

Nordic Plus Covering Statement to draft AAA of 18 March

(a covering note to all contributions of Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and UK)

1. **Time is running out:** 2008 is a critical year for action on the Millennium Development Goals. At halfway point to 2015 stock has been taken on progress in delivering better. We have made some progress, **but international progress is slower than we want.** Development cooperation must thus produce better results and contribute more extensively to poverty reduction on the ground. This requires a new and more equal partnership relation for which the Paris Declaration is the guide. Ownership as the key, less bureaucracy by harmonisation, walk the talk of alignment, a better knowledge of facts, working towards results and being accountable at all levels, are the challenges that we need to meet. Our renewed collective efforts are essential if we are to achieve results, because **we are not satisfied with performance to date.**
2. More equal partnerships, reduced conditionality, more predictable behaviour, less tying of aid, partner led and responsive capacity development, more efficient division of labour and aid agencies that are built around incentives to **produce results on the ground.** These are the concrete issues that need substantial progress. At the same time **aid dependency must be reduced** to achieve real ownership. Sustainable development requires a stronger focus on enhancing domestic incomes and revenues in partner countries and practising policy coherence to promote synergies with other policy areas and to prevent aid resources to be rendered inefficient or wasted.
3. HLF3 brings together donor and partner country ministers, multilateral agency heads, officials, and civil society representatives to **review progress and accelerate action** towards meeting the 2005 commitments – to identify what more must be done and to make the appropriate commitments to ensure that the necessary actions are taken by all partners.
4. HLF3's drive for **better aid** forms part of a **triad of key events** in the 2008 development agenda alongside the MDG Call to Action for **better results** and Financing for Development for **more aid.** The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is an essential element in a global effort to step up efforts to **reduce poverty.** The spotlight is now on the international community to live up to the commitments made.
5. The Paris Declaration is fundamentally a **reform agenda** to support the building of more **effective states** and sustained delivery of the MDG's. It is a critical driver of the international system's effectiveness. It sets standards for the quality of aid across the international aid system. But it **requires political will.** With slow progress in aid volumes, the global economic downturn and the continued challenges in meeting the MDG's, HLF3 must signal real change and not fuel further scepticism in the wider public on the international development 'campaign'.
6. **The PD is delivering results.** The PD's monitoring and evaluation findings confirm that donor behaviour is changing and the quality of aid is improving. In order to enhance progress, it is a challenge to all of us to be accountable to each other and to each of our own constituencies to make the Paris Declaration work better and to realise all actions within the set timetable in this agenda.
7. International commitments on **human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability,** including **climate change,** and **corruption** are cornerstones for delivering better results for poor people and we must strengthen our efforts to integrate these into implementation of the Paris Declaration. UN Conventions and resolutions form a basis for all development cooperation. Those are the challenges for which a number of practical actions have been identified in this Agenda, to be undertaken before 2010.
8. We recognise that application of the Paris Declaration commitments depend on the country contexts and that we face particular challenges in contributing to building of responsive states in situations of fragility and conflict.

9. We recognise the role of civil society as development actors in their own right. And we call upon **civil society organisations** and others, in particular **private businesses, global funds and philanthropic organisations to work with us** for more effective aid and development. We encourage these partners to share the principles of the Paris Declaration and help to achieve a more coherent and collaborative effort through practical commitments that will assist our partners in reducing poverty, promote growth and foster effective states. We would welcome a civil society statement within 2010 on how the organisations will apply aid effectiveness principles in their own activities.
10. We call on international organisations to meet their Paris commitments and strive to **improve the impact of multilateral aid**. We will actively collaborate to support current UN efforts to streamline its operations according to the **One UN** programme.
11. Looking ahead, the development landscape will continue to change rapidly over the coming years and the Paris Principles must be adaptable to them. We requested the WPEFF and associates to begin work now on ensuring new thinking is brought to bear in time for agreement at HLF4 on critical issues so that:
- Development cooperation **is allocated more efficiently** between and within countries and for greatest impact on poverty
 - **Partner countries play an enhanced role in driving reforms** in aid effectiveness, with the Paris targets expanded to address more strongly key issues of importance for partner countries.
 - **Donors and partner countries continue to be held accountable** for improving the effectiveness of development cooperation, with strengthened efforts to ensure rigorous and independent monitoring of progress.
 - There are **clear and monitorable standards for ensuring greater policy coherence** for development
 - There is **greater synergy** and complementarity between the work of the **Working Party on Aid Effectiveness hosted by the DAC and the UN Development Cooperation Forum**.