

CSOs to grow with independent identity, equal status in partnership, free from partisan politics and with downward accountability

Government, civil society, non government organization (NGO), donor, international non government organization (INGO), the relations and debate

Dhaka Declaration, July 2010, Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness



National workshop during 14-16 June 2010, at Proshika-HRD centre, Koitta

1. Origin and process of our mobilization

We, the undersigned, the representatives of the civil society organizations across the country, met in a workshop in Proshika Human Resource Management Development Training Center, Koitta, from 14 to 16 June 2010 to build a consensus on identification of basic issues of CSO development effectiveness in the context of Bangladesh. To have greater common opinion on issues addressed in the workshop, we, on 17 June, presented the workshop outcomes before a

wider audience that includes members of the national parliament, CSO leaders, political leaders, media representatives, donor representatives, and so forth. We have developed this declaration considering the views and concerns expressed in the both process, e.g. workshop and seminar, and we expect to build solidarity of all concerned groups on the declaration. We deliberately have not tried to draw any conclusion; rather we have tried to bring all debates prior to reaching any common framework. Open Forum has initiated a process in this regard. We solicit your support on this.

The CSOs that organized and coordinated the process in Bangladesh which includes the workshop and the seminar are: *Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA)*; Coastal Development Partnership (CDP); Equity and Justice Working Group Bangladesh (equitybd); and *Sushasoner Jonno Pracharavijan (SUPRO)*. The Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN) provided technical and financial assistance.

The Open Forum consultation on CSO Development Effectiveness is a part of a global process. The Accra Agenda on Action (2008), which is a review of Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) induced the governments, United Nations (UN) agencies and the international finance / aid organizations to acknowledge the role of CSOs in aid effectiveness. But CSOs in general have taken up this issue as a part of total 'development effectiveness'. In line with this understanding around 25 leading CSOs across the world that includes AFRODAD, IBON, APRN, CONCORD, ANND, ACFID, CARE, ITUC and ACT have formed a 'global facilitation group' to organize the Open Forum consultation in 50 countries, aiming to discuss and formulate a CSO development effectiveness framework, which would be synthesized in two global assemblies (first assembly to be held in Istanbul in the end of September 2010) and then would finally culminate in fourth high level forum to be held in South Korea in August 2011.

2. The methodology of discussion on CSO development effectiveness

Prior to summarize the workshop/seminar outcomes, it is necessary to discuss the methodology of organizing the workshop. The core group for organizing the workshop was comprised of four organizations. They divided the whole process into four sub-themes: (a) identification of the principles to be followed by the CSOs and identification of external and internal factors that have effect on the principles; (b) identification of the principle required in building partnership; (c) identification of the action/task required to build credibility; and (d) identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the CSOs and recommend actions/ measures for building enabling environment for the CSOs in Bangladesh.

Apart from the inaugural and concluding sessions, the workshop included four other sessions. In each session a representative of the core group made opening remark on the key issue. The key issue was then further elaborated by two international experts and two national experts. The international experts were; Maria Theresa Lauren, Secretary General of APRN, the Philippines, and Anil K Singh from SANSAD, India, who are also members of the global facilitator group. Following the expert level presentations, the floor was open for questions followed by answers from the presenters. Then all participants were divided into smaller groups for intensive discussion. All the groups presented the outcome of respective group discussions in a plenary where all the participants took part in discussion.

To ensure participation of the key CSO leaders in the process, communication with them has been started since the beginning of the year. In the first stage, documents describing the aims and objectives of the CSO Open Forum consultation were sent to them. It was followed by face to face meeting with them by the organizers to brief on the whole process and finally the documents on specific sessions were sent to them. During the whole process, around 43 key CSO leaders of Bangladesh were contacted. Among them 12 CSO leaders participated in different sessions of the workshop. Besides participation in the workshop, this was an opportunity to inform them about the process and inspire them to get involved with the discourses on CSO effectiveness.

Among other activities to reach all the CSOs for their participation were: (a) advertisement in two leading national dailies inviting for participation in the workshop and national seminar (the Daily Star in English and the Daily *Prothom Alo* in Bengali) during April 2010; (b) web publication of workshop related information at www.equitybd.org and communicating through group e-mail; and (c) press conference on 06 June 2010 on the objectives and procedure of CSO Open Forum consultation in Bangladesh. The press conference was covered by 11 national print media in Bengali and English.

3. Outcome of the workshop of 14-16 July 2010

The participants in the workshop came up with a host of recommendation. These are summarized below.

3.1. The principles to be followed by the CSOs for development effectiveness

- i. CSOs should ensure transparency, accountability, honesty, integrity and moral ethics in all levels of organizational activities
- ii. CSO activities should be more inclusive and participatory
- iii. Greater openness of the CSOs activities
- iv. CSOs should do self criticism for their self development
- v. CSOs can talk about politics (e.g, democratization of political process) but should not engage in party politics. A CSO leader must not get involved directly with electoral and party politics. Those who wish join electoral and party politics and also wish to take part in election should resign from the NGO/CSO at least 3-5 years prior to the election.
- vi. CSOs should have long-term and defined mission and vision
- vii. CSOs must work to build a democratic and plural society; and should also work to implement conventions, declaration and charters of the United Nations including the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- viii. CSOs should focus on sustainable development while prioritizing the national interest.

4. External and internal factors that influence CSO work negatively

4.1 Internal factors

- i. CSOs that do not exercise democratic culture in their own work
- ii. CSO leaders who consider NGO/CSO activities as mere an employment opportunity and do not have respect for democratic culture and value
- iii. Practices nepotism where staff, chief executive and board members have family connections
- iv. Market orientation and profit making tendency

- v. Patron-Client relationship between CSOs and the community people
- vi. Self interest of the CSO leaders
- vii. Lack of accountability and transparency, especially absence of written policy on fund management
- viii. No long-term guarantee for fund and consequently the sense of insecurity

4.2 External Factors

- i. Too much dependency of the CSOs on the consultants and aid agencies
- ii. The overriding views, concerns and conditionality of the aid agencies that detract the CSOs from their pro-people position
- iii. Lack of accountability and transparency of the aid agencies that fund the CSOs
- iv. Lack of supportive attitude from some bureaucrats and political leaders
- v. Lack of trust of the community people
- vi. Unlawful and ill-motivated intervention of the political leaders and bureaucrats
- vii. Subcontracting, bidding and tender process for allocating project fund by the government and aid agencies that sometimes make the CSOs corrupt
- viii. Religious extremism

5. Challenges in building credibility

- i. CSOs very often are forced to do or engage in illegal affairs in the course of project design, releasing fund from government projects and bidding for project fund, which should be opposed strongly and urgently
- ii. In some cases administrative obligations also appear as constraint
- iii. Political affiliation or biasness to particular political parties and positions
- iv. Acceptability and trustworthiness of financial audit report is questioned
- v. Aid/donor agencies consider CSOs as mere grant recipient and not as development partner
- vi. CSO leaders do not have commitment and courage to be more democratic, accountable and transparent in their work
- vii. Attitude and assistance of the media in building more transparent, accountable and democratic CSOs
- viii. Lacking adequate human resources committed to the organization and to the task of poverty reduction

6. The principles to be followed in building partnership with different organizations and challenges in this regard

SL	Type of organization	Principles to be followed	Challenges
01	Government Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bureaucrats should come out from their traditional mindset of patron-client relationship. They should consider NGOs/ CSOs as development partners - Government should ensure greater participation of community people in project design and planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of transparency and absence of democratic culture, especially to ensure stakeholder participation in project design and planning; bribery, corruption and lack of openness - Procrastination in contract signing, fund disbursement and decision making - Political biasness in selecting partner NGOs and fund disbursement - Politically bias in funding mushroom NGOs - Illegal financial transaction
02	National NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should have regular fund flow. - Should act like a true development partner. - Should undertake joint monitoring and evaluation, especially with the community people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Behave like a corporate agency. - Very often violates the deed of contract and makes delay in fund release.
03	International NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should have mutual trust and should consider the partners on an equal footing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependency of the aid agencies.
04	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should respect each other; also should respect local culture. - Should ensure easy and open accessibility to the information by the local people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobilization of community people is a challenge in some cases. - Becoming trustworthy to the community people.
05	Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should have open and transparent and bribery-free consultation and communication system. - Networks should be selective of specific issue, objective and goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To keep regular communication is not easy, though essential. - Building trustworthy and transparent relationship between each other.
06	Grassroots organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be respectful to each other. - Ensure participation of all relevant stakeholders in project design and planning. - Give importance in the integration of the rights based approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependency and lack of mutual trust.
07	Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure accountability, transparency and mutual respect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence of local politics.
08	Micro credit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should integrate rights based approach. - Projects should be based on need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need based micro credit program.
09	Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy reform on the basis of equal opportunity and equal level of fund distribution for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give importance on participatory decision; decision making by some individuals is like hijacking of the achievements of collective efforts
10	Grassroots group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demand based project implementation in a participatory method - Social audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Huge gap in views and ideas between aid agencies and community people.

7. Recommendations for developing enabling environment for CSOs in Bangladesh on the basis of SWOT

7.1 Strength

- Work with the marginalized communities.
- Have integrated rights based approach in their work.
- Are able to reach wider stakeholders including the political leader.
- Have high level of recognition in international level and also have good network with international CSOs, especially in communicating country concern and problems at the international level.
- Generally, CSOs are politically conscious but neutral about party politics.
- Have disciplined and professional human resource and possess institutional network country wide.
- Are able to organize local families, communities and local organizations.
- Are able to gather local knowledge and practices and disseminate these.
- Have written guiding principles for organizational development.

7.2 Weakness

- There are some misunderstanding and unnecessary debate on their work.
- Some CSO professionals seem to be less committed to community and consider CSOs as organizations for earning salary.
- Many also believe that the views and concern of the CSOs are dominated by the donors' influence.
- Hard to predict long-term funding scope.
- Lack of commitment of the staff. members to work for a longer period.
- Lack of capacity to use full potentials of ICT in campaigning and also in exercising governance
- Affiliation of some CSO leaders with political parties

7.3 Opportunities

- CSOs could do advocacy for policy, practice and law changes.
- Are able to organize people for noble work.
- Can develop and mobilize human resources.
- Can put forward alternative policies to build a self-reliant nation.

- Are able to sensitize mass people and make them united in raising their voice while the political parties hardly can do so.

7.4 Threat

- Bureaucratic domination in the name of control.
- Donor domination.
- Differences in opinion with the political parties.
- Multi-faced corruption.
- Extremism and terrorism
- Aggressive attitude of the large NGOs and CSOs.

7.5 Recommendations for building more effective and enabling environment for the CSOs

- Equal relationship in networking and partnership.
- NGO Affairs Bureau should play the role of 'facilitator' rather than 'controller'.
- Capacity of local level CSOs should be developed.
- All CSOs should have a common minimum position and a level of unity.

8. Views and concerns of the CSO leaders who participated in multi-stakeholder consultation

Following the 'conclusion of Open Forum workshop' held during 14-16 June 2010, the outcomes were presented in a multi-stakeholder consultation in Dhaka on 17 June 2010. Country's well-known and respected CSO leader Prof. Muzzaffar Ahmed presided over the seminar. Dr. Abdul Matin, Secretary General-BAPA, moderated the consultation, while Mr. Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, Convener-EquityBd, presented the workshop findings in the seminar. Speeches of selected participants are summarized below.

'We have seen NGOs turning to extremists', said



Meher Afroze Chumki, Member of the Parliament and Chairperson, Parliamentary Standing Committee to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs of the government of

Bangladesh. She pointed out that NGOs and CSOs have played very supportive role in social development, and their work and contribution to the society are commendable. But the internal conflict among the NGOs, mistrust and gap with the government agencies and their involvement with the party politics raised many questions, which have to be resolved first. NGOs that preach religious extremism should not be allowed to continue. CSO activities should be monitored internally and also by external agencies and should be accountable to the local administration.

'In many ways the CSOs are different from the NGOs; CSOs are like flowers, I wish them to flourish in many numbers', said Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed.



He mentioned that CSOs and NGOs are different in kind; so they require different guiding principles to follow. People's support and assistance is the key to the strength

of CSOs, while NGO activities are much dependent on fund; this makes CSOs different from the NGOs. The more lively CSOs are, the more vibrant the society is. In fact, CSOs are like flowers, we wish them to flourish in many numbers, no matter where they bloom; they may bloom in a planted tree in a tub or may bloom in nature. But fundamentally we have to keep trees alive; trees should be rooted on the soil. Similarly CSOs should also be rooted in the society.

As if, sunlight, air and rainfall keep trees alive, similarly voluntarism, conciseness and commitment will keep CSOs live. Flowers lose their beauty if we pluck and keep them in flower base in house; CSOs also lose their spirit and motivation if we try to confine them, regulate them; CSOs should be more transparent, more open.

NGOs should ensure free flow of information, said Mustak Hasan Mahmud, Director General, NGO Affairs Bureau of the Government of Bangladesh. He emphasized increasing accountability and transparency

of the NGO activities. He also urged the NGOs to ensure transparent and effective use of donor money.



He mentioned that the government agencies also have many lacking, which they are trying to overcome. "Now, we are in the process of upgrading our

system and policies to reduce bureaucracy and ensure accountability to our stakeholders. In fact, government do not want to guard the NGOs and CSOs activities, it wants CSOs to be self regulated. In the past, NGOs and CSOs became questionable; now they have to undertake self corrective measures".

'Are the CSOs loyal to party politics and participate in unfair bidding for projects? Can we consider them as civil society?' Dr. Bodiul Alam Majumder,



General Secretary, *Sushasoner Jonno Nagorik* (SUJAN) raised question on the identity of the civil society.

He also raised question whether

the media, micro credit NGOs, international NGOs, etc are the part of CSO or not. Our many foreign friends say that CSOs in Bangladesh are very strong and vibrant, but many of those are loyal to party politics. Similarly, though there are many good NGOs but some are just like development contractors-are they part of the CSOs?

Is it bureaucracy where CSOs will be accountable to? In fact bureaucracy was established to defend the interest of our foreign masters. Although the government considers the bureaucracy to shoulder all the responsibilities but how a corrupt bureaucratic system could be able to do so? If NGOs are to bribe the NGO Bureau for project approval then, how the Bureau

would ensure accountability of the NGOs? In between controlling or facilitating, what would be the role of the government? NGOs are required to be accountable. But the present structure doesn't ensure that.

'If you are part of the CSOs then you have to be ready to face red-eyes', said Dr Tofail Ahmed, a local



government expert. Still debate exists, who are CSOs, who are not. We have many evidences that many businessmen have turned to politicians by

choice, but still they are businessmen. On the other hand many professionals get involved with CSOs considering this as self-employment. So it is very difficult to define CSOs.

It is not always right that CSOs would speak against the government; they would assist government, if necessary. CSOs that aim to mobilize funds for money making cannot contribute to the mass mobilization.

We have to practice our policies in our personal life, and not only in the organizational level, said

Shaheen Anam, Executive Director, *Manusher Jonno* Foundation. The other people who criticize CSO work should keep in mind that we are not from a flawless society.



As CSOs are the part of this society, so we cannot say that we are perfect in all aspects. But we have to keep in mind that we are working for a particular class of the society. We have to consider their interests, problems as well as demands on priority basis. We have to consider social movement as part of our life; this could not be done under a project.

'Noble work of the CSOs should be appreciated',

said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Director, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association.



The NGOs and CSOs that once earn 'bad image' for corruption, they lose credibility for ever. There is no evidence of re-financing to the corrupt NGOs by the donors. But we see the opposite scenario, where organizations of other sectors get support and finance though they are being identified as corrupt. Though the target of NGOs, CSOs, government and corporation is alike but their nature of work is quite different; that's why it is not fair to regulate all the sectors under a common regulation. Aside from criticism of the CSOs, their good initiatives should be appreciated. As per government policy, only the lowest bidder qualifies for work, but that lowest bidder might not be the competent one.

'We have to overcome our own limitation' said

Golam Mortoza, editor of the *Weekly Saptahik*.



He said that CSOs always speak about fair and just society, but they keep mum while freedom of expression of the mass media is violated. We don't see any support from the CSOs in favor of the newspapers that have been brought to halt under the government regulation, though we expect voice for justice from the leading CSOs. This means that CSOs are not politically neutral. We expect that CSOs will talk about politics even not involving directly with party politics. But a large segment of CSOs in the country keep political discourses aside. Such opportunistic attitude of the CSOs brings bad name for the entire sector. I believe that if our local government institutions are empowered and if the CSOs and local government monitor each other, then

corruption would be reduced. Ironically, the policy planners of our country (Members of the Parliament) want to control and regulate everything; they should give up authoritative mentality and should create enabling environment for CSO at the local level.

'It requires national consensus on some issues',



said Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, *Karmojibi Nari*. We try to know each other with our identical color, and it's the problem though all of us should have a particular identity.

What is the identity of

NGO, CSO, political party etc? What's their position in the society? I believe that the most courageous, most spirited people belong to the CSOs. I know myself with these characteristics. But when people see my other identity, like I'm political leader and I do NGO activities, then my spirit and courage are questioned by others. In fact, there is less number of people who want to serve the country. We should have consensus on some national issues, which is necessary for country's progress and development. CSOs should define their ideology and values; similarly they should set the difference from the political parties.

'CSOs are playing partisan role', said Mohiuddin

Ahmad, Core Committee Member, South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE). The sense of having power has been strongly implanted in our mind, not the sense of responsibility. Our government, not being responsible to the people, always tries to exercise power. Now we consider CSO as NGO, which was not supposed to happen. Since childhood we knew that serving society is voluntary work. But that notion has been changed. The CSOs are



now playing partisan role; we have pro-BNP CSOs and pro-Awami League CSOs. We have to come out from this situation. I believe that CSO Open Forum would be able to open a new path in this regard.

'The activities of the CSOs are now questionable',

said Dr. Abdul Matin, General Secretary, *Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA)*. Dr. Matin pointed out that for many reasons people are questioning



the role of CSOs. In fact CSOs could remain out of criticism if they do not cross their limits. CSOs should define their role and engagement with the government; whether their role is complementing the government or not. We saw in the past that many large NGOs forgot their responsibilities and were directly involved with party politics. Now they are facing many difficulties. On the other hand, turning of large NGOs to corporate organizations also create adverse situation and defame the position of other NGO/ CSOs.

'You may face criticism if you do something', said

M A Quader, General Secretary, *SUPRO*. Our constitution is the covenant of our rights, but the state has failed to ensure it. That is why CSOs have emerged and in realizing rights and services for the people. Through this Open Forum we are trying to create more conducive and enabling environment for the CSOs so that they could contribute more in realizing peoples' rights.



'We have started our work with a commitment of building an equity and justice based society',



said Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, Convener, Equity and Justice Working Group, Bangladesh. We are not competitor to the government rather complementing to the government's work;

we are assisting government's initiatives at the national and the international level. In realizing our commitment of building an equity based society, we set our work approach in two ways e.g., firstly, service delivery at grassroots level and secondly, policy advocacy. We are evaluating our commitment and goals through this Open Forum and we are encouraged by this global process.

'I am seeing the 'shadow of unity' at the CSOs Open Forum', said Salma

Ali, Executive Director, Bangladesh National Women's Lawyers Association. I always wish for the unity of the NGOs and CSOs and I believe that CSO Open Forum could be able to



do this. We should not create such an environment that someone could question on our accountability.

'Big NGOs has difficulties to act as civil society',



said Zakir Hossain, *Nagoarik Uddog*. Small and medium NGOs can play effective role, because they can maintain interactive dynamics within their organizations. In our country, big NGOs

have done a lot of questionable activities, and sometime are considered as anti poor. While we are discussing the very character of NGOs, we have to consider their size.

'Politics, nature of state and power relation has influences in CSO development effectiveness', said



Rashed Al Titumir, *Unnayan Anweshan*, that influence the very nature of CSO development effectiveness. As NGOs need to take registration from NGO Bureau, NGOs are

definitely under the influence of the state and its politics. If state is in transition and market has influence then it will also have influence in CSO development effectiveness. In fact, it is the state and also the market distributing resources, even to the CSOs. So the CSOs need to decide what kind of social change they want. Their development effectiveness will be decided accordingly.

'Civil society and NGO movement are different', said

Ranjan Kormoker, Steps Toward Development. Civil society has long history movement in this country. In all the prominent movements, there is a role from civil society. Civil society and NGO movement are different. If we talk about civil society movement in integrating NGO movement then it undermines the very nature and spirit of the civil society movement. I do admit that there is contribution from NGOs, but NGO movement is the part of greater civil society movement. Development partners should consider that role of the civil society in a developed country. But in Bangladesh the role is different.



'CSO and NGOs can do politics', said Badrul Alam,



Bangladesh Krishok Federation. NGOs should involve in the politics for the betterment of the people for social transformation. There are examples

in countries like Nepal that NGOs are involved in the politics and some of them became Member of Parliament. NGOs and CSOs have to work for social transformation where involvement in politics is inevitable. In Bangladesh we consider the urban based literate people are part of the civil society, but there are lots of small organizations who are in rural areas and are not registered; they should be considered as part of the civil society.

‘Micro finance institution should also act as civil society organization’, said Emranul Haque Chowdhury of UDDIPAN.

Micro finance institutions of this country should not also work as mere financial service delivery organizations; they should also act as CSOs. It means they have to integrate some right based work or advocacy work. One has to consider development with a holistic approach.



‘We need to improve our accountability to get legitimacy to hold accountability of donors and the government’, said Ahmed Swapan Mahmud, the



Executive Director of VOICE. There is a huge debate with regard to CSOs and NGOs in Bangladesh. Apart from the global reality where NGOs are treated as CSOs, in Bangladesh this is broadly

termed as NGOs, while CSOs are more independent individuals from academic, business, and professional sectors. However, this is based on perspective on how we take NGOs here in Bangladesh and this perspective depends on the act of the NGOs here. In regard to aid

effectiveness, CSOs should make them accountable and should also make their actions on the ground effective. But to realize the accountability and practice transparency, the big NGOs should also work in a positive manner.

‘CSOs are very much in politics, they have worked for transforming power in favor of the poor and marginalized’ said Asgar Ali Sabri, Action

Aid Bangladesh. Partisan politics will put the limit of CSO legitimacy in question and consequently endanger the whole organizational stability and growth that we have experienced in the recent time. As



far as the politics is concerned, the CSOs must talk about policies for the poor and politics of poverty that reproduces chronic poverty. And therefore, the CSOs must question the existing power structure hardly responsive to the needs and priorities of poor and marginalized.

‘This process will go far ahead’, said Jahangir

Hossain Masum, Executive Director, Coastal Development Partnership. In Bangladesh we have organized this consultation with two expectations: first, to establish linkage and



coordination with the global framework, and secondly to set principles and standard for the country level CSOs. In fact, Open Forum has created an enabling environment and space for all CSOs for working together.

‘CSOs require minimum principles of standard and mutual understanding in their work; they also require understanding and coordination with the

INGOs’, said Maria Theresa Lauren, Secretary General, Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN).

CSOs in Bangladesh have widespread and work-base role. These organizations require some minimum standard and principle in their work; they also should coordinate their work with the international organizations. That is why the NGOs and CSOs in Bangladesh should know first, who they are, what is their responsibility, and how this work could be done more effectively. On the other hand international organizations and aid agencies should know their responsibilities and also should know each other. We also have to define our relationship and engagement with the government, INGOs and also with the political parties. Through this process we could expect universal guiding principle for the CSOs. I believe that this Open Forum will fulfill all expectation of CSO development effectiveness.



‘We are assessing our own mistakes, flaws and aptness’, said Anil Singh, Secretary General, SANSAD,



India. We all want to see CSOs more successful and effective. If we could make CSOs more accountable and supportive to the society, only then we can say that we are successful. But above all, we require consensus

on few issues and a common guiding principle for all. Our experiences tell that working environment for the NGOs and CSOs in Bangladesh is much better than other South Asian countries, and it's the achievement of

the NGOs and CSOs of Bangladesh. In contrary to this, corporate agencies are more influential in India and they even influence CSO activities.

9. Why and how were we organized this mobilization?

Generally, in Bangladesh, we consider an organization as CSO who is involved in social development activities but not involved with party politics and religious activities. In principally participation of all the CSOs in the Open Forum consultation on CSO effectiveness should be facilitated; and all the CSOs should follow common standard in building relationship with other stakeholders, especially with the government, donor agencies and with the international NGOs. Due to limitation of resources, it was not possible to organize such a consultation countrywide, but it was tried to reach out the objective and process of Open Forum consultation to all CSO groups and to all people. Several inclusive and methodological steps were undertaken to reach all the CSOs across the country.

Twelve CSO leaders participated in the workshop and 20 other CSO leaders participated and spoke in the multi-stakeholder consultation. Speeches of many resource persons have been quoted in this report. Aside from this, there was participation from the media in three ways: press conference on 06 June 2010, a ten member journalist team visited the national workshop, and participation of many of journalists from the print and the electronic media in the multi-stakeholder consultation.

10. Long term vision

In the preparation and circulation of this short statement, firstly, it has been tried to reflect opinions from Bangladesh as a contribution to prepare a global framework in this regard. There were attempts to bring diverse opinions and debates that was necessary to reach a consensus.

We hope that this will help to build a strong civil society in Bangladesh.



Multi-stakeholder consultation during 17th June 2010, at CIRDP auditorium, Dhaka

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Organizers:

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