

PRESS RELEASE

US Secretary of State Clinton congratulates Civil Society on Istanbul Principles while evidence shows governments have failed short on their commitments

Busan, Republic of Korea, 30th November

"I want to thank our Civil Society partners for your tireless efforts to improve lives around the world and congratulate you on developing the Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness" - Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State of the United States

People's organizations welcome the acknowledgement of the [Istanbul Principles for Civil Society Development Effectiveness](#) by US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at the opening ceremony of the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

Civil society is participating in these high level negotiations for the first time as a full and equal stakeholder in the negotiations, and are actively advocating for a stronger commitment from governments and donors to provide an enabling environment where civil society can put these Istanbul Principles into practice.

The eight (8) Istanbul Principles emphasize the important impact of CSO activities on the rights of people living in poverty and marginalization, and are the first ever global reference for civil society organizations in their development work. They are the product of civil society's own initiative to define the principles that guide their work as independent development actors.

Indeed, civil society developed the Istanbul Principles in response to the agreement at the previous 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra. The same agreement committed governments and donors to provide an enabling environment for civil society as a independent development actor.

Today, the Istanbul Principles are evidence that civil society kept their Accra Agenda for Action promise - whereas governments have not lived up to their commitment of an enabling environment. As highlighted by Maina Kiai, UN Special rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, during his speech at the Busan Global Civil Society Forum:

"The commitment to protecting CSOs has been repeatedly broken by governments across the world. In addition to many traditional ways to restrict civil society's activities, such as intimidation and arbitrary arrests, there has been a wide proliferation of legal and policy restrictions on civil society groups to prevent them from participating."

At the 4th High Level Form, one of the key asks of civil society is to advance the Accra Agenda for Action statements and demand an enabling environment that is founded on human rights and freedoms, at minimum on already-agreed international standards, so that civil society can truly fulfill their key and officially recognized role in development.

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[Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness](#) is a global, fully participatory consultation process run by and for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to build and advance an international CSO consensus on common development effectiveness standards and enabling conditions required from governments and donors. The Open Forum has finalized the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness – that include the Istanbul Principles – as political statement on CSOs' role in development and a distinct long-term reference for the development work of CSOs worldwide. www.cso-effectiveness.org.

[BetterAid](#) unites nearly one thousand development organizations from civil society worldwide, and has been working on development cooperation and challenging the aid effectiveness agenda since January 2007. BetterAid is leading many of the civil society activities including in-country consultations, studies and monitoring in the lead up to the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4) in Busan on 29 November - 1 December 2011. www.betteraid.org.

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