



China-Europe-South America CSO Dialogue

Joint Statement

The statement has been issued following the Second China-Europe-South America Dialogue Meeting: *Civil Societies in Progress for Change*, held in Beijing 28-30 May 2013

Our common points:

1. On solidarity:

We feel that we are part of a worldwide community and believe that it is necessary to overcome borders and hegemonies of any kind, and to make solidarity our general and common interest. It is a responsibility that should be assumed. The path towards achieving the goal of sustainability involves the sharing of procedures, experiences and successful cases studies in a spirit of constructive dialogue and mutual respect.

2. On global crises:

The planet and human beings are interconnected and share a common destiny in confronting their limits. We acknowledge that the current situation is one of the least desirable alternatives. We face a crisis of civilization and, within the framework of current agendas of the members of the international community, there seems to be no basis for common ground or mutual understanding. The convergences of various crises - environmental, social and economic - reveal the limits of GDP growth and must force us to reconsider our collective and individual responsibility. The focus on the economic dimension must be balanced by more efforts directed at improving the social, environmental and particularly the cultural dimensions of sustainability. Finally, sustainability requires greater respect for and appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity.

3. On Civil Society:

Civil society shares a common goal of proposing new solutions to the pending issues of global agendas. Civil society organizations must be included as one of the main actors in global, regional, national, and local governance processes. A stronger role for civil society in agenda-setting and implementing the transition towards sustainability is necessary.

4. On poverty and inequalities :

The struggle against poverty is part of sustainable development and should be accelerated. Inclusive policies directed against extreme poverty as well as inequalities are needed. It implies also to take into account the experience and knowledge of people living in poverty, who are real actors of change and not only beneficiaries or targets of programs. The wealth of the societies is contingent on the well-being of its most vulnerable citizens.

5. On institutions :

We understand that existing institutions and procedures have proved incapable of resolving outstanding issues. In short, current institutions and procedures have been structurally unable to respond to this crisis, making it incumbent upon citizens and CSOs in positions of responsibility to define new procedures and a new paradigm.

6. On markets:

The market economy is incapable of taking into account environmental pressures and resource disparities. Furthermore, the search for financial advantages leads to increasing social and economic damages and accelerates ecological instability, resulting in increasing power asymmetries.

7. On partnerships:

We need to build social relations and participation for bottom-up processes, empowerment and ownership, resulting in horizontal cooperation between stakeholders. Multi-stakeholder cooperation for achieving sustainability between media, government, private sector, CSO and academia must be enhanced.

8. On spirituality:

Sustainability requires finding a balance between material and spiritual development. Faith based organizations, religions and ethical life conceptions (“buen vivir”) as being part of civil society can particularly contribute to this debate because they tackle with values and they are organized on a global, regional and local level.

Our common Challenges:

1. On the current economic system:

It is important to recover and preserve the connection between the Earth and human beings, as it has been broken by an economic system based on utilitarian and financial interests. The BRICS countries are facing economic challenges and should be making stronger efforts to change their current unsustainable economic development model and quest for economic leadership, whereas Europe should address the austerity policies which are leading to increased poverty and inequality.

2. On ethics and diversity:

We will all be better served if we acknowledge the diversity of ideas and ideals and accept the potential for new and better alternatives that value this diversity, whilst fully recognizing that there are multiple solutions rather than a single one. We need a common ethics based on universal rights and responsibilities consistent with the capacities, property, and knowledge of actors.

3. On new institutions:

To invent new institutions and procedures that can display the participation of people and citizens in identifying key issues while also reassuring them.

4. On social justice and participation:

People work but their incomes are insufficient to ensure the living wage and preserve their dignity. We must formulate a conception of social justice that also respects the Earth's integrity. Vulnerable groups should be encouraged to participate in the decision-making processes for sustainability, especially at the local level.

In Europe, the economic and industrial crisis leads to question the dominant capitalist patterns of production and consumption and how to invent new forms of non market-oriented production and consumption systems (e.g. within the frame of the “Commons”).

In South America, the disparity of the intergovernmental agencies (UNASUR, ECLAC, MERCOSUR, and the Pacific Alliance) prevents public policies from being coordinated coherently at the regional level. This disparity is notably a reflection of the ideological differences of political actors who have conflicting views on how the different economies should be integrated into globalization and how participatory the democratic regimes should be within each country and in the region.

5. On redefining State-society relations:

The relations with the state, local governments and business must be redefined in order to give civil society more leeway to frame and implement alternative solutions. Civil society is playing an increasingly important role globally and nationally.

The government of China encourages Chinese CSOs to make their contribution especially to the realization of sustainable development in China, yet the governance of CSOs needs to be further improved and an enabling environment needs to be provided to give more space for CSOs to carry out their activities. CSOs have made significant contributions to the implementation of the MDGs in China. China's National Consultation on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda has provided a platform for a dialogue between the civil society and government agencies, enterprises and academia. It has promoted a better understanding of the different stakeholders and facilitated their future cooperation. The positive role of the civil society has been confirmed and their contribution to the formulation of SDGs is encouraged.

In Europe, new social movements are rising based on mistrust of the system including towards the classic civil society bodies such as Unions or CSOs (see “The indignant movement”). The functioning of the European Union should be more democratic and the participatory process should be inclusive and open to a wide variety of stakeholders, so that the citizens' voices could be taken into account and the decisions become less bureaucratic.

In South America, civil-society organizations and social movements (students, indigenous peoples, citizens' assemblies, etc.) are seeking to influence public policies where states are being managed by progressive governments, or to resist neoliberal policies where states are being managed by conservative governments. Beyond their relationship with the state and governments, many social actors are pursuing a more autonomous agenda, independent from the official agenda, and implementing networked forms of political organization with new methods of citizen mobilization.

6. On life satisfaction and imagery:

Consumption and production are the primary drivers of exchange in our society. We must develop other sources of satisfaction, promote care and shared cultures and be capable of promoting and harnessing the imagination of citizens and the people.

7. On growth and development:

The current global development paradigm is a trap and must be reconsidered. We must address the key issue of poverty alleviation through creation of another paradigm which challenges the primacy of growth and check that the most vulnerable people are benefiting from public policies.

Our proposals for a shared agenda and future dialogue:

On principles for our actions participation and civil society

- Enrich the learning process: share information on processes (through the UN, regional, social forums, etc.)
- Organize national campaigns and examine connections
- Mutually support one another as we improve civil society's capacity building

In terms of activities

1. On Case studies :

- Publish the collection of case studies relating to the three regions that were presented during the meeting and provide a “bottom-up” analysis related to our main common challenges (participation, environmental boundaries) by the end of 2013

2. On Information sharing:

- To share the available material through an online platform where all groups can share various papers, documents, videos etc., taking into consideration the compatibilities and formats each member need. These information-sharing mechanisms and platforms will enable to discuss recent developments in South American and European CSOs and share updates from Chinese CSOs through Skype calls, mailing lists, etc.

3. On participation:

- Create concrete long-term strategic partnerships for joint action.
- Create opportunities for other voices and participants, thus encouraging a better understanding of and possible solutions to the agenda's outstanding issues, all within the framework of tripartite (or multipartite) dialogues.
- To implement new forms of participation in our countries.
- To collectively support and assist the most vulnerable, marginalized, and disadvantaged in making their voices heard

4. On future meetings:
 - To have an open dialogue at our next meeting in Santiago de Chile in November 2014, in the hope that the current members and others will participate.
 - Topics for future dialogues:
 - The governance, ethics, and economics of the Commons
 - « civilizations »: bio, ecological
 - New world governance in a changing world
 - Alternative voices of the CSOs in the BRICS context
5. On international processes: An international agenda on sustainable cities and territories, and climate change
 - Ecocity in France, September 2013
 - SDG session in NY February 2014: jointly follow, constructively participate in, and positively influence the SDG consultation processes
 - Process COP 20 on Climate Change in Lima (December 2014) towards COP21 in Paris (2015) where a new global climate agreement must be agreed on

Participating organizations:



Association 4D (France)



ATD
FOURTH WORLD

ATD Fourth World (Belgium)



Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer
pour le Progrès de l'Homme

The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for the
Progress of Humankind (FPH) (Switzerland)



CONCORD (Belgium)



Bread for all (Switzerland)



Nature Code - Center of Development and



China-Europa Forum



Ibase (Brazil)



The Citizen Movement on Climate Change (Peru)



United Nations Association of China



South-North Institute for Sustainable Development (China)



Promotion Association for Mountain-River-Lake Regional Sustainable Development of Jiangxi Province (China)

Environment (Austria)



Forum for a new World Governance (Chile)

Network for Democracy and Equity (Argentina)



China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation



The Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Center (China)



China Association for NGO Cooperation