

Charter on the role of business, civil society and cross-sector partnerships in the Post-2015 Development Agenda



The signatories

1. Aim to contribute to sustained prosperity and dignity for all individuals, present and future;
2. Stress the following dimensions for sustainable development:
 - a) Leave no one behind;
 - b) Change unsustainable and promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production;
 - c) Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth;
 - d) Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all;
 - e) Forge new partnerships;
3. Acknowledge the importance of an active involvement of business and civil society in the post-2015 Global Development Agenda;
4. Acknowledge the unique role and responsibility of the State in the areas of protection of human rights, public service delivery, good governance, and taxation of corporates and individuals;
5. Acknowledge the work of the United Nations High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Global Compact to actively involve private sector and civil society organizations in the Post-2015 debate and the work of the Social Economic Council of the Netherlands in facilitating responsible business;
6. Commit to contributing actively to the new Global Development Agenda from 2015 onwards;
7. Express intention to contribute to shaping a Dutch national multi-stakeholder strategy to further the new goals of the United Nations Development Agenda once they have been adopted in September 2015;
8. Express their intention to set up and join national and global partnerships to further the new goals of the United Nations Development Agenda once they have been adopted in Sep. 2015;
9. Endorse the content of this charter;

The role of business sector

10. The purpose of businesses is to create economic, social and environmental value by providing valuable goods and services in a profitable manner;
11. The particular role of businesses in relation to Global Sustainable Development is to:
 - a) Respect the human rights of people and workers and conserve natural resources;
 - b) Find or finance profitable business opportunities that contribute to sustainable development;
 - c) Innovate to find new solutions to address issues as nutrition, health care and clean technology
 - d) Promote a good business culture by eradicating corruption in business practices;
 - e) Promote good governance, law and order as well as contributing to society through taxation;
 - f) Be open in their communications and reporting about their impact on society;
 - g) Enable sustainable business practices by responsible investment policies and philanthropy;
 - h) Comply with the normative frameworks for International Corporate Social Responsibility and stakeholder engagement as specified in the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, which includes the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
12. Businesses have a great potential to find value creating business opportunities including:
 - a) Creating inclusive, decent and fair jobs;
 - b) Making supply chains inclusive and sustainable, including convening parties to transform markets and linking micro and small enterprises with larger markets;
 - c) Creating resource efficient and circular business processes;
 - d) Creating inclusive products that are also accessible to the poor;
 - e) Stimulating and engaging in social entrepreneurship and impact investing;
13. To fulfill their complex role, businesses need to define, measure and report transparently on the impacts of businesses on economic, natural and social capital;

The role of civil society

14. The role of civil society is to:
 - a) Provide for valuable goods that should be organized independently of market and government forces such as commentary, building and transmitting intellectual capital, monitoring, watchdog activities, religious associations, voluntary associations and advocacy;
 - b) Contribute to the management of public goods from a civic perspective: work together with the public and business sector to manage intellectual, economic, natural, cultural and social public goods by providing brokerage, expertise and non-state representation of groups in society;
 - c) Provide for valuable goods for which there is no natural market and which governments are not best placed or not willing to provide; this includes providing goods in the domains of, amongst others, aid, education, culture and nature where a specific expertise, independence or representation is valuable;
 - d) Enable people to organize themselves outside of the state and the market;
15. It is important to recognize the vibrant, diverse and evolving nature of civil society – the area outside the state, market and the family – that includes amongst others non governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, civil society organizations, labor unions, informal groups and communities, social movements, religious communities, grassroots organizations and cooperatives - and some of which increasingly undertake entrepreneurial activities;
16. Civil society has a great potential to serve society in innovative ways by:
 - a) Leveraging the great organizational potential of the online space;
 - b) Playing the role of facilitator, convener and innovator for the business and public sectors;
 - c) Meeting a great demand for civil society organizations in upcoming markets and democracies;
17. To fulfill their complex role, civil society organizations need to define, measure and report on the impacts they have on economic, natural and social capital;

The role of cross-sector partnerships

18. Addressing the main global development challenges requires the cooperation of governments, businesses and civil society at a local, national and international level;
19. The boundaries of the state, market and civil sector will blur as their goals align, which will require close cooperation between these sectors, without affecting their independence;
20. Partnerships are of added value when organizations can achieve more by pursuing a joint strategy than by pursuing individual strategies through increased coordination and trust resulting in synergy;
21. Cross-sector partnerships are necessary to realize sustainable development, as the main challenges do not respect the boundaries of sectors and require a high degree of coordination.