

Joint statement on the Development Assistance Committee policy statement and reference document: 'A Development Co-operation Lens on Terrorism Prevention: Key Entry Points for Action'

10 October 2003

In April 2003 a high level meeting of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) endorsed a policy statement 'A Development Co-operation Lens on Terrorism Prevention: Key Entry Points for Action' (hereafter 'the DAC paper'). Members and civil society partners of a Global Security and Development Network (the undersigned) have read the DAC paper – only recently made public – with some concern, and wish to make the following response¹.

1. We welcome those statements in the DAC paper that emphasise the importance of donor commitments to poverty reduction² and human rights³.
2. However, members of the Global Security and Development Network are concerned that despite recognising the importance of poverty reduction and human rights, several sections of the DAC paper may be interpreted as opening the door for the re-direction of aid away from poverty reduction and towards a counter-terrorism and security agenda. There is grave concern that the counter-terrorism and security agenda risks violating fundamental human rights and further marginalizing the poor and disenfranchised. The following sections outline our major concerns:

The need for clarity and coherence with regard to the goals of development co-operation

3. Combating terrorism and combating poverty are not the same thing. Within the DAC paper it is not made explicit that while eradicating poverty may reduce the risk of terrorism, counter-terrorism strategies do not necessarily reduce poverty. Articulating this understanding crystallises the need for development co-operation to remain focused on eradicating poverty and protecting human rights - *not preventing terrorism* - as the goal of development co-operation.
4. Throughout the DAC paper there is the suggestion that donors may need to "calibrate" current aid approaches and allocations to take account of terrorism prevention. This clearly opens up the possibility, not only of making terrorism prevention a goal of development co-operation, but of giving it precedence over the existing and internationally agreed goals of development. We would stress that any such confusion of purpose seriously undermines the possibility of achieving development goals.

¹ All page and paragraph references refer to the PDF version of the document on the DAC web site accessed 29 October 2003.

² The final paragraph on page 15 of the DAC paper states: "Donors should emphasize and implement the recommendations of the DAC *Guidelines on Poverty Reduction*. They stress that efforts to empower the poor to exercise their human rights and to have voice, to facilitate access to basic services, education and employment, to strengthen their capacity to pursue sustainable development, and to help them cope with risk and vulnerability are key to fighting poverty."

³ The importance of human rights is noted in several places including on page 12, fourth bullet point under section A, page 15 (as in footnote 2) and page 16 under 'Strengthening the rule of law'.

5. The DAC paper recognises that support for terrorism may be born out of exclusion and injustice. However, it fails to recognise that reshaping development co-operation to address terrorism prevention, particularly if donors unilaterally reallocate funds to what they perceive as the security priorities, may increase the sense of injustice and exclusion in some communities.
6. It is a matter of some concern that the DAC paper makes the assumption that people living in poverty, as they become increasingly frustrated with their condition, may become disaffected supporters of terrorism. This creates a rationale for aid rooted in a violent 'threat' that poor, marginalized, disaffected people pose to the lives and freedoms of citizens in developed countries.
7. Many of the activities suggested under Section C of the DAC paper apply generally to terrorism prevention *in any country* and have little or no clear link to reducing poverty in the ODA recipient country. On page 17 the section on 'strengthen financial governance systems'⁴ seems to specifically contradict footnote 7, which states, "...directly addressing global financial and other support structures [is] not covered by development co-operation". This is one example of our general concern that the DAC paper suggests that donors should engage in new initiatives for which terrorism prevention – and not development – is the primary goal.
8. Combating terrorism is important, and developing countries may need legitimate support in this area. However, we reject the proposal that this support should come from relatively small – and overstretched – international aid budgets whose focus must remain on poverty eradication and, minimally, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are the internationally agreed goals of development co-operation.
9. The UN Zedillo Report suggests that an additional US\$50 billion per year is required to meet the MDGs. Donors – even with promised aid increases – are far off this mark; aid is currently near an all-time low⁵. Increased development assistance is urgently needed to address the enormous challenges posed by, amongst other things, AIDS, environmental degradation and a lack of global food security. Many developing countries are currently in grave danger of failing to meet the MDG of halving world poverty by 2015. It is imperative that aid remains clearly and unequivocally dedicated to achieving existing development goals. Increases in aid must not be used to justify spending aid on other priorities. Northern governments should find the necessary resources in appropriate non-ODA budget lines to respond to terrorism in a manner that is proportional (taking into account the extent of the apparent risk) and sharply focused (for anti-terrorism purposes).
10. For many years the DAC has promoted policy coherence in support of development. The DAC must clearly establish that poverty reduction and the MDGs are the legitimate goals of development co-operation and that terrorism prevention strategies of donor governments must not undermine development.
11. We would strongly underline the caution contained on page 19 of the DAC paper regarding consistency in aid. We agree that there is a **"real risk that**

⁴ This section states that donors can help to "build capacity of finance ministries and banking regulators" and "devise alternative approaches to informal financial structures".

⁵ In 2002 ODA amounted to 0.23% of the national wealth of DAC countries; this represented a small rise from the all-time low of 0.22% (Countries Begin Recovery in Development Aid: 5% Increase in 2002, OECD/DAC, 2003).

development aid may become “simply” an instrument of geopolitical and/or military interests”.

Human rights: contradictions between the development and security agendas

12. A notable omission in the DAC analysis is the tension between protecting all human rights for all people, and the introduction of anti-terrorism legislation or counter-terrorism strategies that threaten fundamental human rights and freedoms. The importance of a free media is emphasised several times in the DAC paper⁶. However, in many cases media freedom has been curtailed by newly introduced 'anti-terrorism' legislation⁷. The increase in military aid to developing countries, which has accompanied the 'war on terror', is also a cause for concern. Human rights organisations have pointed out that increased military aid in the context of the 'war on terror' has actually increased insecurity for people in many parts of the developing world⁸.
13. We call attention to the concern expressed on page 19 of the DAC paper regarding human rights, security and the private sector. Specifically: “**OECD governments might overlook severe abuses taking place because they need co-operation from [a] particular country's government**”. We reiterate this concern but with a significant qualification: the DAC paper refers only to 'severe abuses' but the international community has an obligation, rooted in international human rights law, not to ignore any derogation of international human rights standards.

Transparency and 'good governance' of aid

14. The DAC paper also raises questions about transparency in relation to donor decision-making and aid allocations. Paragraph number 2 on page 8 speaks of the need to “calibrate current aid allocations and approaches carefully where the prevention of terrorism is a relevant development objective”. However, no mention is made of who will decide when counter-terrorism is a relevant objective or how such decisions would be made. What role will developing country partners have in decision-making processes that may affect their current allocations of aid?
15. The questions posed in point 14 (above) notwithstanding, we would emphasise that in so far as reducing poverty and injustice and achieving the MDGs will contribute to reducing support for terrorism there is no need to define any new objective for development co-operation.
16. We support the proposal in the Conclusion on page 20 that developed countries track all activities relating to security, terrorism and development, irrespective of

⁶ For example on page 13, second paragraph from top.

⁷ See: International Mechanisms for Promoting Freedom of Expression: Challenges to Freedom of Expression in the New Century a joint declaration by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OAS Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression (see: <http://www.article19.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArealD=37&SubArealD=75&PageID=45&ElementID=126>, (accessed 30 October 2003))

⁸ In 2002 UK-based foreign affairs think tank, Saferworld, in a memo to the House of Commons Quadripartite Select Committee, stated that UK arms export controls were being relaxed in the 'war on terror'. In 2002 the American-based organisation, Human Rights Watch, released a report, '*Dangerous Dealings: Changes in U.S. Military Assistance After September 11*', in which they outlined concerns that the US government was extending new military assistance to governments responsible for serious human rights abuses.

their relationship to development co-operation. Such data should be made publicly available.

17. We cannot support the recommendation in the Conclusion to review the ODA eligibility criteria in relation to the prevention of terrorism. Such a review will only open the door for donors to press for changes in eligibility that make more space for pursuit of foreign and security policy through ODA spending. The integrity of ODA has already been compromised by the manifestation of foreign policy and domestic commercial interests in aid spending (for example, tied aid). Aid budgets have been eroded by practices such as the inclusion of expenditure on support for refugees in donor countries in development budgets. ODA that is targeted at poverty eradication can afford no further erosion in purpose or diffusion of objectives.

In conclusion:

18. Development co-operation and development aid must remain focused on the enormous task of reducing global poverty and injustice, and achieving – at a minimum – the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals.
19. Scarce aid resources must not be diverted to address counter-terrorism and security concerns; nor should much needed increases in aid be used to justify spending on counter-terrorism.
20. The counter-terrorism agenda must not be allowed to undermine development, human rights and human security.

Signed:

Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA), **Australia**⁹

British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND), **United Kingdom**¹⁰

Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), **Canada**¹¹

New Zealand Council for International Development (CID), **New Zealand**¹²

Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke (MS), **Denmark**

Pacific Asia Resource Centre (PARC), **Japan**

IBON Foundation, **Philippines**

Coordination SUD, **France**¹³

APRODEV, **Europe**¹⁴

KEPA, **Finland**¹⁵

Cordillera Peoples Alliance, **Philippines**

⁹ ACFOA is the coordinating body for some 90 Australian non-government organisations in Australia.

¹⁰ BOND is a network of 290 NGOs involved in international development.

¹¹ CCIC is a coalition of about 100 Canadian organizations working for social justice, humanitarian aid and economic development both in Canada and the developing world.

¹² CID is an umbrella agency that represents 56 New Zealand-based NGOs that are involved with international aid and development.

¹³ Coordination SUD is the French umbrella organization of NGOs working in international development and relief, representing 120 members.

¹⁴ APRODEV is the association of 17 major development and humanitarian aid organisations in Europe, which work closely together with the World Council of Churches.

¹⁵ KEPA is an umbrella organisation of over 200 Finnish NGOs that are active in development work and concerned about global issues.

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, **United States of America**

VENRO, **Germany**¹⁶

CIDSE, **Europe**

Trocaire, **Ireland**

Hellenic Committee of Development NGOs, **Greece**

11.11.11 Coalition of the Flemish North - South Movement, **Belgium**

Broederlijk Delen, **Belgium**

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), **United Kingdom**

AGEZ, **Austria**

KOO - Koordinierungsstelle der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz für internationale Entwicklung und Mission, **Austria**

Austrian NGO Platform, **Austria**

¹⁶ VENRO is the network of 102 German NGOs, involved in international development and relief.