

**Conference:
ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK?
PARADIGM REVIEW BY CSOs AS
DEVELOPMENT ACTORS**

Prague, Czech Republic, May 14-16, 2008

Opening and welcome by the organizers

by Christine Bedoya, Director of TRIALOG



Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends!

I have the big pleasure to welcome you to the conference “Are we on the right track? Paradigm review by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as development actors”, which is organised by TRIALOG in cooperation with CONCORD, the Ecumenical Academy Prague and the Czech NGDO platform FoRS. We really appreciate having you all here with us at this conference to share experience, analysis and ideas for future work of civil society in development.

This event will be the moment to speak about trends in development cooperation and to discuss how CSOs can make sure to find the best answers to these trends. We want to find answers to questions like:

- What kind of development are we looking for?
- Do CSOs from West, East, North and South identify the same needs and challenges?
- Are there differences but also common positions on development approaches in the member states of the EU?
- What does civil society from developing countries expect from European CSOs?

The EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007 enriched EU civil society. The 12 new member states brought new perspectives, new priorities and also new target countries into European development corporation. This conference should provide a space to look for common answers to global problems. Civil society in Europe is ready to meet the current challenges and to listen to the needs of the partner countries all over the world.

The outcome of this conference will provide a basis for a second conference during the Czech Presidency of the EU in 2009, which will focus on practical steps and the resources civil society needs in order to reach development aims. The 2009 conference will actively engage donors, EU and government officials, multinational agencies and other stakeholders responsible for shaping EU and global development policies.

The organisation of this event and the presence of guests from Latin America, Africa and Asia - which is really crucial – was only possible thanks to our cooperation partners and sponsors like the Czech and Austrian Official Development Corporation, the Regional Partnership Programme (RPP), the European Commission, the EU Permanent Representation in the Czech Republic, Oxfam Great Britain, Glopolis, Bread for the World and Fondation de France.

Let me wish you and all of us a very interesting and fruitful event with a lot of discussions during the next few days. Thank you very much!

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