

Brussels, 10th of August 2016

RE: Leave no one behind in a future EU-ACP framework

Your Excellency,

We are writing to you on behalf of the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) and Lumos, two international organisations working towards an inclusive society for all.

In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted, amongst others by all signatories of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. The current discussion on the future relations between African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union (EU) is an important opportunity for the EU to live up to the 2030 Agenda's commitment of leaving no one behind (Preamble, p. 26) and demonstrate how it is being implemented in its international cooperation.

Building on the basis for inclusive societies, provided by the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, you can contribute to make the new framework one that prompts transformational change, fully in line with the 2030 Agenda's objectives and principles. Any future framework between ACP and EU must ensure the fundamental rights of the most vulnerable groups – including children, families and persons with disabilities – are respected, protected and promoted in its content and implementation measures.

Our organisations have decided to come together and develop a common position. In the light of the above and the upcoming debate on the future relations between ACP countries and the EU, we would like to share with you our key recommendations:

- **Recognise civil society:** the future framework needs to recognise civil society, including organisations representing persons with disabilities (DPOs), children and their families, as a key partner. This should be enhanced by the introduction of a mechanism similar to the European Code of Conduct on Partnership, as found in the Commission Delegated Regulation No 240/2014 of 7.1.2014 in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds.
- **Provide equal opportunities:** the framework must acknowledge that equality of opportunity, without discrimination on any grounds, is essential for ensuring sustainable and inclusive development, at the human, social and economic level.
- **Maintain the human development objective:** the human and social development objective must be maintained in the future agreement and all efforts under this objective should reach the most marginalised, including persons with disabilities and children in institutional care. The definition of human development should be in line with the 2030 Agenda and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and focus on inequalities, empowerment and human rights. It should address access to inclusive education and universal health coverage, the provision of rehabilitation services and social protection measures that include disability related costs.

- **Promote deinstitutionalisation:** the framework should contain an explicit reference to the transition from institutional to family and community based care as a priority. This would provide a basis for the creation of national and local deinstitutionalisation strategies and action plans and for the use of available funds to support families and contribute to poverty eradication. The framework should acknowledge that all children have the right to grow up in a safe environment that enables them to reach their potential; and support services should be provided to parents at home and at the community level, to ensure that families can keep their children with them. No parent should ever be placed in the situation of having to choose between keeping their children with disabilities and taking up employment. This provision would be in line with existing EU legislation, namely the Regulation 1303/2013 on the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).
- **Tackling human security challenges:** the future partnership should provide for more effective joint action on tackling transnational security challenges. Children living in poverty in developing countries are the most vulnerable to human trafficking and the future partnership must address this, as well as the particular vulnerabilities of certain groups including children in institutional care and children with disabilities.
- **Preventing violence against children and child labour:** we praise the work of the current framework and its revision in 2010 for highlighting these issues. The future framework should be in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and it should seek to further emphasise the need to prevent violence against children and end the economic exploitation of children through all forms of child labour.
- **Mechanisms for promoting implementation:** The current partnership agreement has been successful in shaping policies in partner countries, however, the new agreement should contain further mechanisms that help to promote accountability and encourage dialogue and cooperation between civil society and governments to continue to improve the implementation of these policies.

These key messages comprise only part of our respective positions. You may be interested to also look at [IDDC's position paper](#) and [Lumos' position paper](#). We would be delighted to discuss with you further our views on an inclusive post-Cotonou framework during a meeting in the upcoming weeks.

We thank you in advance for considering our request and taking into account our messages in the future negotiations. Please do not hesitate to contact us, should you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Georgette Mulheir
CEO, Lumos



Priscille Geisser
Chair, IDDC

The International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) is a global consortium of disability and development non-governmental organisations (NGOs), mainstream development NGOs and disabled people's organisations (DPOs) supporting disability and development work in more than 100 countries around the world. The aim of IDDC is to promote inclusive development internationally, with a special focus on promoting the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by all persons with disabilities living in economically poor communities in lower and middle-income countries. More information can be found at www.iddcconsortium.net.

Lumos works to end the institutionalisation of children around the world by 2050. The organisation supports children to move from institutions to family-based care, replacing outdated and harmful residential institutions with inclusive and accessible health, education and social services. More information can be found at www.wearelumos.org.