocated funds reach their intended beneficiaries, social audits have also helped to identify where provisions of the NREGA could be improved so that associated programmes successfully address the rights of the rural poor.

Open discussion about human rights in political dialogue can enhance predictability around alignment and aid flows, enabling a harmonized and graduated approach to deteriorating human rights situations. Human rights should also inform donor practices and standards of accountability and transparency, provision of information and procedural fairness in relation to aid.

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