



## **DONOR ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUE**

### **Aid Effectiveness: Trends and Impacts of Shifting Financial Flows to CSOs in southern Africa**

2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2007

Gaborone, Botswana

Gaborone International Convention Centre

#### **Background**

The international community has been making attempts to improve the effectiveness of aid for a number of years now. The Rome High-Level Forum on Harmonisation (2003), and the Marrakech Roundtable on Managing for Results (2004) set precedents for the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) which remains a landmark document supported by a wide range of stakeholders. SADC members and their international cooperation partners adopted a similar declaration in Windhoek in April 2006. Both the Paris and Windhoek Declarations call upon donor institutions and both developing and developed countries to increase their efforts to effectively utilise development resources on the basis of the principles of ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results and mutual accountability. The challenge now is to implement these declarations and to address some of the emerging issues, such as how they relate to non-state actors.

One of the key emerging issues is the extent to which external donor support to southern African civil society organizations (CSOs) is being affected by the new emphasis on aid effectiveness. The argument is that there is a significant shift in the way donors are channeling their support to CSOs, including the pooling of donor support through national and regional intermediaries. This in turn has the potential to shift the dynamics in the way CSOs can influence poverty reduction efforts. Some key questions about the nature and extent of coherence between donors' country level support and their regional support to CSOs are also emerging. For example, how does donor support to CSOs working on poverty reduction at the national level link to those CSOs working on regional initiatives?

In addition, there are still concerns about the pace and limited impact of improving aid effectiveness through harmonization (donor cooperation) and alignment (support to partner priorities), especially in relation to addressing issues of the quality and quantity of aid, moving from project support to budget support, aid absorption capacity of southern Africa CSOs, and the limited participation of key interest groups in influencing decisions on how aid is given, managed and utilised, among other issues.

In this context, the Southern Africa Trust has commissioned a research report on the subject of "Aid Effectiveness: Trends and Impacts of Shifting Financial Flows to CSOs in southern Africa". The preliminary findings of this work will be presented at a one-day roundtable discussion on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007 in Gaborone, Botswana.

### **Roundtable Session Objectives:**

By the end of the session, we will have

1. Learnt about preliminary findings of the Southern Africa Trust's commissioned research.
2. Discussed ways of strengthening CSOs so as to ensure that they can effectively access and manage aid flows (absorptive capacity) to southern Africa.
3. Discussed effective mechanisms and innovative sources of funding for CSOs in southern Africa.
4. Discussed future opportunities for regional CSO-Donor engagement in southern Africa.

### **Participants**

The roundtable will include representatives from the following organizations:

- key donors active in the southern Africa;
- inter-governmental focal agencies;
- regional governments; and
- civil society organizations from southern Africa.

### **Logistical Arrangements**

Southern Africa Trust has some limited resources available to cover the costs of representatives from civil society organisations. This will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

All other participants will be expected to cover their own costs, including travel and accommodation.

### **Deadline**

Please RSVP by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February to Southern Africa Trust:

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