

## Invitation to the Conference:

# Right to Development / Role of CSOs

**Nicaragua**  
**November 24 – 26, 2010**

1 <sup>st</sup> day AM	Opening and Introductions
PM	Paradigm Shift (input from previous events in Prague) CSOs at a Crossroads Framework and Paradigms Global Context
Day topic	<a href="#">CSOs in Times of Crisis/Paradigm Shift</a>
2 <sup>nd</sup> day AM	Role of CSOs/Panorama Legitimacy/Quality Rights and Duties Principles (Codes of Conduct)
PM	What kind of Development? Development for Life Social Economies: alternative, local, grassroot, democratic Non-violent conflict resolution Participatory politics
Day topic	<a href="#">Right to Development/Reclaiming Political Space</a>
3 <sup>rd</sup> day AM	Principles of Identity Priorities of CSOs under Changed Paradigms
PM	Open Space for way forward and future collaboration EU-LA Goodbyes

### Rationale:

For some time, a central debate within the CONCORD family and their partners worldwide has focused on various aspects affecting the future work of non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) and civil society development organisations (CSOs). Several events have challenged current development approaches and the role of CSOs in development. Just two examples:

- **"Are we on the right track? Paradigm Review by CSOs as Development Actors"** in Prague in May 2008, and
- **"CSO Development Effectiveness - Searching New Ways"** in Prague in June 2009.
- Furthermore, CONCORD is currently in a consultation process between the European Union institutions and member states and civil society to define the future role of CSOs in shaping, monitoring and implementing European development policies (the so-called **"Structured Dialogue"** – ex-Quadrilogue and "Palermo II").

At the same time – as a consequence of the Paris Declaration agreed by donors - the **Open Forum for CSO development effectiveness** is searching for a **vision on development effectiveness** through national and international policy dialogue, taking account of the centrality of the concepts of human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and

the capacity of development actors to lead the changes they seek, as the foundation for situating CSO effectiveness, as well as the effectiveness of donors and governments. The objectives are to reach an **agreement on common principles** regarding CSO development effectiveness and an **agreement on guidelines on how to apply these principles** and documentation of good practices for context-relevant mechanisms appropriate to each country and region.

The **2008 conference on Paradigm Review** was initiated by TRIALOG and co-organised by the Ecumenical Academy Prague, the Czech platform FoRS and CONCORD. The aim was to start a dialogue between CSOs in the South, West/North and East about the basic concepts of development not only from a European perspective, but starting from the needs and expectations of the South. The common message from the Southern speakers, supported by many Western participants, was a criticism of globalisation, driven by neo-liberal capitalism, causing poverty, ecological disasters and violating human rights. This created special dynamics during the conference because participants from the East had come with different experiences and expectations. This first conference asked basic questions about development so little more than a review and a start of in-depth exchange were possible.

However, there were some shared outcomes about the **changing paradigms of development** in times of economic, financial, ecological and food crises:

- The importance of emphasising human rights and especially economic, social and cultural rights as a base on which to overcome poverty and exclusion;
- The need to provide everybody with a possibility of life in dignity and happiness; to change our perspective, to look at poor, marginalised people as genuine actors of development and to overcome the disproportionate asymmetry of power and wealth;
- The opportunity to challenge the possible tyranny of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- Justice is a pre-condition of democracy: popular democratic participation (people's participation principle) should be safeguarded whatever the dominant development paradigms or governance practices may be.;
- The importance of distinguishing between development and economic growth, because they follow completely different logics. The logic of development is real growth of humanisation. Cooperation replaces competition, wealth is meant in non-monetary terms, equality, real democracy, human needs are above profit, nature is respected, and power is used to serve not to dominate. It is better to speak about "change" than growth.

([Full documentation is available](#) on the website of TRIALOG)

Participants felt that the debate should be taken forward, with more focused contributions on practical steps for the CSO community in the South, East, West and North. Therefore a second conference was agreed to take place in a developing country with broad participation of CSOs from North and South. As Nicaragua is still an ODA cooperation or priority country for most old EU member states and was strong partner for development cooperation in the past of most new EU member states, the **conference on the role of CSOs in development will take place in November 2010 in Nicaragua.**

**The organisation of the conference is in cooperation with:**

HORIZONT3000 Nicaragua  
Universidad URACCAN, Nicaragua

**And with participation of:**

CONCORD constituency and working groups  
Open Forum  
Mesa de Articulación