

Results Working Group 1

Human rights and Governance – Involvement of civil society?

- The Strategy reflects a European perspective rather than African priorities (e.g. food security, gender, AIDS, rural development as the aim of trade and infrastructure)
- Ownership is a real issue. We heard from the Austrian government speaker that even African governments are not aware of the Strategy (only the African Union); so they probably were not able to influence the Strategy.
- We recommend that it be clarified what steps will be taken for this to become a joint EU-Africa Strategy that reflects African priorities.
- Priorities will differ from country to country, so they should be elaborated by governments and local NGOs.
- Many of the principles in the Strategy are fine, but what will matter is how they are implemented through practical steps.
- Governance and human rights are important. Governance is a key underlying element, e.g. in relation to food security and food distribution. It is justified to ask for transparency and good governance. Donors can use their influence, but this should be linked with the real experiences of NGOs.
 - For example, in Ethiopia, one of the NGOs participating in the country was forced to leave out human rights from its activities in order to be registered by the government.
- Governance must be looked at from an African point of view. Accountability of governments to their citizens should be the focus, and civil society should be strengthened so that citizens can demand their rights.
- Europeans should admit issues such as corruption also pose problems in our societies, we are not only giving lessons.
- Human rights must be seen as the other side of the coin of development. Social rights can be an entry point for a human rights approach.
- The Strategy can be useful to hold governments to account for their commitments. Milestones and indicators should be elaborated and monitored.
- NGOs can inform their African partners of decision-making processes in relation to the implementation of the Strategy (e.g. programming of the 10th European Development Fund) so that they can participate.
- Development education should also be an important element of the Strategy.