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Statement on policy coherence for development: aid, trade, investment, and other issues

Dietz, T.; Hoebink, P.; Mulder, H.; Lambooy, T.; Kapoor, S.; Fogelberg, T.; Barry, A.; Borren, S.

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4. Statement on Policy Coherence for Development: Aid, Trade, Investment and other issues

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Including article by Paul Hoebink, Sylvia Borren, Ton Dietz and Alpha Barry: 'Ontwikkelingshulp kan beter'

world connectors

In 2007 the Worldconnectors wrote four statements related to the themes Migration and Development, Global Human Security, Millennium Development Goals and Policy Coherence for Development. All four statements are prepared by Working Groups before presentation and discussion at the Round Table of Worldconnectors.

The statement on Policy Coherence for Development: Aid, Trade, Investment and other issues – discussed by all Worldconnectors at the Round Table on 12 October 2007 at the World Trade Centre in Rotterdam – is an inspiration and starting point for further dialogue, public debate and media activities of the Worldconnectors. Within this framework the Worldconnectors prepared three proposals for parliamentarians and policy makers, the corporate sector based in the Netherlands and for civil society groups (see Annexes).

The Working Group on Policy Coherence for Development consists of the following Worldconnectors: Ton Dietz, Paul Hoebink, Herman Mulder, Tineke Lambooy, Sony Kapoor (special advisor), Teresa Fogelberg, Alpha Barry and supporters: Dušica Vukolić and Alide Roerink (NCDO), Gordana Stanković (SID Nl), Koen Kusters (DPRN), Roeland Muskens (Wereld in Woorden).

The following special guests at the Round Table in October have contributed to the statement as well: Otto Genee (Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Coherence Unit), Peter Heintze (Managing Director Evert Vermeer Foundation), Francis Weyzig (Researcher SOMO), Peter van Lieshout (WRR), Jan-Willem Bertens (NCDO Board Member).

Reactions and comments on the statement can be shared on the website www.worldconnectors.nl and readers are invited to exchange inspiring examples and initiatives that illustrate and support Policy Coherence for Development: Aid, Trade, Investment and other issues via email: roundtable@worldconnectors.nl.

Other statements:

1. Statement on Migration and Development
2. Statement on Global Human Security
3. Statement on Millennium Development Goals: Schokland Agreement for the second half of the MDGs (2007 - 2015)

Colofon
February 2008

Annex to 'Inspiring a Global Mindset – an overview of 2007'

Worldconnectors
NCDO
PO Box 94020
1090 GA Amsterdam

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Statement on Policy Coherence for Development: Aid, Trade, Investment and other issues

I. REFLECTIONS

We, the Worldconnectors, would like to stimulate that policy on aid, trade and investments becomes more coherent in terms of its impact on poor countries and its people. Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) is needed at various levels: first, internal coherence is the consistency within one program or department, in this case within development policy itself or within foreign policy as a whole; secondly, intra-country coherence is the consistency among policies of a single government; and lastly, inter-country coherence is the consistency of aid and non-aid policies of different countries, e.g., in the European Union or vis-à-vis the WTO. We call for a more pro-active policy of the Dutch government aimed at increasing PCD at all levels, and in particular at the level of the EU. Policy Coherence for Development should contribute to the goals and principles formulated in the Millennium Declaration and the Earth Charter.

In this statement we want to make a plea for an even more holistic approach, in which government policies and strategies of other actors are better aligned for a just and sustainable world. We call this *'Societal Coherence'*, which refers to the impact on well-being, poverty eradication, human security and sustainability of the combined activities of governments, business (producers as well as traders), consumers, and civil society. This is a plea for 'complementary governance' in which all efforts of the government, the private sector, private aid organisations and consumers should be aimed at eradicating poverty and sustainable development for women, men and children in all parts of the world.

This is also a call for inclusive democratic practice, both at the national level and at the global level. Inclusive democracy means that all citizens feel their voice matters, regardless of whether they are men or women, or from a poor country or any disadvantaged group. What we consider normal democratic 'checks and balances' do not yet exist at the global level between civil society, government and the corporate sector. There is informal consultation of civil society organisations by UN bodies, but decision making in the corporate sector, in multilateral institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organisation, and in the United Nations itself, has no democratic connection with (organised) citizens.
In our efforts to increase Policy Coherence for Development and Societal Coherence there is no need to start from scratch. The Dutch government has been striving towards policy coherence and is on top of the 'Commitment to Development Index' published by the Centre for Global Development, measuring the coherence of policies of 21 of the world's rich countries, but we should keep in mind that this was with a score of 6.5 out of 10, so there is ample room for improvement. There are some existing initiatives in which private and civic actors work together with government agencies, to align their activities. These are activities under the umbrella of socially responsible entrepreneurship, fair trade chains, or clean development mechanism and joint implementation activities. But there is still a long way to go before we can speak of Societal Coherence, active global citizenship and inclusive democracy. We would like to stress that knowledge and transparency are needed to make sure that well-intended activities do not backfire, and that not-so-well-intended activities do not get a chance to undermine global justice and sustainability. The basic principle should be: 'do no harm'. The guiding principle should be: 'do more good'.
Our previous three statements were about the Millennium Development Goals, migration and security. These statements can be found on our website (www.worldconnectors.nl). We will not repeat policy proposals from these earlier statements. This statement is about the need for coherence for development. In this document we draw specific attention to the need to align Dutch aid, trade, investments and tax regulations in terms of their effects on developing countries.[1] It is a long list of considerations and proposals. In shorter documents available on our website we present the key proposals targeted at three main target groups, i.e., parliamentarians and policy makers; civil society and civilians; and the corporate sector.

1. Early 2008 the worldconnectors will prepare a statement on sustainable development, including the need to address climate change.

II. CONSIDERATIONS

General

1 We should dare to look ahead one generation or even a few generations from now. Scenario thinking should go beyond the demographic, climate change and energy domains in which they are currently mostly applied. In order to identify the changes that are needed to arrive at global human security, environmental sustainability and a more balanced and democratic relation between nation states and between citizens of developed and developing countries, we should dare to rethink the world of aid, trade, and investments for the world in the future. Furthermore, we need to dare to think about future governance institutions – particularly about the desired relationship with its citizens. How to organise complementarity and coherence between global level institutions and governance at the lower levels? And how to organise meaningful transparency and accountability to actively include citizens (including women, migrants, and indigenous peoples) from the local to the global level?

2 In a sustainable, democratic and just world, aid mechanisms as we know them will gradually be replaced by fair trade, tax arrangements and effective interconnected global and national democratic processes and justice systems. Global citizenship will mean a shared global responsibility for more equal contributions by all citizens and all private organisations to maintaining and improving the global commons and a global public domain. In the future, instead of aid contributions by individual 'donor' countries to 'receiving' countries, individuals and private organisations may pay a global tax to a global fund. This is, of course, a long-term goal, which requires global democracy and a system of global accountability.

3 Social movements, trade unions, human rights- and women- and youth organisations do not have a voice in most global institutions, but they will always be essential in promoting democracy and participation. They are necessary to ensure equity and justice and should be part of day-to-day inclusive democracy in which gender justice, human rights, freedom of the press and accountability to citizens can never be taken for granted. Also, labour unions, farmer unions, cultural sectors and faith-based organisations are important actors to achieve Societal Coherence.

Volume and Quality of Aid

4 Development Assistance has been provided for nearly sixty years now. Still the volume and the quality of aid do not meet the expectations. Too much aid is still tied to the output of donor countries' industries and aid is not always focused on poverty reduction. Furthermore, aid efforts are often fragmented, scattered and uncoordinated, particularly in emergency situations and in the aftermaths of natural disasters, which leads to a lack of quality of aid. It is to be discussed whether 'grand plans of coordination' or rather light structures with a lot of actors acting in a 'chaotic' way actually reaches the women and men on the ground more effectively, or if there is a middle ground between the two.

5 The Netherlands has always been a rather generous contributor to international aid, justice and defence institutions. That should continue, although with more attention for its effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and for checks and balances in the aid system.

6 It is desirable that the current multitude of government-to-government aid arrangements will be replaced by more coordinated approaches in the future. But in order for this to work, the implementing institutions need to become more democratic and more transparent. At the moment, there is no transparency on conditionalities that are attached to aid.

7 Sector Wide Approaches (SWAps)[2] and Direct Budget Support (DBS)[3] are no panacea for all the wrongs in development assistance, particularly when receiving governments do not have transparent policies and when they are not democratic. Some sectors (like agriculture) that seem to be less attractive for sector and budget support tend to escape donors' attention. Moreover, when all aid is in the form of DBS, environmental, gender and corruption issues may be neglected, since these are often not on the development priority lists of the governments of developing countries.

8 To avoid degradation of quality, civil society organisations should play a role in closely monitoring aid that is channelled through organisations such as the EU and the UN. Dutch civil society organisations can be catalysts of a better integrated European and worldwide alliance of civil society.

9 Women's organisations around the world have received less and less funding in the last ten years. Tools such as gender-budgeting are not yet used consistently, but when they are there is evidence of shocking levels of injustice and incoherence, even within present aid- and national budgets, with very low spending on education, health and social services to women and children. The Dutch government has prioritised gender in its present policy and can do more to fund women's organisations in developing countries.

International Trade and Agricultural Policies

10 Global trade arrangements should be fair for entrepreneurs and workers in the South. In a just world all goods and services that are traded should be based on global minimum standards of remuneration, environmental care and safety, and institutions are needed to make sure producers and traders stick to these global minimum standards.

11 We call for care regarding trade liberalisation. We should not strive for liberalisation for the sake of liberalisation. Instead we should strive for trade for the sake of justice for all men, women and children. We should not assume blindly that liberalisation leads to global equity. Also, some of the current production and consumption systems have disastrous environmental effects and this requires immediate reforms in international trade regulations, taking up all environmental costs in product prices. Important examples are logging and fishing. We would also like to point to the tension that exists between promoting trade liberalisation on the one hand, and restricting labour mobility on the other hand (see our statement on migration on www.worldconnectors.nl).

12 In the past, trade negotiations led to a serious reduction of tariffs and trade barriers in particulary on industrial goods and some services. Unhindered intra-firm trade was a major driver for this liberalisation. Despite some redresses, the United States and the European Union continue to support their own producers by subsidies, dumping practices and tariff escalation. For poor countries to benefit from opportunities stemming from the globalisation of trade, they should first receive support to develop internal and regional agriculture, markets and their own production and service sectors.

13 International trade in agricultural products and changes in the agricultural policies of the United States and the European Union are currently mainly viewed from the perspective of trade liberalisation, and not from the viewpoint of the effect it has on the life of rural families. We should bear in mind that only a very limited part of agricultural products is traded internationally (10%) and that the major part of it is consumed locally. There are several international markets of agricultural products which each have their own characteristics. Some are just dumping markets, others are strongly dominated by a few international firms. Changes in agricultural policies can be viewed from various angles, such as food security, farmers' incomes, and environmental considerations. In developing countries land rights of women, the position of local markets and local processing industries are also important. Rural policy considerations and the interests of developing countries producers should be integrated in these policies, under the umbrella of Policy Coherence for Development. The production of agro fuels and the rising demand from Asia already have their effect on world-market prices and might result in new scarcities, that force us to look at agricultural and food policies from different perspectives than in the past.

2. The Sector Wide Approach is an aid modality in which funding from donors and/or from the national budget for a specific sector supports a single policy and expenditure programme under leadership of the government of the aid-recipient country.

3. Direct Budget Support (DBS) is an aid disbursement mechanism by which development assistance is directly channelled through the national budgets of aid receiving countries, using national allocation, procurement and accounting systems.

14 The legal link between the EU's trade and development policies is set out in Article 178 of the EC Treaty, which establishes that: '[t]he Community shall take account of the objectives referred to in Article 177 in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries.' This principle of 'coherence' was first introduced into the EC legal framework in the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and later restated in the Treaties of Amsterdam and Nice. The EU however appears to confuse the principles of coherence and consistency and there is evidence that increased and short term trade liberalisation for the benefit of EU countries is 'bought' by promises of aid packages which may or may not materialise.

Investments and Corporate Social Responsibility

15 Companies that invest in developing countries will contribute to a just global society and a sustainable earth when they comply with global minimum standards of environmental and social behaviour, pay the required taxes and dues, invest a fair share of their locally accruing profits in local expansion, and find an acceptable balance between local and non-local employees.

16 There is an increasing amount of piece work done – not only in informal sweatshops, but also in tax-free zones – which includes child labour and misuse of and violence against (young) girls. Actions to stop child labour and organising trade union activities are dangerous 'political' activities in countries such as India and China, Guatemala and Colombia.

17 Clear Dutch and EU regulations on social and environmental production standards will help companies to perform better. Compliance with social standards means stopping all child labour, discourage wage inequality between women and men, combating inhuman working hours and unsafe, unhealthy and violent conditions. Compliance with environmental standards means stopping environmentally destructive production systems. Strong civil society and consumers organisations with local, national and global networks will help to ensure that companies adhere to internationally agreed standards.

18 Several large Dutch companies have a good record of voluntary Corporate Social Responsibility. These companies can collaborate with civil society and the government in their efforts to take action against violators of international minimum social and environmental standards.

19 While stressing the importance of responsible behaviour of the multinationals based in the north, we should also be aware that an increasing number of international companies are based in developing countries (e.g., China and India).

Taxes

20 Tax justice does not only mean that individuals and organisations living/working within particular political entities contribute to these local entities by paying their local taxes, but it also means that their negative impact on localities (there and elsewhere) is compensated by compensatory dues.

In the next section we present a range of policy suggestions that will stimulate and contribute to Policy Coherence for Development and Societal Coherence. The proposals are directed at parliamentarians and policy makers, at the corporate sector and civil society organisations, but also at responsible citizens, both at the level of the Netherlands and the EU.

III. POLICY PROPOSALS

Volume and Quality of Aid

1 Official Development Assistance (ODA) should not be used for Defence or other non-ODA activities. The Dutch government should strive to remove all tied aid from bilateral development assistance and it should call upon other countries to do the same. The Netherlands should ensure its Official Development Assistance (ODA) of 0.8 per cent of its GNP will remain pure ODA and it should remove items such as debt reduction and costs for asylum seekers in the Netherlands. At the same time it should increase its total expenditures for foreign assistance (HGIS), for other domains than traditional development policy, to 1.5 per cent of GNP (which includes ODA). The investments of all ministries in international cooperation should be transparent, through reporting on the HGIS budget.

2 Aid delivery and conditionalities attached should be more transparent. All aid agreements between countries with whichever conditionalities should be available to civil society in any given country and globally in the form of proposals, so as to allow enough time to consider changes and the advocacy needed to instigate these changes.

3 Direct Budget Support must include a number of transparency and accountability mechanisms involving citizens and their organisations. These include improvement in millennium goal indicators, gender budgeting, clarity about spending on education and health and on strengthening civil society and inclusive democratic processes.

4 Some donor countries are guided by short-term national security and trade imperatives rather than long-term development objectives, and have become less willing to commit to multilateralism in development cooperation. The Netherlands should be at the forefront to challenge such strategies in practice by contributing generously to efficient and effective international organisations and to various citizens' movements, but also through diplomacy, by trying to commit other donors to multilateral initiatives.

5 The Netherlands should further concentrate aid going to specialised international organisations and it should develop clear-cut policies towards these organisations based on criteria of societal and policy coherence, efficiency and effectiveness. It should make its assistance and its policies vis-à-vis these international organisations more transparent and it should be accountable not just to Dutch citizens but to global citizens organisations.

6 Members of the EU Parliament should urge all EU countries to initiate a separate commission on international development coherence, and to appoint a Minister for Development Cooperation.

International Trade and Agricultural Policies

7 In negotiations within EU and WTO, the Netherlands should call for far reaching deregulation that aims to dismantle market protection by rich countries, in particular for those products that are important for poor countries (such as textiles and clothing). ACP and other developing countries should have the opportunity to protect their producers for a longer and realistic period of time.

8 Trade restrictions for agricultural products from poor countries and export subsidies for agricultural products to developing countries should be terminated and domestic support for agriculture in the EU should cause no harm to farmers of developing countries. In the Doha round of WTO negotiations and in the negotiations on the EPAs the Netherlands should support the right of developing countries to protect their farmers against dumping.

9 New scarcities present a need to actively rethink agricultural policies. In addition, when promoting agro fuels, caution should be exercised in relation to the possible effects on food security and the environment in producing countries.

10 Civil society groups should pressurise the European Commission so that it does not demand trade liberalisation in exchange for aid and to ensure that coherence measures formulated by the Union are implemented. The negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements and the development of the new EU-Africa Strategy currently present windows of opportunity for NGOs to influence European trade regulation.

11 When developing product standards and sanitary regulations, certain sectors in developing countries may require longer transition periods, and therefore assistance to enable them to comply with these standards.

12 The Dutch government and specialised NGOs should ensure specific attention for the following issues:
   a. The illegal trade in timber, diamonds and weapons.
   b. The fisheries agreements between the EU and developing countries, which lead to the depletion of fish resources.
   c. The affordable access to crucial medicines in developing countries.
   d. The upcoming developments in the field of bio fuels, an issue that raises complex questions regarding climate change policies, land rights in developing countries, and food security.

Investments and Corporate Social Responsibility

13 We recommend that all Dutch companies working abroad: a) adopt and live up to standards for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), such as the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Principles of the United Nations Global Compact; b) engage themselves in developing standards and certification schemes in respect of sustainable production methods; and c) ensure transparency in their worldwide activities, standards and behaviour, for all stakeholders, including investors and consumers, preferably by publishing sustainability reports in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative Guidelines.

14 Transnational companies and banks should be transparent in their transactions with governments from poor countries and commit themselves to stop all (illegal) payments to government officials.

15 The corporate sector and the Dutch government should jointly search for means to stop notorious violators of basic human rights or environmental standards from committing such practices, if necessary by legal sanctions. Guidelines for minimum standards are enshrined in widely accepted international treaties on these subjects.

16 We encourage companies to set up, as part of their CSR strategies, innovative partnerships, with government, civil society and academia, not only in the Netherlands but also in developing countries, especially the lowest income countries, with Sustainable Development as the main objective. The Dutch government should, where possible, support corporate initiatives directed at the lowest income countries.

17 MVO Nederland and watch dog organisations could develop a monitoring unit at their headquarters in the Netherlands to share information about 'good practices' and to expose 'bad practices' about multinationals and banks.

18 The government, civil society, academia, and the private sector should work together to help consumers make responsible choices by providing reliable information on the origin, environmental, social and gender impacts of certain products. In the Netherlands, the branch organisation for development NGOs, Partos, can play a role here, together with organisations such as the Consumentenbond.

Taxes

19 Tax havens should be gradually dismantled, and corporations and individuals misusing these tax havens exposed. The Netherlands has a special responsibility concerning tax evasions, as the Netherlands (and the Netherlands Antilles/Aruba) itself is a tax haven for multinationals, which results in missed tax income for governments in poor countries. Not only should the Netherlands revise its tax policy, it should also lobby within Europe for other countries (e.g., Luxemburg and Switzerland) to do the same.

Additional Institutions, Instruments and Practices

20 In addition to the coherence unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other relevant Ministries need a foreign impact monitoring unit, aligned with the MFA's coherence unit. Furthermore, we call for a broad and independent commission with the right gender balance, including government, private sectors, NGOs and research institutions, to monitor Policy Coherence for Development, and report to parliament. Finland and Spain already initiated such independent platforms. Such a platform is needed at the level of the European Union as well.

21 The Dutch National Contact Point (NCP) for the OECD Guidelines on multinational companies deals with citizen complaints – which can come from anywhere in the world – concerning internationally operating companies that have their headquarters in the Netherlands. This is an important initiative and we encourage replication in other OECD countries. Furthermore, we propose to start a similar independent platform (an ombuds(wo) man) to deal with complaints of world citizens concerning perceived misbehaviour of non-private sector agencies and individuals that are based in the Netherlands.

22 Information about activities in which private agencies work together with civic and/or public partners for development purposes should receive more attention from academics in the field of international development issues. In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can play a more prominent role in stimulating the debate about best practices and impacts on various groups of citizens of these multiple-actor partnerships for sustainable global development.

ANNEXES:

Proposals for Parliamentarians and Policy Makers

Preamble

Development Assistance has been provided for nearly sixty years now. Still the volume and the quality of aid do not meet expectations. Too much aid is still tied to the output of donor countries' industries and aid is not always focused on poverty reduction. Furthermore, aid efforts are often fragmented, scattered and uncoordinated, particularly in emergency situations and in the aftermaths of natural disasters, which leads to a lack of quality of aid.

The legal link between the EU's trade and development policies is set out in Article 178 of the EC Treaty, which establishes that: '[t]he Community shall take account of the objectives referred to in Article 177 in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries.' This principle of 'coherence' was first introduced into the EC legal framework in the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and later restated in the Treaties of Amsterdam and Nice. The EU however appears to confuse the principles of coherence and consistency and increasingly there is evidence that increased and short term trade liberalisation for the benefit of EU countries is 'bought' by promises of aid packages which may or may not materialise.

Global trade arrangements should be fair for entrepreneurs and workers in the South. In a just world all goods and services that are traded should be based on global minimum standards of remuneration, environmental care and safety, and institutions are needed to make sure producers and traders stick to these global minimum standards.

Proposals

Volume and Quality of Aid

1 Official Development Assistance (ODA) should not be used for Defence or other non-ODA activities. The Dutch government should strive to remove all tied aid (e.g. ORET) completely from ODA and it should call upon other countries to remove tied aid from ODA too. The Netherlands should ensure its Official Development Assistance (ODA) of 0.8 per cent

of its GNP will remain pure ODA and it should remove items such as debt reduction and costs for asylum seekers in the Netherlands. At the same time it should increase the total of its expenditures for foreign assistance (HGIS), for other domains than traditional development policy, to 1.5 per cent of GNP. The investments of all ministries in international cooperation should become clear through reporting on the HGIS budget.

2 Aid delivery and conditionalities attached should be more transparent. All aid agreements between countries with whichever conditionalities should be available to civil society in any given country and globally in the form of proposals, so as to allow enough time to consider changes and the advocacy needed to instigate these changes.

3 The Netherlands should avoid dispersing aid over an increasing specialised international organisations and it should develop clear-cut policies towards these organisations based on criteria of societal- and policy coherence, efficiency and effectiveness. It should make its assistance and its policies vis-à-vis these international organisations more transparent and be accountable not just to Dutch citizens but to global citizens organisations.

International Trade and Agricultural Policies

4 Trade restrictions for agricultural products from poor countries and export subsidies for agricultural products to developing countries should be terminated and domestic support for agriculture in the EU should cause no harm to farmers of developing countries. In the Doha round of WTO negotiations and in the negotiations on the EPAs the Netherlands should support the right of developing countries to protect their farmers against dumping.

5 When developing product standards and sanitary regulations, certain sectors in developing countries may require longer transition periods, and therefore assistance to enable them to comply with these standards.

Proposals for the Corporate Sector based in the Netherlands

Preamble

Coherence for development includes cooperation between the government, corporate sector and civil society. Dutch business activities in developing countries should comply with minimum ethical, environmental and social standards, thereby supporting Dutch development assistance programmes. We, the Worldconnectors, believe that cooperation will generate a better result for sustainable development than confrontation. However, companies that do not want to cooperate with 'sustainable globalisation with a human face' should expect peer pressure, disciplinary action by NGOs or legal sanctions.

Proposals

Corporate Social Responsibility

1 (A) We recommend that all Dutch Companies working abroad, adopt and live up to standards of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), such as the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

(B) We recommend that all Dutch Companies working abroad, are active in developing standards and certification schemes in respect of sustainable production methods.

(C) We recommend that all Dutch Companies ensure transparency regarding their worldwide activities, standards and behaviour, for all stakeholders, including investors and consumers, preferably by publishing sustainability reports in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative Guidelines.

(Legal) Actions against notorious perpetrators of human rights and severe polluters

2 We invite the corporate sector and the Dutch government to jointly search for means to stop notorious violators of basic human rights and environmental standards from committing such business practices, if necessary through legal sanctions. Guidelines for minimum standards can be found in widely accepted international treaties on these subjects.

Innovative Partnerships

3 (A) We encourage companies to set up, as part of their CSR strategies, innovative partnerships with the Dutch government, civil society and academia, with Sustainable Development as the main objective.

(B) We encourage companies to set up, as part of their CSR strategies, innovative partnerships with the governments, civil society and academia of developing countries, especially the lowest income countries, with Sustainable Development as the main objective. The Dutch government should, where possible, support corporate initiatives directed at the lowest income countries.

Proposals for Civil Society Groups

Preamble

We want to make a plea for a holistic approach, in which government policies and strategies of private and civic actors are better aligned for a just and sustainable world. We call this 'societal coherence'. To achieve societal coherence, civil society organisations have a specific role to play.

Proposals

1 Civil society groups should put pressure on the European Commission so that it does not demand trade liberalisation in exchange for aid and to ensure that coherence measures formulated by the Union are implemented. The negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements and the development of the new EU-Africa Strategy are current windows of opportunity for NGOs to influence European trade regulation.

2 Civil society organisations should analyse activities of multinationals and banks in terms of coherence, illegal payments (corruption), gender justice, environmental impact, and sustainability. In particular specialised NGOs should continue to be alert, monitor and campaign on the following issues:
   a. The trade in timber, diamonds and weapons.
   b. The fisheries agreements between the EU and developing countries, which are presently leading to depletion of fish resources.
   c. The affordable access to crucial medicine in developing countries.
   d. The upcoming developments in the field of biofuels, an issue which raises complex questions regarding climate change policies, land rights in developing countries, and food security.

3 Civil society organisations should work together with the government, academia, and the private sector to stimulate Corporate Social Responsibility and to ensure transparency for consumers and other stakeholders. Consumers need to be provided with reliable information on the origin, environmental, social and gender impacts of products. This will assist them in making responsible choices. In the Netherlands, the branch organisation for development NGOs, Partos, can play a role, together with organisations like the Consumentenbond.

4 The Dutch National Contact Point (NCP) for the OECD Guidelines on multinational companies deals with citizen complaints – from anywhere in the world – concerning internationally operating companies that have their headquarters in the Netherlands. This is an important initiative that we should learn from and we encourage replication in other OECD countries. Furthermore, we propose to start a similar independent platform (an ombudsman) to deal with complaints of world citizens concerning perceived misconduct of non-private sector agencies and individuals that are based in the Netherlands.

In combination with every statement the Worldconnectors reach out for dialogue and debate with Dutch society by writing articles among others. For the theme Policy Coherence for Development: Aid, Trade, Investment and other issues, Paul Hoebink wrote the following article with Sylvia Borren, Ton Dietz and Alpha Barry. It was published in *Trouw* on 13 November 2007.

Ontwikkelingshulp kan beter

In vergelijking met andere rijke landen doet Nederland veel aan ontwikkelingssamenwerking. Maar kwaliteit en uitgaven moeten omhoog.

Paul Hoebink e.a.
verbonden aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

Nederland staat internationaal goed aangeschreven voor de inspanningen op het terrein van ontwikkelingssamenwerking. Zo gaf het Centre for Global Development in Washington ons land vorige maand opnieuw de gouden medaille: Nederland voert de index aan waarin de inzet van de rijke landen ten behoeve van ontwikkelingslanden gemeten wordt. Alleen wordt die bovenste plaats niet verdiend met een acht of een negen, maar slechts met een magere 6,5. Er is dus nog veel te verbeteren in het Nederlandse beleid.

De Nederlandse hulp is nog steeds vervuild. In tegenstelling tot de internationale afspraken is een deel van de hulp nog altijd gebonden aan besteding aan goederen en diensten van Nederlandse bedrijven.

Grote bedragen worden ook besteed aan schuldkwijtschelding. Deze schulden zijn ontstaan door bij de staat verzekerde exportkredieten. Als besloten wordt ze kwijt te schelden, dan zou dat uit de verzekeringspremies betaald moeten worden en niet ten koste moeten gaan van de hulp aan de armsten.

Verder wordt er ook nog steeds een deel van de opvang van asielzoekers in Nederland uit de ontwikkelingshulppot betaald. Wij pleiten ervoor om de 0,8 procent van ons bruto nationaal product (bnp) aan ontwikkelingshulp ook zuivere ontwikkelingshulp te maken.

Maar dat niet alleen. Er zijn veel meer internationale verplichtingen die geen ontwikkelingshulp zijn. In 1995 is besloten om daar 0,3 procent van het bnp voor beschikbaar te stellen. Dat percentage wordt niet gehaald.

Zo zou Nederland bijvoorbeeld voor internationaal milieubeleid en andere internationale noden meer geld moeten vrijmaken. Bovendien moet transparanter worden wat Nederland op al deze terreinen besteedt (ook voor humanitaire interventies) door in de begroting van Buitenlandse Zaken over al deze posten te rapporteren.

De internationale ontwikkelingshulp verliest ook aan kwaliteit door fragmentatie. Er zijn steeds meer internationale organisaties en fondsen die hun eigen hulpprogramma's hebben. Nu al meer dan tweehonderd. De aandacht van die organisaties raakt bovendien versnipperd over steeds meer projecten en programma's. Nederland moet daarom bevorderen dat het aantal organisaties sterk vermindert en dat er veel meer samengewerkt wordt.

En er dient kritischer te worden gekeken naar de hulp via die internationale organisaties. Als zij, zoals het IMF, al jaren lang bedenkelijke kwaliteit afleveren, dan zouden deze zich niet meer met ontwikkelingslanden moeten bezig houden.

Dit alles geldt ook voor particuliere organisaties. Het is prachtig dat veel burgers zich inzetten om de armoede de wereld uit te helpen, maar er is een zekere wildgroei. Er kan ook hier meer samengewerkt worden.

Ontwikkelingslanden ondervinden veel hinder van de manier waarop rijke landen hun producenten ondersteunen, of dat nu door export- of productiesubsidies gebeurt. Het Europese landbouwbeleid staat om die reden al 40 jaar ter discussie. Wij pleiten er niet voor om de discussie over dat landbouwbeleid alleen vanuit het oogpunt van vrijhandel te bespreken.

Een evenwichtig beleid ten aanzien van die landbouw kijkt natuurlijk naar de voedselvoorziening op lange en korte termijn, naar de inkomens van boeren, het milieu en de kwaliteit van het leven op het platteland, maar ook naar de belangen van boeren in ontwikkelingslanden. Er is niet één wereldlandbouwmarkt, maar er zijn verschillende deelmarkten. Een aantal daarvan is dumpingmarkt, waar restpartijen tegen bodemprijzen worden afgezet.

Dat treft veelal de boeren in (West-) Afrika, door het dumpen van producten als kippenpoten, tomatenpuree, aardappels en uien. Ontwikkelingslanden moeten het recht hebben en krijgen om hun boeren daar tegen te beschermen. Nederland moet zich binnen de Wereld Handelsorganisatie (WHO) daarvoor inzetten.

Importbepalingen schaden ontwikkelingslanden ook nogal eens. Het is goed voor de Europese consument dat producten die hier binnen komen de gezondheid bijvoorbeeld niet kunnen schaden. Europa zou echter bij het vaststellen van regelingen die daarop zijn gericht, zich vooral moeten conformeren aan regels zoals die opgesteld worden binnen internationale organisaties als de WHO.

Vooral en bovendien zou Europa ook moeten kijken wat die regels voor gevolgen hebben voor producenten in ontwikkelingslanden, in het bijzonder in Afrika en hen daarbij steun moeten geven, zodat zij aan de nieuwe eisen kunnen voldoen.

Nederland kan een veel meer proactieve houding aannemen op dit gebied. Dat betreft eveneens de illegale handel in hout, diamanten en wapens, zeker ook als deze producten via onze havens worden doorgevoerd. Daarbij gaat het ook om ervoor te zorgen dat medicijnen tegen betaalbare prijzen beschikbaar zijn voor patiënten in ontwikkelingslanden.

Via het Akkoord van Schokland heeft de Nederlandse regering de samenleving betrokken bij het behalen van de Millennium Ontwikkelingsdoelen. Dat is een prima zaak, maar wij vinden dat de regering dan ook gehouden is om zelf, op alle fronten, het goede voorbeeld te geven: maak van die 6,5 een 8.

Diamant zoeken in Sierra Leone. De handel blijft omstreden. FOTO REUTERS

Co-auteurs van dit artikel zijn:
Sylvia Borren *directeur Oxfam-Novib*
Ton Dietz *hoogleraar Universiteit van Amsterdam*
Alpha Barry *verbonden aan ICCO*