

Dhaka Declaration July 2010 on Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness

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

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

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 common consensus on identification of basic issues of civil society organizations (CSO) development effectiveness in view of Bangladesh perspective. To mobilize greater common opinion on issues worked-out in the workshop, on 17 June we presented the workshop outcomes before wider stakeholders- that include national level parliament leaders, CSO leaders, political leaders, media people, donor's representatives, and so on. We developed this declaration considering the views and concerns of the both process e.g. workshop and seminar and

In Bangladesh, in the whole process of organizing the workshop and seminar we, the co-coordinating CSOs are namely; Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon-BAPA; Coastal Development Partnership-CDP; Equity and Justice Working Group Bangladesh-Equitybd and Sushasoner Jonnyo Pracharavijan-SUPRO appreciatively acknowledge the technical and financial assistance from the Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN).

The open forum consultation on CSO Development Effectiveness, in fact, is a part of global process. In fact it is in the Accara Agenda on Action (2008), which is the review of Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the governments, UN agencies and the international finance / aid organizations first acknowledge the role of CSOs in aid effectiveness. But CSOs in general has taken this aid effectiveness 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, PLAN and ACT has 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 will be synthesized in two global

thus, also expecting solidarity of all concern on the declaration. We have intentionally did not tried to develop any conclusion rather we have tried to bring all different debates, we feel prior to reach any common framework such a exposure is necessary. But, we feel there are common understanding on how CSOs should grow, that the above headline. Open forum has started a process in this regard. We are expecting your solidarity in this regard.

assembly (first gobal assembly to be held in Istanbul during the end of September 2010) and finally will be culminated in fourth high level forum to be held in Korea in August 2011.

2. The methodology on discussing CSO development effectiveness

Prior to summarize the workshop/seminar outcomes it is required to discuss the methodology

of organizing the workshop. The core group, comprises with four organizations, that is responsible for organizing the workshop divided the whole process into four sub-theme which include; a) identification of the principles to be followed by the CSOs and identification of external and internal factors those have an effect on the principles; b) identification of the principle that is required in building partnership; c) identification of the action/task required to build credibility; d) Identification of the strength, weakness, opportunities and threat of the CSOs and recommend actions/ measures for building enabling environment for the CSOs in Bangladesh.

Aside with the inauguration and concluding sessions, the whole process of workshop was divided in to four other sessions. In each session a representative from the core group made the introductory presentation on the key topic. The key issues of the presentation were then further discussed by two international experts and two national experts. The international experts were namely; Maria Theresa Lauren, Secretary General of APRN, the Philippines and Anil K Singh from SANSAD, India who are also members of the global facilitator's group. Following the expert level consultation, there was long question and answer session for a threadbare discussion, then all the participants broke out into groups for group discussion. All the groups presented the outcome of group discussion in a general session where all the participants took part and provided their feedback, views and concern for a common outcome.

In fact, to ensure presence/participation of the renowned CSO leaders to the process we started communicating them since the beginning on the year. In the first stage we sent them documents describing the aims and objectives of the CSO open forum consultation, and then in the second stage we met them in a meeting while we made brief presentation on the whole process and finally we sent them the documents on specific session. During the whole process we communicated around 43 experienced CSO leaders in Bangladesh, among them 12 CSO leaders participated in different sessions of the workshop. This is to mention that, beside to ensure participation of CSO leaders in the session, the other objective of communicating a good numbers of CSO leaders was to inform them about the process and inspire them to get involve with the discourses on CSO effectiveness.

We also undertook few other planned activities to reach all the CSOs across the country and to inspire their participation; the activities includes; a) Advertisement in two leading national dailies calling participation of the CSOs in the workshop and national seminar (the Daily Star in English and the Prothom Alo in Bangla), during April 2010, b) web publication of workshop related all information at www.equitybd.org and communicating all the information through group e-mail and finally c) press conference on 6th June on the objectives and procedure of CSO open forum consultation in Bangladesh that has published in 11 national newspapers in Bangla and English.

3. Outcome from the 14th to 16th July workshop

The entire workshop followed a methodological structure that include, presentation on the subject matter, experience sharing and reflection on the presentation, group discussion and synthesis of the consultations through a general discussion. Thus the consultation summarizes to the following recommendation;

3.1 Principles to be followed by the CSOs for development effectiveness

- 3.1.1 CSOs should ensure transparency, accountability, honesty, integrity and moral ethics in all level of organizational activities
- 3.1.2 CSO activities should be more inclusive and participatory
- 3.1.3 Greater openness of the CSOs activities
- 3.1.4 CSOs should do self criticism for their self development
- 3.1.5 CSOs could talk about politics but should be neutral in party politics. In no way CSO leader should get involve with electoral and party politics. CSO leaders who wish join electoral and party politics and also wish to take part in election should resign from the NGO/CSO activities at least 3-5 years before commencing of election.
- 3.1.6 The CSOs should have long-term and defined mission and vision
- 3.1.7 The CSOs must undertake its work to build a democratic and plurilateral society; they also should undertake work to implement conventions, declaration and charters of the Unities Nations, including the implementation of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights.

- 3.1.8 The CSOs should focus on sustainable development while prioritizing the national interest.
- 4 External and internal factors that influence CSO work**
- 4.1 Internal Factors**
- 4.1.1 CSO that does not exercise democratic culture in its own work might affect development effectiveness
- 4.1.2 The CSO leader who considers NGO/CSO activities mere an employment opportunity and who does not have respect on democratic culture and values.
- 4.1.3 The development effectiveness of an organization also may be affected if it practices nepotism while staff members, chief executive and board members do have family connections.
- 4.1.4 Market orientation and profit making tendency of CSO may also affect development effectiveness.
- 4.1.5 Patron-Client relationship between CSOs and community people also would affect development effectiveness.
- 4.1.6 Self interest of the CSO leaders.
- 4.1.7 Lack of accountability and transparency, especially absence of written policy on fund management affect development effectiveness of the CSOs.
- 4.1.8 No guarantee for fund for long years and, thus, sense of insecurity also affects development effectiveness of the CSOs.
- 4.2 External Factors**
- 4.2.1 Very often, dependency of the CSOs on the consultants and aid agencies affects the development effectiveness.
- 4.2.2 The overriding views, concern and conditionalities of the aid agencies also detract the CSO from their pro-people position. Lack of accountability and transparency of the aid agencies sometimes causes development ineffective of the CSOs who receive fund from those aid agencies.
- 4.2.3 Lack of supportive attitude to the CSOs from some bureaucrats and political leaders.
- 4.2.4 Lack of trust of the community people on the CSOs activities.
- 4.2.5 In some cases, unlawful and purposeful intervention of the political leaders and bureaucrats to the CSO activities also hamper CSO effectiveness.
- 4.2.6 Subcontract, bidding and tender process of providing project fund by the government and aid agencies are making the CSO corrupt; these processes are also hampering the development effectiveness.
- 4.2.7 Religious fundamentalism also affecting development effectiveness to some extent.
- 4.3 Challenges in building credibility**
- 4.3.1 CSO, very often, compel to do, or engage, in illegal affairs in the course of project design, getting funds from government project, bidding for project fund, which should be vetoed strongly and urgently.
- 4.3.2 In some cases administrative obligations also appears as bars to the CSO activities.
- 4.3.3 Political affiliation of the CSOs or biasness of CSOs to a particular political parties and positions.
- 4.3.4 Very often, it became difficult to have acceptable and trustworthy audit report
- 4.3.5 Very often the aid/donor agencies consider CSOs mere as grant recipient, not consider as development partner.
- 4.3.6 The CSO leader does not have much courage to be more democratic, accountable and transparent in their work
- 4.3.7 Presence of politically aware CSOs is essentially required in a country like Bangladesh; thus positive attitude and assistance from the media is required in building more transparent, accountable and democratic CSOs.
- 4.3.8 CSOs lacks human resources committed to the organization and, also lacks devoted human resources in the struggle of poverty reduction.

4.4 Principles to be followed in building partnership with different organizations and challenges in this regard

SL	Organization Type	Principles to be followed	Challenges
01	Governmental Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bureaucrats should come out from their traditional mindset of partron-client relationship. They should consider NGOs/ CSOs as development partners - Government should ensure greater participation of community people in project designing and planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In fact, there is no transparency and practice of democratic culture especially ensuring of stakeholders participation in project design and planning. Bribe, corruption and lack of openness are the common phenomenon. - Procrastination in contract signing, fund disbursement and decision making - Political biasness in partner NGO selection and fund disbursement. – - Politically bias funding to the NGOs established over night. -Illegal monetary transaction .
02	National level 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 process, especially jointly with the community people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Behave like a corporate - 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 as of same level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependency of the aid agencies
04	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should be respectful to each other; also should be respectful to 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 - Become trustworthy to the community people
05	Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There should have open and transparent and bribing free consultation and communication system. - Networks should be selective of specific issue, objective and goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To keep on regular communication is not easy always but 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 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 - Project should be based in need based. 	<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 individual is like hijacking of the achievement of joint effort by the leading organization
10	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 gaps in views and ideas between aid agencies and community people

4.4 Recommendation of developing enabling environment for CSO's work on the basis of the Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threat of the CSOs in Bangladesh

4.1 Strength

- 4.1.1 CSOs work with the marginal communities
- 4.1.2 CSOs have integrated rights based approach in their work
- 4.1.3 CSOs are able to reach wider stakeholders including the political leader and also could ensure their presence in different seminar, consultations organized by the CSOs
- 4.1.4 CSOs have high level of recognition in international level and they also have good networking with the international CSOs, especially in communicating country concern and problems in international level
- 4.1.5 Generally, CSOs are politically conscious but neutral about party politics. They have disciplined and professional human resource. CSOs also have institutional structure country wide
- 4.1.6 CSOs are able to organize local families, communities and local organizations
- 4.1.7 The CSOs are able to gather local knowledge and practices and disseminate these
- 4.1.8 The CSOs have written guiding principles for organizational development

4.2 Weakness

- 4.2.1 There are some misunderstanding and unnecessary debate on the work of the CSOs
- 4.2.2 Some CSO professionals seem to be less committed to the society and community while they consider CSO as an organization of earning livelihoods
- 4.2.3 Many also believe that the views and concern of the CSOs are dominated by the donors' influence
- 4.2.4 It's really hard to predict long-term funding scope
- 4.2.5 Lack of commitment of the staff member to work for a longer period. Very often the international NGOs employ potential staff member of the CSOs with of high salary

- 4.2.6 Lack of capacity to use full potentials of ICTs in campaigning and also in exercising governance
- 4.2.7 Affiliation of few CSO leaders with political parties

4.3 Opportunities

- 4.3.1 CSOs could do advocacy for policy, practice and regulation changes
- 4.3.2 CSOs are able to organize people for noble work
- 4.3.3 CSOs could develop and mobilize human resources
- 4.3.4 CSOs could put forward alternative policies in view to build a self-reliant nation
- 4.3.5 CSOs are able to sensitize mass people and make them united in raising their voice while the political parties hardly able to do so.

4.4 Threat

- 4.4.1 Bureaucratic dominance in the name of control
- 4.4.2 Donor domination
- 4.4.3 Differences in opinion with the political parties
- 4.4.4 Multi-faced corruption also affecting this sector
- 4.4.5 Fundamentalism and terrorism also is a threat to this sector
- 4.4.6 Aggressive attitude of the large NGOs and CSOs

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

- 4.5.1 Equal relationship in networking and partnership
- 4.5.2 NGO Affairs Bureau should play facilitator's role rather controlling the CSOs
- 4.5.3 Capacity of the local level CSOs should increase
- 4.5.4 All CSOs should have an common minimum agreement based unity on their role, relations and governance.

5. Views and concern of the CSO leaders participated in multi-stakeholder consultation

Following the 'conclusion of open forum workshop' held during 14-16 June 2010 we presented the workshop outcomes in a multi-stakeholder consultation at CIRDAP Auditorium, Dhaka on 17 June 2010. In this consultation we invited CSO leaders from all sectors and also invited high level policy planners both from government and opposition parties and representatives from the leading media, representatives from aid agencies and international NGOs. Country's well known and respected CSO leader Professor Muzaffar Ahmed presided over the seminar. Professor Muzaffar Ahmed has been leading CSO movement since last 4 decades, and presently he is leading and contributing activities of many CSOs, which are namely- Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, Sushasoner Jonnyo Nagorik, and Transparency International Bangladesh etc. Dr. Abdul Abul Matin, General Secretary Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon moderated the whole consultation and Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, Convener EquityBd presented the workshop findings in the seminar. The speech of CSO leaders summarized below;



We have seen NGOs turning to extremist, said Meher Afroze Chumki, Member of Parliament and Chairperson, Parliamentary

Standing Committee to the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs of the government of Bangladesh. She pointed out that NGOs and CSOs have played very supportive role in social development, their work and contribution to the society is 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. We also have even bitter experience; we have seen NGO becoming religious extremist. These should not allow to be continued. It's my opinion that NGO/CSO activities should be monitored internally and also by external agencies. They also should make

accountable to the local administration; this approach will reduce our fear and also will increase effectiveness.

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



professor Muzaffar Ahmed. He said that CSOs and NGOs are different in kind; so they require different guiding principle to follow. Peoples support and assistance are the key to the strength of CSOs, while NGO activities are much dependent on fund; this makes CSOs different from the NGOs. The more the CSOs are lively, the more the society is vibrant. In fact, CSOs are like flowers, we wish them flourish in many numbers, no matter where they bloom, they might bloom in a planted tree in a tub or might bloom in nature. But fundamentally we have to keep trees alive; trees should be rooted in the Earth. Similarly CSOs also should be rooted in the society. As if, sunlight, air and rainfall keep trees alive, similarly voluntarism, conciseness and commitment will keep CSOs live. Flowers lost it beauty if we pluck and keep them in flower base in house; CSOs also loses its sprit and motivation if we try to confine them, regulate them; CSOs should be more transparent, more open. In fact the existence of the CSOs depends on its self-criticism, self-reliance and on self-governance. This open forum consultation would develop a clear understanding on the self-strength of the CSOs in Bangladesh

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. Here I should confess that we, the government agencies, also have many lacking, we are trying to overcome our lacking and limitations. 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, government wants CSOs to be self regulative. But during past few years NGOs and CSOs activities became disputed; now they have to undertake self corrective measures.



Are the CSOs that show loyalty to the party politics and participate in unfair tendering for projects? Can

we consider them as civil society ? Dr. Bodiul Alam Majumder, General Secretary, Sushasoner Jonnyo Nagorik (SUJAN) raised question on the identity of the civil society. He also raised question whether the NGOs, 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 them 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 consider the bureaucracy to shoulder all the responsibilities but how a corrupt bureaucratic system could be able to do so? If NGOs require giving bribe to the NGO affairs bureau for project approval then, how that organization will ensure accountability of the NGOs? In fact, since the liberation, the controlling tendency of the government and unwanted domination by the bureaucracy caused destruction of many rising sectors in Bangladesh. What would be role of the government, controlling or facilitating? NGOs are required to be accountable, but the present structure couldn't be able to do so, rather this will destroy the sector

'If you are part of CSOs then you have to be ready to face red-eyes' said Dr Tofail Ahmed, an expert of local government. Still debate exists, who are CSOs, who are not. We

have many evidences that many businessmen turned to politician by choice but still they are businessman. On the other hand many professional get involved with CSOs considering this as a self-employed job. So it is very difficult to define CSOs, but it also does not require any kind of registration for being a CSO.



It is not always right that CSO would speak against the government; they would assist government in necessary case. CSO that aim to mobilize funds for money making couldn't be able to contribute to the mass movement.

We have to imply our policies to our personal life not only to the organization level only said Shaheen Anam, Executive Director, Manusher Jonnyo



Foundation. The other people who criticize CSO work should keep in mind that we are not from a flaw less society. As CSOs are part of this society so we can not say that we are perfect in all aspect, but we have to keep in mind that we are working for a particular class of the society. We have to consider their interest, problem as well as demands as 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 injudicious approach of regulating all the sectors under a common regulation. Thus, aside with the criticism of the CSOs work, their good initiatives also should be appreciated. As per government policy, only the lowest bidder qualifies for work, but that lowest bidder might not be the competent one. There are differences in tendering work to the lowest bidder and to the competent one. Still it's a doubt that any other organization but the CSOs could generate creative developmental idea. So if we are not given freedom of work then it might not be possible for us to continue our work. There might have minimum 'code of conduct' for the NGOs and this should be monitored by the coalition of the NGOs like NGO federation, but must not be monitored by the government agencies.



'We have to overcome our own limitation' said Golam Mortoza, editor of a Bangla news week called

Saptabiki. 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 CSO 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 were empowered and if the CSOs and local government would monitor each other then corruption would be reduced. Ironically, the policy planners of our

country (Member of Parliament) want to control and regulate everything; they should give up authoritative mentality and should create enabling environment for CSOs work in local level.



'It requires national consensus on some issues'

said Sirin Akter, Chairperson, Karmojibi Nari. We try to know each other with their identical color, and it's

the problem though all of we should have a particular identity. What is the identity of NGO, CSO, political party and teacher? 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 sprit, my courage become questionable 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 its ideology and values; similarly they

should set the difference from the political parties.



CSOs are playing partisan role, said Mohiuddin Ahmed, 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, it always try to exercise power. Now we consider CSO as NGO, which was not supposed to happen. Since childhood we knew that serving society is voluntary. But that notion has been changed. The CSOs are now playing partisan role; we have BNP minded CSOs and Awami League minded CSO. We have to come out from this situation. I believe that CSO open forum could 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 Paribesh 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 unless they cross their limits. CSOs should define their role and engagement with the government; whether their role is complementing the government or advising the government. We saw in the past that many large NGO and CSO forgot their responsibilities and was directly involved with the 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. There are many NGOs in our country that established corporate business, opened private university and bank and even have build multi-storied building- all these are against the sprit of a CSO. This open forum is to find the ways to overcome the present crises and challenges what the CSOs are facing, also to make the CSO activities more effective.



'You may face criticism if you do something' said M A Quader, General Secretary, SUPRO. Our constitution is the covenant our rights, state has made

responsible in ensuring people's rights as stated in the constitution but state has failed to do so. That is way CSO emerged and pro-activated 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.



I am seeing the 'shadow of unity' at the CSOs open forum' said Lawyer Salma Ali, Executive Director, Bangladesh National Women's

Layers Association. She said, 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.

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



are on our commitment, 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; are assisting government's initiatives both in national, even in international level- he said. In realizing our commitment of building an equity based society, we set our work approach in two ways e.g. firstly, service delivery at grass roots level and secondly, policy advocacy for policy and practice changes. We are evaluating our commitment and goals through this open forum and we are encouraged by this global process.



This process will go far ahead, said Jahangir Hossain Masum, Executive Director, Coastal Development Partnership. He said that open forum consultation on CSO effectiveness has

been started across the globe. In Bangladesh we have organized this consultation with of two expectations; the first one is to establish linkage and coordination with the global framework, and the second one is 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. We are optimistic to put forward the process far ahead.

CSOs do 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 role and work-base across that favored development of

many national level organizations across the country. These organizations do require



following 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 first should know who are they, 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, New Delhi. He said that we all want to see CSOs more successful and

effective and success. If we could make CSOs more accountable and supportive to the society only then we can say that we are successful. But, all above, we require consensus on few issues and a common guiding principle for all. I have seen that around 80 organizations worked together in organizing open forum consultation in Bangladesh; more organizations are expected to join in the process in the coming days; in fact under the open forum they have joined hands for their effective contribution to social development. Here we are discussing our own mistakes and flaws also. Similar process is going on across the globe. 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.

5. Why and how we organized this mobilization?

Generally, in Bangladesh, we consider an organization as CSOs who are involved in social development activities but not involved with party politics and religious activities. I believe that we should facilitate participation of all the CSOs in the open forum consultation on CSO effectiveness; 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. Though, due to limitation of resources it was not possible to organize such wider consultation countrywide but we tried to reach out the objective and process of open forum consultation to all CSO groups and to all people. We undertook several inclusive and methodological steps to reach all the CSOs across the country, which include; firstly, published advertisement in two leading national dailies describing background and objectives of CSO open forum and calling participation of the CSOs in the workshop and national seminar; secondly, communicated with around 43 experienced CSO leaders in Bangladesh, sent them relevant papers, documents and invited them in the workshop and seminar as the resource speaker. Among them 12 CSO leaders participated in the workshop and 20 other CSO leader participated and spoke in the multi-stakeholder consultation. Speech of many of the resource persons has been quoted in this report, few names has not been mentioned in the report, they include; Mr Zakir Hossain of Nagorik Uddog, Imran Uddin Chowdhury of UDDIPAN, Rashed Al Mahmood Titmir of Unnayan Onneshan, Ahmed Swapon Mahmud of Voice, Ranjan Kromoker of Steps Toward Development and Bardul Alam of Bangladesh Krishak Federation- we are grateful to them.

Aside with this, we involved the media in three ways; firstly, we organized a press conference on 06 June 2010 on the objectives and process of open forum consultation. News of the press conference published in 11 daily newspapers. Secondly; a journalist team comprises with 10 members participated in the national workshop. Finally, we invited huge number of journalists both from print and electronic media to participate in the multi-stakeholder consultation. We sent them press release on the consultation both in Bangla and English. Since the beginning of the consultation, we published and kept open

all the relevant information at www.equitybd.org. We also formed an e-group with the all stakeholders to send them information on the follow-up activities.

6. What is our long term expectation?

In the preparation and circulation of this short statement firstly; we tried to reflect opinions from Bangladesh to prepare a global framework in this regard, but still anyone among us can place different opinions. Secondly; we tried to bring all sorts of diverse opinion and debates in relation, which is primarily a necessity to reach a consensus for a common standard. We feel this statement should be widely circulated among all, so that everybody could think and act on this.



We hope that to build a strong civil society in Bangladesh we, altogether, would be able to forward this far ahead; we are looking forward to cooperation from all concern.

Sincerely,

Arpan, Agrajtra Mohila Unnayan Somiti, On line knowledge centre, Ain O Salish Kendra, Adarsha Mohila Sangha, Aloran, Astha Adivasi Network, ISDE, Ashika, RAAC, RDRS Bangladesh, RCSV, EquityBD, In Search of Light, INCIDIN Bangladesh, UBINIG, Uopma Somah Unnayan Sangsta, ALWO, APRN, SDA, AMKS, SDO, Caritas Bangladesh, KJSSUF, Kubaraj Antapunji Unnayan Sangatan, Khasia Welfare Society, Green Voice, Chetona, Chance, Chalan Bill Andolan, Jatiya Nodi Rakkha Andolan, Jabrang Kollyan Somiti, TAP, Dak Diye Jayi, DNK, Lead

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