

Partnership with the Poor

Mutual Commitments in Development Policy Cooperation

*Report by the Group of Experts
on "World Economy and Social Ethics"*

*Published by the
German Bishops' Conference
Research Group on the
Universal Tasks of the Church*

Partnership with the Poor – Mutual Commitments in Development Policy
Cooperation.

Published by the German Bishops' Conference Research Group

Bonn, February 2005

ISBN 3-932535-86-3 (German Commission for Justice and Peace)

Available from the Universal Church and Migration Division (Bereich
Weltkirche und Migration) of the Deutsche Bischofskonferenz (German
Bishops' Conference), Kaiserstrasse 161, D-53113 Bonn, Germany
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Table of Contents

0 Introduction7

1 Development Cooperation Always Means Influence9

 1.1 *On the term development cooperation9*

 1.2 *Development cooperation bodies10*

 1.3 *Forms of exerting influence11*

 1.4 *Conditions for the effectiveness of development cooperation14*

 1.5 *Misunderstandings and practical problems as difficulties for partnerships16*

2 A Normative Reflection on "Partnership" in Development Cooperation 18

 2.1 *Development as an alleviation of human suffering18*

 2.2 *Solidarity20*

 2.3 *Participation21*

 2.4 *Subsidiarity23*

 2.5 *Development cooperation between fundamental ethical orientation and political implementation24*

3 Ten Basic Rules of "Partnership" and "Conditionality"25

 3.1 *Respect for human dignity26*

 3.2 *Common goals26*

 3.3 *Responsible and transparent choice of partners 26*

 3.4 *Reciprocal conditionality27*

 3.5 *Recognition of independence27*

 3.6 *Mutual enhancement28*

 3.7 *Reliability and permanence28*

 3.8 *Accountability and transparency29*

 3.9 *Fair rules of conflict29*

 3.10 *Shared responsibility in the event of failure29*

4 Partnership in Key Areas of Development Cooperation30

4.1 Public Development Cooperation30

 4.1.1 Bilateral development cooperation30

 4.1.2 Multilateral development cooperation32

4.2 Non-state development cooperation35

 4.2.1 Civil society organisations35

 4.2.2 Churches40

5 Final Remarks: From Rhetoric to Reality43

Brief information on the publisher and authors of this report

The Publisher

The **Research Group on the Universal Tasks of the Church** is an organisation appointed by the Commission for the Universal Tasks of the Church at the German Bishops' Conference. The research group is made up of professors from various disciplines and has been commissioned with conducting research into questions relating to the global responsibilities of the church in Germany.

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The group of experts on **Global Economics and Social Ethics** is a specialist committee of the Research Group on Universal Tasks of the Church at the German Bishops' Conference. It was appointed in 1989 to advise institutions of the Catholic church on questions of global economic development. In terms of objectives and members, the committee strives to combine expertise on economics and social ethics.

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0 Introduction

The term "partnership" is used in various contexts: it covers personal relationships just as it does "strategic alliances" or "social partnerships" between major groups in society. The term always has connotations of emphasising shared interests and goals and fair participation by all, both in costs and benefits.

For decades now, the term "partnership" has also been used in the realm of development policy cooperation. Users of the term intend to emphasise, against the background of the colonial past and a continuing imbalance of power, that relations as between equals – "eye-to-eye level" – and the recognition of aid recipients as people, groups or states with equal rights are needed. Because only then can the goals of "development" borne by the poor themselves and the creation of the institutional and structural frameworks required for this be achieved. However, the partnership concept cannot hide the fact that there is an imbalance in the relations which, if it were not there, would mean that no development cooperation is needed at all. It is the aid donors who usually have the opportunity to expressly or, in a less direct form, via "political dialogue" set the conditions, while aid recipients are frequently compelled to accept these conditions. The widespread partnership rhetoric neither always coincides completely with the actual forms of cooperation, nor has it been sufficiently explained as to whether and to what extent the setting of conditions for the provision of aid is ethically justified. Use of the term partnership occasionally covers over latent tensions, differing interests and subtle exertions of influence.

However, recent years have increasingly seen discussion take place at various levels on what partnership can mean in the field of development cooperation, on what mutual commitments must arise for all sides from this and in what way certain conditions are also ethically justified in development cooperation. Experts tend to use the key and emotive word "conditionality" to label these conditions. The report at hand aims to support this process of reflection and to raise awareness for the problems and the opportunities of partnership-based cooperation in the field of development policy, namely among the staff and decision-makers of institutions and organisations working in the field of development cooperation, among those in positions of political responsibility and among the general public. Because only if there is at least some degree of awareness for the problems in the broad public debate will it be possible to avoid respectively repel simplifying statements which extend across the whole

spectrum from authoritarian paternalism to naïve caution. The belief that one could prescribe a specific development path for the poor respectively for poor countries, without taking their own conceptions into consideration and without taking them seriously as subjects in their own development, constitutes an act of paternalism. The other pole believes, for moralistic reasons, that no use should be made whatsoever of any kind of condition or control. However, this means having to accept the risk of funds being misused and development projects failing, and possibly even means playing into the hands of those who oppress and exploit the poor.

Initially, the report will briefly explain its concept of development cooperation and will present forms of development cooperation and development cooperation agencies. This shows that every form of development cooperation means influence and explains the problems which consequently arise for each and every development partnership. Building on the basis of a fundamental ethical reflection of development cooperation in the second chapter, the third chapter will draw up ten basic rules on implementing the partnership concept in development cooperation. Working on the basis of the presented guidelines and against the background of the findings drawn from the first chapter, Chapter 4 will make recommendations on how to deal responsibly with the call for partnership between aid donors and recipients.

1 Development Cooperation Always Means Influence

1.1 On the term development cooperation

In everyday language, the terms "development policy" and "development aid" are often used synonymously. In fact, *development policy* is the farther-reaching, more general term which describes the entirety of all measures which are used to work towards a specific "development". Initially, these include political measures at the level of the individual "developing countries", as well as measures taken at international level, like in the field of organising the international trade and monetary system.¹ Development policy is expected to create conditions for the development of all people which extends beyond mere subsistence and purely material well-being. Besides economic-financial aspects, it equally includes social, political and cultural fields. *Development aid* is a constituent part of development policy. The term development aid is used when development cooperation agencies make long-term resources available which are important to the development process; indeed, these resources are made available at conditions which deviate, to the benefit of the recipients, to a politically-defined, minimum degree from usual market conditions.

For political reasons, it has become customary to talk of "cooperation" rather than "aid". This is done to express the fact that effective support for developing countries in their development process cannot be achieved through any paternalistic aid from outside, but rather only on the basis of partnership. However, this new term stands out through a number of imprecisions: on the one hand, it induces associations of partnership, even when unilateral aid is involved, while, on the other, the term is occasionally used for all development-promoting measures, including, for example, structural reforms of the global trade and finances system which have a positive impact on the developing country without external resources actually being made available. The report at hand uses the term development cooperation synonymously with development aid in the narrower sense, i.e. without consideration of commercial trading relations.

¹ cf. the report "Global Finances and Human Development" by the Group of Experts, Bonn 2001.

1.2 Development cooperation bodies

The forms of development cooperation and the bodies working in this field are so different; the potential relations between them so complex that "partnership" must of necessity take on a very different definition in each case. In order not to give an all too simplistic view of the problems, it is necessary for this complexity to be at least roughly outlined. First of all, it is possible to differentiate between three different forms of cooperation: *financial*, *technical* and *personnel (human resources)*. As far as the various bodies are concerned, development cooperation can be divided into *official* and *non-official* development cooperation. Non-official development cooperation is provided by non-governmental organisations and the churches, while official development cooperation is offered by governments and multilateral organisations. The latter include the European Union, sub-organisations of the United Nations and, above all, the World Bank, which pursues general development policy goals, above all to combat poverty. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose responsibilities mainly lie in stabilising the international monetary system and in assisting with balance of payments imbalances has, above all since the start of the debt problem, taken on a development policy role which in turn has also led to greater cooperation with the World Bank. The term *Public-Private Partnership* (PPP) is used wherever official development policy collaborates with private organisations; however, the report at hand will not address this aspect.

Official development cooperation is usually based on treaties between participating governments or international organisations. However, the past ten to fifteen years have seen the focus shift from project to programme aid. Agreements between donor and recipient countries became more comprehensive and increasingly include the overall policy of a developing country. One example of this is provided by the "poverty reduction strategy papers" (PRSP) which are agreed in connection with debt reduction measures. The significance of globally adopted goals, such as the "Millennium Development Goals" (MDG), also increased. Nevertheless, different donor countries partly pursue differing interests and goals, which is why donor conflicts arise which agreements on work-sharing and on national or sectoral focuses of development cooperation (donor coordination) then have to seek to defuse.

Although governments are the contact points for official development cooperation, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

(Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung – BMZ) also supports church aid organisations and non-governmental organisations. Non-governmental bodies working in the field of development cooperation choose their partners on the basis of their own criteria which they must justify vis-à-vis their financial sponsors. A particular feature of church development cooperation lies in the fact that it can link up with partnerships that already exist in a wide variety of forms: church communities actively look for partner organisations; episcopal relief organisations already fund and support meaningful projects in the preparatory phase upon application. Dioceses can make use of diocesan structures for partnerships, while religious orders can use the relationships between the local orders.

1.3 Forms of exerting influence

All development cooperation by governmental and non-governmental bodies aims to improve the situation in the recipient country. Even when donors leave the definition of goals and their implementation completely to the recipients, they still change the situation in the recipient country with their aid. This is why every form of development cooperation also represents an exertion of influence which must additionally reckon with *unwanted side-effects*. Such side-effects occur, for example, when the aid causes funds from the national budgets of the developing countries being released for other projects which possibly hardly benefit development at all (e.g. unwarranted arms purchases), so-called fungibility effect. The attempt to influence may take a direct or an indirect form, but may also be hidden and secret. As a rule, the award of aid is subject to certain conditions which are generally described here under the general heading of "conditionality". It is clear that massive influence can be exerted via such conditions. However, various levels and contexts need to be observed:

Simply the formulation of *general development policy goals* by the donor sets conditions. Because, firstly, these may possibly exclude countries, regions or projects from funding which, upon closer consideration, should meaningfully be supported. Secondly, recipients will at least refer to these goals when drawing up their funding applications in order to improve their chances. Dependence on external funding exerts pressure on public and civil society actors in developing countries to adapt to the respective external focuses. This "implicit conditionality" may mean that developing countries have already accepted the

preferences and targets of industrial countries in advance when they submit their application.

Every funding policy reaches its decision on the basis of certain *selection criteria*. These criteria may be explicitly and then more or less unequivocally worded or may be relatively unfathomable or arbitrary. Whatever the case may be, they already exert an influence on the form of the application and on how the aid recipient draws up the measures; the recipient will always endeavour to comply with the criteria. Critics of such aid "conditionality" emphasise that these conditions serve to covertly pursue the self-interests of donor countries or, at least, serve to set the donor's cultural standards as the yardstick which do not coincide with the recipient's cultural standards. Non-governmental bodies also have criteria for the selection of partners and projects, even though these are often not drawn up quite so unequivocally. Some non-governmental organisations pursue very specific development policy goals, what also explains why their selection criteria are more narrowly defined.

Agreements are generally concluded for the *execution* of individual projects. They define the joint goals, the required financial and non-financial contributions by the parties to the agreement and the performance review respectively project evaluation formalities. Further conditions are found in the definition of target groups, schedules for the implementation of measures, the precise project design and the conditions which are intended to guarantee the viability of projects. Such conditions are justified here to the extent that they define the actual general requirements needed for the sustainable success of development projects. This is particularly significant when the purpose is indeed only achievable under certain conditions or when only specific conditions can serve to ensure that the aid is used for the agreed purpose. So, for example, in the case of direct poverty-oriented projects it must be ensured that the aid really does reach those in need.

Ideally, conditions are not imposed unilaterally but are rather agreed upon by both sides in cooperation talks. The question of negotiating power and the distribution of cooperation yields plays an important role here. Tying aid to conditions which can also indirectly be achieved through the introduction of technical standards can prove to be morally questionable, for example, when the aid may be awarded as a cheap loan while the recipient, on the other hand, is forced through the conditions to purchase goods at a higher price than could have been achieved without the tied aid. Contractual terms will generally be problematical when they provide aid subject to counterpayments which have

nothing to do with the success of the programmes. Such "deals" generally burden third parties and can be tantamount to "coercion".

Long-term development cooperation between countries is based on treaties or international agreements. In view of the power imbalances between the countries, it must be assumed that the interests of the stakeholders are not equally considered in such agreements, but rather that the richer and more powerful countries exercise greater influence and so define goals and conditions which correspond more strongly with their perspective of the development problems. Even where poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) are drawn up and agreed on in developing countries with participation by civil society, the participating civil society organisations are not always able to recognise themselves in the results of the process – which, on the other hand, does not in each case necessarily have to be a disadvantage, because the recommendations and demands of civil society are not always right, especially since they often contradict each other.

According to the German federal government, it makes its decisions on the scope and fields of development cooperation on the basis of the "Criteria of German development cooperation" (*Kriterien der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*). These criteria also apply to the European Union's development cooperation. These criteria are

1. Respect of human rights
2. Participation by the population in political decisions
3. Rule of law and guaranteed legal security
4. Establishment of a market-friendly and social economic order which protects property and encourages private initiative
5. Development orientation of government action (to improve the economic and social situation of poor population groups, the ecology, population policy, renunciation of excessive arms).

Germany's development policy goals which are implicitly expressed here are probably hardly contentious in this general form. In the concrete application of these criteria, however, they act as "conditionality", as fixed and unilaterally-defined conditions of aid.

Cooperation criteria in development programmes or the conditions set when project contracts are signed can formulate various goals. For example, conditionality can call either for the existence of or for a specific quality of political institution (low corruption rate) or can focus on the realisation of economic targets. In the latter case, for its part, micro-economic conditionality may prevail which directly affects the project or its immediate environment, or macro-economic conditionality may exist which aims to influence the economic policy of the recipient country. Conditionality can set general goals, such as general economic growth, or can pursue specific socio-political goals, such as a more even distribution of wealth, a focus on the poor and the environment. Conditionality can also prescribe specific instruments considered suitable for achieving specific goals in the short, medium or long term.

All in all, it can be seen that those who want to help, also want to achieve something. This is not possible without the use of influence. The call for "partnership" consequently does not mean dispensing with the use of influence; rather it means arranging the unavoidable influence in such a way that it is above all the poor who profit from the cooperation.

1.4 Conditions for the effectiveness of development cooperation

Because explicit conditions are above all justified by the fact that they are seen as a necessary prerequisite for the jointly aspired success of development cooperation, analyses can help in this context to try to determine the actual effectiveness of the development cooperation. Recent years have seen many macro-economic effectiveness analyses carried out and discussed. The most important conclusions of these so-called assessing aid studies are: development cooperation is above all able to promote existing potentials and to train people, or as economists put it "to create human capital" so that they can then rely on their own initiative. Financial cooperation can only be effective in countries with "good governance". Donors only have few options with which they can use financial cooperation to influence the politics of the recipient country against its will. Development goals can apparently neither be dictated nor bought. The decisive question is whether the development aid really corresponds with the goals of the partner, whether the funded projects meet their needs and whether, despite the external support, they remain subjects within their own development.

Or in other words: it is decisive that those who carry out a project or programme, participate in it or are to benefit from it, can identify with its goals and really "embrace" the project or programme.

This important prerequisite is discussed under the heading of "ownership" in development policy debates. In view of the dependencies and asymmetries between recipients and donors, it will probably prove difficult to achieve complete concordance in every case. But, conditions and stipulations can only be effectively implemented when the recipients themselves are able to perceive them as suitable ways to solve problems. Otherwise, opposition is secretly mobilised, for example, by recipients verbally accepting the external conditions, but only partly and sluggishly translating them into practice. In the field of state development cooperation, "ownership" by the government of the recipient country is not enough on its own when measures face rejection in society. Influential social groups, for example corrupt elites, can form an opposition when they see their privileges endangered through the external conditions of development cooperation, just as can large parts of the population when they experience themselves as the "losers" of these measures or consider the proposed measures to be incorrect.

The tension between the required "ownership" and the externally imposed conditions of aid means that the question of whether conditionality is actually capable of achieving the desired effects at all is the subject of controversial discussion in the development policy debate. Where successes are to be seen, say critics, these are not to be attributed to the fact that conditionality had influenced the policies of the recipients, but rather, they claim, to the circumstance that the correct policies would also have been practised without conditionality. Conversely, they say, there are many examples of failed programmes or projects, even though these had been subject to conditions. There is no dispute that it is above all the choice of countries, partners and projects before a cooperation agreement is reached that is important, and less so the concrete conditions which are imposed within this cooperation, because the latter can only be put into practice and controlled with difficulty.

Further studies on improving the effectiveness of development cooperation have shown that institutional and structural improvements to frameworks are decisive in reducing poverty. Furthermore, all projects must be adapted to the country-specific, socio-cultural conditions. A help for self-help approach promotes individual initiative and avoids the danger of a permanent expectation of help arising. Above all in the field of non-official aid, surveys prove that there is a

high correlation between a good partnership and the effectiveness of development cooperation. Over and above this, world economic and world political contexts naturally also interfere with or improve a country's development chances and so the effectiveness of development cooperation measures.

1.5 Misunderstandings and practical problems as difficulties for partnerships

Donors and recipients should share the goal of contributing to successful and effective development partnership. Both encounter the problems of partnerships in development cooperation which are outlined in the following. Their differing perspectives can productively complement and correct each other in the search for a solution when the partnership provides for the requisite communication and mutual trust for this.

Goal-setting problems

Donors and recipients can agree on general development policy goals, but agreement on certain programmes can nevertheless lead to conflicts. There may be agreement on the programme, but that does not necessarily mean consensus on the projects to implement the programme. The problems of setting goals together can, not least, result from:

- differing priorities as can generally arise within the recipient or donor country or even between them ("national security has priority over improvements to the water supply" – or vice versa);
- differing schools of thought with differing solution models behind which objectively conflicting goals may also lie ("education is more important for development than water supplies" – or vice versa);
- the shortage of financial resources which force a decision to be made between several equally necessary and effective strategies ("water supply and education are equally important, but there is only enough money for one project");
- the need to weigh up between short and long-term strategies with their differing impacts ("water filters rather than wells").

These goal-setting problems mean that the process of searching for a consistent, medium-term economic and development policy strategy is also no easy task in a partnership-based dialogue.

Problems of knowledge and understanding

All societies have their own social norms which need to be considered in the implementation of development policy measures. While economic conditions, institutional structures and legal provisions are easier to communicate to outside agents, informal mechanisms (cultural norms, implicit knowledge) are frequently difficult to access. And so a project may fail because a local from a "wrong" social group is appointed as a department head and his instructions are ignored by the members of other social groups. Even locally present agents are not immune to an inadequate perception of internal problems and contexts. Non-governmental organisations equally face the question as to whether or not their analyses and methods correspond with the social circumstances of the countries in which they work. A partnership-based approach can contribute substantially to solving such intercultural cooperation problems and so improve the effectiveness of development cooperation.

Triggering or intensifying conflicts

Any poverty-oriented development cooperation pursues the goal of eliminating the underlying causes of impoverishment. This is why it will encounter power structures in developing and industrial countries which cause or consolidate poverty (large-scale land ownership, trading monopolies, corruption). Changing these structures can cause smouldering conflicts to break out or intensify those which have already manifested themselves, because the privileges of those who want to retain such structures to their own advantage are threatened. The situation becomes problematical when those who are not directly affected, because they are in the safe position of an outsider, allow these conflicts to escalate. But because, on the other hand, social change without conflict is hardly conceivable, their complete avoidance cannot be the goal – and especially not when these smoulder under the surface and their solution is urgently needed for the good of society. Rather, donors need to take on responsibility for the consequences and consider to what extent existing conflicts can be defused, settled peacefully and overcome.

Coordination and coherence problem

The recipients of development aid generally not only find themselves confronted by the specifically targeted exertion of influence by a single actor, but rather with a large number of such actors. This can lead to the problem that their development policy goals, programmes, project proposals or recommended actions often contradict each other. And so, for example, one recommendation might be for the country to retain its own natural resources and, possibly, to use these to generate foreign currency earnings through ecotourism, while another proposal might set its sights on the direct marketing of these resources, through the export of tropical timber, for example. Frequently, the various donors fail to succeed in appropriately fine-tuning and coordinating their programmes. This not only applies to governmental development cooperation bodies, but also to non-governmental organisations working in this field of development cooperation.

Furthermore, contradictions in *one* sponsor's various policy areas can obstruct the development of a consistent development strategy by a recipient. This is the case, for example, when EU *development* policy funds the creation of an infrastructure for agricultural exports (beef exports), while EU *agricultural* policy impedes such imports into the EU or puts the success of the EU's own development projects at risk through aggressive export dumping (subsidised agricultural exports).

2 A Normative Reflection on "Partnership" in Development Cooperation

2.1 Development as an alleviation of human suffering

Before any basic rules can be drawn up for partnership-based development cooperation, it is first necessary to inquire into the fundamental ethical principles of development cooperation. Those who do this hear very different arguments from the various actors and stakeholders, ranging from references to their own interests, on the one hand, and to the call for solidarity, on the other: from virtuous altruism through to a war on terrorism, from defusing the North-South conflict to combating the causes of refugee flows, from reparation for colonial exploitation to international peacekeeping. In the context of the East-

West conflict, non-political and military-strategic reasons were also mentioned, while economic motives have always existed: stabilising the supply of raw materials and resources, securing jobs by increasing exports to developing countries, and achieving higher profits for all through the greater global division of labour.

From an ethical perspective, however, development cooperation and the standards that guide it must be warranted by overriding requirements and must be ethically justified. This also has consequences for the call for participation or partnership as well as for the criteria of conditionality.

Every feasible reason first of all requires an appropriate understanding of development, including the development policy goals, a requirement not only in respect of the poor countries of the South, but today also in respect of the transformation countries of the East and the continuing development of the rich countries of the North. Any ethical reflection on these problems should therefore as far as possible be universally and interculturably communicable. Its substantiation must above all be based on fundamental experiences shared by as many people as possible in order to promote broad and comprehensive cooperation.

A highly-promising approach among many possible ones that meet these criteria starts from human vulnerability respectively from common human experience of suffering and injustice. Obvious and fundamental forms of such experience are hunger, illness, poverty or oppression, as well as various forms of discrimination or the denial of democratic rights. The destruction of cultural traditions is also part of such experience – albeit that it is necessary to consider the fact that even deeply-rooted traditions can be inhuman. Based on this understanding, the goal of development policy, and so also of development cooperation is, first of all, to overcome human suffering and major injustice in all its forms and dimensions, respectively, to keep it, as far as possible, within bounds.

This understanding of development and of development cooperation can also be reflected in a positive formulation, for example, in the sense of a "right to development". From a moral perspective, however, priority first goes to improving the situation of the poorest. And so, this approach, based on the experience of suffering and injustice, corresponds with an understanding of development which shifts the focus on overcoming the major restrictions on individual opportunity in life, of unfreedom and blatant injustice and so an extension of freedoms and participative opportunities.

In this context, "suffering" is to be understood in a holistic sense, i.e. it encompasses physical and non-physical suffering. It is always about human experiences which continue to be culturally independent in their as yet unreflected basic form and are nowhere merely accepted, but, so to speak, they scream out to be overcome or at least demand a plausible explanation. Negative experience makes the aspired goal dialectically visible. Human rights, too, can be understood by this approach as the imperative of a "Not like that!", without having to fall back directly on any specific philosophical or religious traditions.

Philosophy offers numerous approaches which in the reasoning of ethics and morals more or less expressly refer to suffering and experiences of injustice. Just the imperative alone "Don't do unto others what you don't want done unto yourself!" can be traced back to this basis. And so the fact that it contains a normative appeal is one of the characteristics of suffering and injustice. Of course, it is only possible to speak of ethics when the initial merely spontaneous and intuitive rejection is joined by the critical intellectual judgement and conscious responsibility. However, this in no way changes the realisation that the value of feeling, which is part of every experience of suffering and which precedes the intellectual judgement, is important, at least as an indicator of human behaviour. And for just this reason it is interculturally easier to communicate and, moreover, possesses greater motivational force.

2.2 Solidarity

Humans are able to place themselves in the position of suffering fellow humans and to a certain extent are able to share in their suffering. Such compassion, a spontaneous, almost inevitable reaction when confronted by the victims in person (or even in pictures or reports), is based in one's own experiences of suffering and in a feeling of unity with others. And so the call "Not like that!" is also directed to those who only suffer with the others, and contains a strong inducement to help the victims. This is why it can be viewed as a basis of all solidarity.

The logic of this approach contains a priority option for the poor which provides the solidarity with a specific character. Priority attention must be given to those who are not able to satisfy even their elementary basic needs and are affected by particular emergencies. All policies at national and international level must, therefore, be poverty-oriented or, to be more precise, poor-oriented.

Solidary action *beyond the immediate living environment* and the obligation for the rich (countries) to engage in solidarity with the poor (countries) can also be explained by this. This new responsibility, which did not use to exist in this form, arises from the globalisation of the view of human suffering, as has been made possible by the modern media. It is also grounded in the growing interdependence of the world in which the political decisions, above all those by powerful countries, have far-reaching impacts on development opportunities in poor countries.

But solidarity not only has a spatial but also a temporal dimension. It encompasses *intergenerational* solidarity both with the past and with the future. On the one hand, the suffering and victims of the past must not simply be forgotten. This is why it is also possible to see some development projects as part of the reparation for past suffering, e.g. genocide of natives. On the other hand, it is important, as far as this is foreseeable, to include possible future victims of the present-day living conditions into the policy impact assessments as well. In other words, the economic and social problems of today must not be viewed separately from the question of maintaining and securing the natural bases of life for future generations.

2.3 Participation

The ethical approach presented here implies a global view which revolves around real people. This leads to a fundamental ethical imperative: Focus, bearer and goal of all development must be the people themselves. This implies both rights as well as, conversely, the appropriate responsibility.

If this is so, development must always primarily be "development from below", that is a development not only *for* but rather also *with* and *through* the people themselves, particularly the poor and "others" with their own socio-cultural identity. In fact, complete exclusion from general and individual participation in development is *a form of fundamental suffering*, because it is perceived as unfreedom, injustice and discrimination.

In addition, there are also *pragmatic reasons* for enabling participation by as many people as possible in the development process. Because it is they who, in the final analysis, have to perform the necessary work. This is about the active co-determination of and creative involvement in political measures and aid

programmes and so the improvement of one's own living conditions; and, what is more, this participation already begins in the decision-making process and not only once the project's realisation has begun. Only when this is the case will local people also be able to identify with such projects ("ownership") and develop the necessary self-confidence in their own resources. Conversely, without the active involvement of the average population, in particular, all development efforts will in the long term be in vain.

After all, participation is a *development sociological request*, because true development as a permanent and far-reaching socio-cultural transformation process absolutely needs the participation of the population and a gradual change in its attitudes and behaviours. As long as those affected, and especially the poor, are not taken serious, but rather remain socially and politically excluded, they will reject such changes for good reason.

It is certainly not easy to organise development and the requisite political processes in such a way as to make the highest degree of participation possible. But all development policies, whether private, public or international, must contribute to creating structural frameworks which enable the poor to themselves contribute to improving their living situation. Because those affected best know their needs and living conditions, have the greatest interest in improving their situation and, in most cases, are rich in practical experience in solving their everyday problems. Their active participation with the goal of promoting the existing individual potential is consequently the key to any successful development policy. Support, especially when it comes from outside, should improve the frameworks and, in addition and as far as possible, only provide initial aid in order not to permanently paralyse individual initiative and damage people's self-esteem and respect.

If participation is to be a continuous dimension of all development, then no group and no individual must be excluded from participation. This means that it calls for solidarity between the poor as well as for a minimum of solidarity of the rich with the poor. Both require a difficult learning process. Many poor people first need to arduously learn that the success of solidary cooperation and common action is dependent on many factors, like participation (motivation), consensus and a willingness to become involved. The rich (countries), which mostly know only little about the living conditions of the poor (countries), must first develop the necessary awareness for their situation and their justified

interests. Only when this happens can the degree of commonalities required for development be produced in a society as a fundamental form of social capital.²

However, the endeavours for participation simultaneously also call for rationality and realism when people's own capacities are assessed, especially the poor. It must recognise the limits to their capacity to participate and to engage in self-help. We must not fall prey to the wishful thinking that these are people with strengths only, but no weaknesses. The general population, too, as well as civil society and the poor are often prejudiced and ignorant, and among them, too, group egoism, power abuse and corruption will be found.

2.4 Subsidiarity

Solidarity and participation need to be combined under structural consideration by the principle of subsidiarity. The obligation to provide help for self-help and the right to general and individual participation must be warranted by institutional measures in order not to become dependent on the more or less arbitrary goodwill of the state and of those in power. Particular emphasis attaches here to decentral decision-making structures which encourage individual initiative, be it that of those directly affected, that of local and regional authorities or of intermediary non-state organisations. Yet, subsidiarity also means that the respective state levels must not be allowed to withdraw from their responsibility for those tasks which only they can perform, especially when it is about providing help for those who cannot help themselves.

This is why previously more or less excluded groups – in developing countries frequently representing large parts of the population – need to be integrated into the process of development. But, above all, the people must not be *impeded* in their individual initiative. This particularly affects women, who often face multiple discrimination, namely as poor people, as women and, possibly, additionally as members of ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, it is they, in particular, who, as all experience has shown, contribute most to the survival of their families and who create initiatives of the poor aimed at improving their lot. However, the main responsibility for the success or failure of all development

² cf. the report "Social Capital. A Component in the Battle against the Poverty of Societies". Study by the Group of Experts on "World Economy and Social Ethics", Bonn 2001 (also available in German 2000).

policies above all lies with those with power and influence, in politics, business and industry and society. It is their task to undertake the necessary structural reforms so that the sustainable reduction or even elimination of poverty becomes possible. It is above all they who need to encourage the economic initiative of people, an enormous but frequently barren potential. This above all calls for improved access for the poor to loans and know-how, to public services, beginning with outpatient clinics and schools and extending all the way through to marketing advice, roughly equal opportunity and legal security for all.

For as much as this depends on the people themselves, without beneficial frameworks, all development efforts "from below" will build on shaky ground. In addition, people not only act in accordance with individual values and preferences, but also largely orientate their actions in line with their social environment and, what is more, in the South no less so than in the North. Self-help organisations like action groups, trade unions or cooperatives will only be able to flourish long-term if they have a halfway favourable political environment.

This also applies to international cooperation, not only in the field of development aid but in all relations. To this extent, it is necessary to support the call for good governance. In fact, the five criteria for German development cooperation already mentioned above (cf. Chapter 1.5) are principles which can also be derived from the above remarks. Of course, they can only be represented with credibility if the countries of the North themselves also orientate their actions in line with the demand for the observance of human rights, for democratic participation for the population, for the rule of law, for a market-friendly and social economic order as for the principle of sustainable development, and also resolutely apply these when organising their international relations.

2.5 Development cooperation between fundamental ethical orientation and political implementation

The proposed normative approach offers a basic ethical orientation which naturally needs to thoroughly analyse social structures and be implemented into political action. The analysis must examine and uncover those political, economic and socio-cultural contexts and causal structures which bring about the concrete suffering, as well as look for and offer answers and solutions for politics and practical action. The often neglected analysis of the socio-cultural

system, which has a key development role to play, is particularly important. Without such an analysis, there is always a danger of the initiation of compassion exhausting itself in some form of non-committal "consternation". The basic experience of suffering is neither a substitute for good analysis nor can it guarantee such analysis. In addition, its results are seldom unequivocal, and can rather lead to differences of opinion for reasons which are intrinsic to the subject itself and are, therefore, legitimate. This applies to an even greater extent to the action level, because various political options can often be derived from one and the same analysis. However, as they are implemented, these always and above all need to be checked against fundamental ethical criteria. This never unequivocal communication process demands political shrewdness, a feeling for the doable, learning from mistakes and long-term thinking.

International declarations and agreements which already define and generally accept a basic framework of ethically-founded demands are particularly valuable for translating fundamental ethical options into development policy action. This is why it is useful, in addition to a fundamental ethical reflection, to refer to such texts which represent the present state of international agreement on the principles and goals of development policy action.

In this respect, the so-called "Millennium Development Goals" are currently particularly important. The declaration, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2003, ceremoniously proclaims eight goals based on quantitative criteria: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, to achieve universal primary education, to promote gender equality and empower women, to reduce child mortality, to improve maternal health, to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, to ensure environmental sustainability, and to develop a global partnership for development. These goals can obviously not only be directly derived from the proposed ethical approach of reducing human suffering, but the last of the eight goals also fits very well to the matter of promoting partnership in development cooperation.

3 Ten Basic Rules of "Partnership" and "Conditionality"

A list of ten basic rules can be drawn from the proposed ethical understanding of development and development cooperation against which concrete partnerships in development policy cooperation need to measure themselves.

3.1 Respect for human dignity

True partnership is only possible on the basis of respect for *common human dignity*, which specifically does not rule out substantial differences between partners on account of sex, age, abilities, culture, religion and many other aspects. At the same time, this represents an enormous challenge as well as a great opportunity. Yet, such a partnership can only succeed when the more fundamental commonality of human dignity and human rights always remains in view and has primacy in the event of conflict. The differences are often very large, especially in development cooperation, for example, in terms of the availability of power and money, which makes partnership in this field particularly difficult.

3.2 Common goals

Partnership can certainly also have an intrinsic value, but, as a rule, it also demands common *goals* which extend beyond it. The fact that partnerships succeed better than, indeed perhaps can only succeed then, is a matter of long-standing human experience. This also applies to development cooperation based on a common interest in overcoming suffering. It is from here that it draws its justification, and the criteria of the understanding of development are the yardstick against which the partners and their action must always be measured. They can certainly have different opinions as far as the concrete implementation is concerned, but their discussion must always remain bound to the common objective.

3.3 Responsible and transparent choice of partners

As far as the *choice of partners* is concerned, promising development cooperation is only possible when the partnership at least partly corresponds with the goals of both partners and is compatible with the fundamental development conceptions of both sides. The partners must also be able to mutually assume that they are also "capable of partnership". The proposed

development understanding implies that the selection should consider such partners, in particular, who at first sight are perhaps less attractive, namely the poorest countries, the poor and such organisations that work intensively with them. Voluntariness also implies that no partner can be called upon to deny its own goals and interests. A true and voluntary partnership is also only entered into under certain conditions (conditionality) which are openly stated from the very beginning or have to be the result of common situation analyses, target agreements, success indicators and action options. If the development cooperation no longer corresponds with these conditions, then it can or must also be ended, albeit that attention must be given to ensuring that such an exit does not cause unreasonably high sacrifices among innocent third parties.

3.4 Reciprocal conditionality

From an ethical perspective, a conditionality which can be counted as an *effectiveness condition* for the agreed programme or project is not only justified but must even be claimed. In particular, in the field of bilateral, public development cooperation which aims to improve the situation of the population, it is ethically legitimate to negotiate *conditions to the benefit of the poor* (and in the interest of coming generations). However, for the sake of effectiveness, the donor side for its part also needs to set itself conditions of effectiveness, which means also meeting certain conditions of development cooperation (reciprocal conditionality). This includes, for example, the coherence of its own policy: the development cooperation must not be impeded by measures in other political fields. If the conditions of aid only unilaterally serve the interests of one of the partners or if they have only little or nothing to do with the success of the agreed programme or project, then they need to be rejected as unfair. If potential partners are in such a difficult situation (e.g. extreme poverty) that they basically have to accept any condition, then such a desperate situation on the part of the aid recipient must not be exploited by the donor.

3.5 Recognition of independence

Partnership always means *cooperation* in respect of the common goals. It must be structured in such a way that it, in accordance with the principle of

"development from below", does not paralyse any of the partner's inherent capabilities. But it must also provide subsidiary assistance when this is necessary. In this case, it can temporarily and certainly rightly call for a certain degree of representative or advocacy action, although this must not lead to any permanent dependence. Experience has shown that cooperation, in particular with respect to the common goals and interests, also forms the best basis for continuing intercultural respectively interreligious dialogue. In this respect, this approach also serves to open up deeper dimensions of partnership.

3.6 Mutual enhancement

Partnership always includes a degree of *mutual enhancement*. The greater the specific differences are, the more opportunities there will be in this respect. Of course, much depends on the fact that the partners who are stronger at first sight, that is for example a donor from an industrial country, must always be aware that they are not stronger in every respect, but rather can always also be enriched by the other side, for example, as far as the human strengths or special cultural features of developing countries are concerned. It is often of great significance for the self-awareness and so for the development competence of aid recipients that they can in some way return the aid, which the donor side must also acknowledge appropriately.

3.7 Reliability and permanence

Partnerships need *reliability* and a certain degree of *permanence* so that both sides can truly get to know each other and are able to place the cooperation on a sound basis. In particular, the defined development policy focuses should not change too quickly and, above all, not arbitrarily. Reliability and permanence cannot be achieved without transparency in the relations, which means both sides must be half-way certain that they are not being cheated or misused. Longer trustful cooperation certainly provides the best basis for this. Shared value conceptions which extend beyond the concrete goals, such as those which religious denominations or non-governmental organisations have, for example, can also contribute greatly to this. All this is "social capital" whose value can hardly be placed high enough.

3.8 Accountability and transparency

Partnership always contains a *contractual element* which defines the mutual rights and obligations, including *accountability* and *transparency*. Attention must be given here to ensuring that there is true mutuality respectively reciprocity. This helps to reduce the danger of the stronger side always asserting itself in the event of a conflict. This is all the more necessary when the participating partners are not only dealing with each other but are themselves also bound to other agents, such as a financial sponsor's accountability to taxpayers or their donors, or the head of a development project's accountability to a village community or a non-governmental organisation.

3.9 Fair rules of conflict

Even in trustful partnerships, differences of opinion may legitimately arise. This is completely normal, especially in the endeavour to achieve goals as far as possible. In such cases, clear and fair *rules of conflict* are important which, as far as possible, are defined and known in advance. Precise agreements and good contracts can contribute much to this. On account of the imbalance between partners from the South and from the North, it may be ethically advisable for such conflicts to be resolved in an arbitration process in which both sides are equally represented.

3.10 Shared responsibility in the event of failure

Since development cooperation takes place in a complex framework and an unclear and confusing social environment, it is unavoidably fraught with risks and also exposed to setbacks. Rather than leading to mutual accusations, it should lead to productive learning processes. The main responsibility for an aid project or programme initially lies with the partner whom the funding and mobilisation of resources aims to serve. However, as far as the conception that *all* decision-making power and responsibility is to be located with the supported partner is concerned, it is necessary to counter that partnership, by principle,

involves *both* partners participating in the whole. Because donors who prescribe or negotiate certain conditions are (co-)responsible for any possible planning errors that might occur, they must, in the case of a failure involving follow-up costs, also contribute to settling and clearing any damage, etc. Unfortunately, donors frequently find it easier, on account of their superior negotiating position, to escape this responsibility without the risk of sanctions.

4 Partnership in Key Areas of Development Cooperation

The fourth part of this report draws the necessary conclusions for selected areas – official development cooperation, non-official development cooperation performed by civil society organisations and by the churches – from the ethically-embedded ten basic rules of partnership. To avoid unnecessary repetition, only those aspects will be mentioned which are important or problematical for the respective area.

4.1 Official Development Cooperation

4.1.1 Bilateral development cooperation

Choosing partners and forms of differentiated cooperation

In the process of choosing partner countries, donor countries need to give greater consideration than in the past to findings drawn from effectiveness analyses, and measures must be derived from this for engaging in a more differentiated cooperation. Financial cooperation to support reforms should be provided only to credible countries with a record of "good governance". In many cases, however, preference is given to former colonies, countries of geostrategic and military strategic importance, countries with large refugee flows and countries which possess important resources like oil or an interesting market for exports or direct investments. In the case of German development cooperation, many critics are also of the impression that the above-mentioned five criteria are not applied with equal consistency, which can strongly reduce the credibility of development policy.

In cases of flagrant corruption, gross disregard of agreements or when the recipient country begins a war of aggression, the question needs to be asked as to how effective support can actually still be provided for people in the country concerned. In those cases in which agreements are not met, a system of suitably graduated sanctions can be considered: warnings, temporary suspension or reduction of aid as well as changes in the type and/or weighting of development cooperation instruments are all conceivable steps. In serious cases, attempts must be made to intensify the "political dialogue" as well as human resource and technical cooperation (anti-corruption advice) in order to spread new ideas, to train decision-makers and to raise political interest as well as personal initiative among the civil population. In cases of particular unreliability or where there has been a massive loss of trust in those in power, it is not even possible to continue providing bilateral disaster relief for the state concerned, because it is to be expected that the aid will not reach its targeted recipients. Then, an attempt has to be made to channel aid through non-governmental organisations, although this is also associated with specific problems.

Adapting to the respective situation

In order to be able to engage in a development policy that is adapted to a country's respective situation, sociological and socio-cultural knowledge is also required besides economic expertise. Through cooperation with independent economic and social research institutes from developing countries, the quality and acceptance of expertise might be improved. Both problem analysis and solution-finding naturally need specialist and country-specific knowledge and also need to be drawn up together with the partner countries. Through the additional participation of organisations which have good contacts with the population it is possible to take country-typical features into account which would otherwise have remained hidden to external experts. In acquiring information, the governments of donor countries are advised to consult non-state agents, organisations of the poor and their interest groups. This information can be checked and then introduced into the elaboration of country concepts. The internal and external view of governments (and their scientific bodies) can mutually complement and correct each other here, as can the population's perspective of their concrete living conditions and the institutions-focused view taken by academics and scientists.

Reciprocity of obligations and commitments

The partnership between donors and recipients becomes all the more credible the more both sides are reciprocally obliged to meet certain conditions. A constructive example of a reciprocal agreement is provided by the 20:20 initiative to promote basic social services. This is the result of the World Social Summit held in Copenhagen in 1995 and is a voluntary, reciprocal commitment entered into by donor and recipient countries. The developing countries are to invest 20% of their respective national budget into social sectors while, at the same time, industrial countries will allow 20% of the development cooperation to flow into the elimination of poverty; the planned sectors include, not least, basic education, basic health services, overcoming malnutrition, providing safe drinking water and sanitation.

Necessary improvements in the field of climate protection should also be followed by reciprocal obligations – for example by some developing countries committing themselves to protecting their rain forests, while industrial countries commit themselves to reducing CO₂ emissions. The achievement of these goals would need to be monitored by both sides.

4.1.2 Multilateral development cooperation

North-South dialogue and global development partnership

In order to agree on common development policy cooperation goals and on the measures required for their implementation, the "North-South Dialogue", which was half-heartedly begun decades ago, now needs to be taken up again. Despite international statements, declarations and agreements, the question of how differing development policy goals and the measures required to implement them are to be weighted between North and South is still a matter of controversy in many areas. Often, there is not even agreement on the analysis of the causes of development deficits. Furthermore, the development policy goals and interests of donor countries often contradict each other. Intensive global dialogue could serve to make it clear that growing global problems mean that all countries could indeed profit from coordinated development policy cooperation. In order to really be able to speak of a global development partnership between North and South, as called for by the eighth Millennium Development Goal, new efforts are urgently needed.

Help in crisis situations

In crisis situations, the award of aid and assistance mostly not only depends on the type and extent of the crisis situation, but also on the political and economic interests of the donor country. However, developing countries should receive aid and assistance on the basis of uniform and comprehensible rules which are above all oriented in line with transparent and verifiable criteria, such as need, extent and type of emergency, a country's capability for taking its own actions and the sustainability of any measures taken. In addition, the measures proposed for overcoming the crisis must be clearly and objectively justified and concretely warranted for the specific country. Otherwise, suspicion will arise that such measures aim to unilaterally assert the interests of industrial countries.

Participation by civil society

In 1999, governments at the G7 summit in Cologne integrated representative participation by the population in the process of drawing poverty-combating programmes as a prerequisite for debt relief into the HIPC debt relief initiative. Besides legally-formal democratic participation in a country, civil society forms of participation are consequently additionally introduced via the instrument of conditionality. Although it is not unproblematical when this means parallel structures are being created from outside which operate alongside the institutions of representative democracy, this can at least be temporarily justified where the political system is not permeable enough and the population is hardly represented. In addition, the parliaments need to agree to these conditions in most cases. In Bolivia, for example, the new institution of a "Social Control Mechanism" was formally adopted by act of law. Practice shows, however, that participation by civil society is not unproblematical when enforced through such conditionality. Alone the fact that the poverty combating strategies of the World Bank and the IMF have to be accepted as adequate in a joint assessment leads to another question, namely what the IMF and the World Bank actually want to read as a prerequisite for their acceptance of the paper, playing at least as much of a role when writing the paper as does participation by civil society. Sometimes, additional agreements were reached with the World Bank which aimed to balance out presumed deficits in the poverty combating programme, but which were then no longer discussed with civil society. In order to benefit as quickly as possible from the debt relief measures, the governments of some

countries drove forward the processes of drawing up poverty combating programmes so hectically that there could hardly be any talk of participation by civil society. For then, there was a lack of adequate deadlines for organising forums and issuing statements. There was a lack of access to important documents which were not available in the national language. In many countries the civil society is hardly organised, so that the question can rightly be asked as to who actually represents it.

Co-responsibility for all involved

When international organisations such as the IMF, for example, have made mistakes in policy recommendations given within the scope of measures to manage financial crises they have not, so far, participated in removing or reducing the disadvantages for developing countries which these mistakes caused. In the case of partnership-based measures, however, both sides should accept responsibility and liability and, what is more, in accordance with their influence on the planning and execution of these measures. If projects fail on account of provable consultancy errors on the part of the donor or on account of erroneous conditions, then the donor must also accept this responsibility. For example, mutual insurance funds can be set up for this purpose, debt rescheduling clauses agreed, debts reduced or completely remitted. The latter could also be taken into consideration when unforeseeable and uninfluenceable circumstances ("exogenous factors") caused the damage respectively prevented the project from succeeding.

Processes for settling conflicts

To settle disputed claims, the institution of an independent court of arbitration is recommended which observes the application of international criteria and decides on disputes arising from international agreements and treaties. Models for ad hoc processes or institutionalised courts of arbitration are currently being discussed in conjunction with a law on insolvency proceedings for states. A core factor is the neutrality of the decision-making authority, since the fact that plaintiff and judge have so far always been the same institution neither corresponds with the principles of the rule of law nor with the concept of partnership.

Improved coordination and coherence

Agreement both between the various donor countries and the international organisations as well as between the various agents from each donor country is needed in order to resolve the above-mentioned coordination and coherence problems. Contradictory goals and measures of various donor countries which, for example, relate to differing geostrategic or economic interests, substantially impede the success of development cooperation. This is also the case when the various policy areas of a donor country fail to coordinate their actions, for example, when development policy measures to promote exports from developing countries into industrial countries conflict with the subsidisation of economic areas in these industrial countries, such as agriculture. This is why donors are obliged to undertake the necessary efforts to avoid such contradictions.

4.2 Non-official development cooperation

4.2.1 Civil society organisations

Selection of suitable partner organisations

The formation of civil society agents is an indispensable prerequisite for social and political democratisation. These players contribute importantly to development and often draw attention to problem areas which state or church organisations have not yet taken enough notice of. The perhaps most crucial exertion of influence by civil society organisations from industrial countries is their contribution to the growth of the civil society sector in developing countries. Their dependence on non-governmental organisations from the North is, however, not without its problems either. The prevailing unemployment of university graduates in some countries means that their potential often lies barren. The foundation of a non-governmental organisation provides these young people with an opportunity to create suitable occupational opportunities themselves without, however, their always bringing with them the qualifications required for a responsible partnership.

Development cooperation bodies and agencies in industrial countries must choose between various possible partners in the developing countries. The financial support means that non-governmental organisations can also continue to operate and gain influence which is only oriented in line with the fashionable

topics of the industrial countries in order to secure their own continuing existence, while their orientation for the public good is questionable. In their own society, by contrast, they mobilise little support in the form of political allegiance or voluntary participation. The partners in the North therefore share responsibility for which non-governmental organisations continue to exist and grow and which ones need to terminate their activities. It is the responsibility of the donors in the industrial countries to gain the most realistic possible impression of whether their partner organisations are indeed endeavouring for local presence, participation and effectiveness in pursuing the respective development policy goal or whether this is just some poetic accessory to the clever procurement of external funds.

Coordination of various donor organisations

Much like the field of public development cooperation, non-state development cooperation also faces the problem that various civil society organisations can contradict each other in their development policy goals and funded projects, and sometimes even tend to work against rather than with each other. Because a certain degree of plurality is indispensable for civil societies, both from the donor and from the recipient countries, and even makes up part of the advantages of non-official versus official development cooperation, any full coordination and agreement between donor organisations is neither possible nor can it be sensibly promoted. Nevertheless, they are at least obliged to use mutual information and coordination to overcome those forms of counterproductive overlaps and competition which could be avoidable, because they arose less from fundamentally different directions of the organisations and more from a lack of agreement between them. Many countries already have important approaches to donor coordination, including in the field of non-state development cooperation, such as in Germany, for example, with the Association of German Development Non-Governmental Organisations (*VENRO – Verband Entwicklungspolitik deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen*).

Co-responsibility of donors

Donors in industrial countries which support non-governmental organisations also need to be more aware of their responsibility. They need to make their selection decision between organisations purposefully and to exert an

appropriate influence on the choice of goals and target groups. The capacity to ingest information via the media is limited, however. More than two or perhaps three crisis areas at most in the world cannot be simultaneously present in the public awareness, and continual development cooperation often loses support in the face of current disasters. At the same time, many donors feel a degree of mistrust about whether or not their donation "really reaches its goal". In particular, they fear that a large part of the donated funds will be used by organisations to pay for their administration. Donors frown on administrative costs, for which the many years of dishonest discussion on administrative costs shares a substantial degree of responsibility. In many cases, the fact that a careful choice of projects and time and cost intensive performance controls are absolutely essential instruments in ensuring that donations are effectively used at the right point is not mentioned. All this makes it more difficult for civil society organisations to provide permanent effective aid and assistance. Donors can liberate themselves a little from the changing focuses of media attention by seeking detailed information on the civil society organisation that they support. And so they can also help where need and suffering prevail that are not currently in the focus of international public attention. On the other hand, civil society organisations can only achieve such donor loyalty when they simultaneously combine their donation raising activities with information work and openly report on their cost structures.

Project partnerships

In the case of direct aid for concrete projects, such as can be established through school partnerships, the visible and comprehensible aid has great motivating significance. Yet, there is no small danger that groups with good contacts in countries of the North can receive more donations than they can meaningfully use, while other places in the region remain unconsidered. A fairer distribution and a sensible coordination of various project partnerships can be guaranteed by larger aid organisations with their professionalism and wider horizon. This is why it is important for the initiation of direct partnerships not only to use chance contacts, but, perhaps, also to report conscientiously on project partners and goals, in agreement with larger organisations.

Continuity and long-term nature of cooperation

Financial support of civil society organisations becomes problematical when the partner organisations from industrial countries transport their own objectives into developing societies with the help of massive economic incentives and these fail to meet the goals and needs of the recipient country. In particular, payments may depend on prevailing "fashions" in the industrial countries, change quickly and so force non-governmental organisations in developing countries to discontinue respectively to take up development cooperation. In organisations without a stable circle of sponsors, this inevitably leads to an erratic funding policy. And this, in turn, then means that long-term effective work by their partners is hardly possible. The donor side must also endeavour to plan its cooperation and funding policy long term and, as far as possible, to liberate itself from the short-lived fashions of conceptual focuses and changing public attention. Only through long-term planned cooperation between civil society organisations of the North and the South can partnership have a chance.

As a rule, the trust and knowledge which a non-governmental organisation in an industrial country necessarily needs for making influence exerting decisions with responsibility and awareness can only form through longer-term oriented cooperation. Furthermore, only then does the partner from the South have the chance to influence the conceptional ideas and prejudices of the partner from the North and to give support in adapting their goals and approaches to the realities. If the partner in the developing country is forced to discontinue its work, because the partner in the North "lacks the staying power", this will inevitably disappoint those to be mobilised and supported and so place a burden on future attempts at bringing about change. Whether permanent effectiveness can succeed in the work of the partner is consequently the donor's responsibility.

Promoting the autonomy of partners

In all long-term cooperation it is still important that the intention of providing help for self-help is not lost from sight. The aid aims to create structures which enable partners to become independent in the medium term. Consequently, the award of funding must not in any way automatically benefit long-standing cooperation partners. This means the cooperation term should neither be too short for any trust and true cooperation to establish itself nor too long so as not to create any new dependencies. In any case, the applied strategies should be reviewed from time to time and adapted, where necessary.

Transparency and anti-corruption measures, also in the field of non-state cooperation

The frequently corrupt state structures mean that funding resources can flow into non-governmental organisations which often stand out through greater economic transparency, local presence and reliability. Unfortunately, however, those with responsibility in non-governmental organisations are also sometimes found to misuse their office or position of trust for private ends. How great the temptation for those in positions of responsibility to do this is will also depend, apart from the respective moral standards, on how well transparency and controls have been established in their organisation. Civil society organisations in the field of development cooperation long found it difficult to establish professional standards of control vis-à-vis their partners, because they did not want to subject themselves to the accusation of paternalising their partners and breaking the spirit of partnership. However, a lack of transparency and unprofessional financial controls encourage misuse and so discredit the civil society commitment. This is why transparency-enhancing and anti-corruption measures must become standard practice in cooperation between non-governmental organisations.

Advocatory commitment

Civil society organisations give a voice to the justified concerns and interests of their partners in the donor countries and use PR measures to work towards bringing about political structural change at global economic level. This is why they should complement their work with partners in developing countries through domestic educational work and political lobbying and also be prepared to enter into political conflicts. The awareness among donors for this has unfortunately not developed much, which means that donations for this field are largely missing. A deeper insight into the importance of this advocatory function is needed in order to be able to translate it into reality with effective PR and greater breadth. Because the effectiveness of development cooperation can be fundamentally and permanently improved through more favourable global economic frameworks. It is especially the structural adjustments that are needed for this in industrial countries³ that represent essential complementary measures

³ cf. the report "Structural Adjustments in the North in order to promote Development in

for development cooperation and serve to implement a partnership concept under which both partners each contribute their own resources to the achievement of a common goal.

4.2.2 Churches

The churches and their conception of development cooperation

The Christian churches, and especially the Catholic church, see themselves as a universal church which becomes concretely visible, acts and lives in the diversity of local churches. Relations between the local churches, in particular, have changed substantially over recent decades. The idea was to move away from the one-way transfer from the local churches of the North to those of the South. The goal is to achieve a worldwide spiritual and learning community of mutual giving and receiving which includes, as far as possible, a spirit of close and partnership-based cooperation in terms of human resources, technical equipment and, above all, finances.

With its focus on people, the care which the church provides is not only intended for Christians in other countries but also, and independently of their religion, for all people in need. Differing (country) focuses and priorities in the goals, such as the pastoral cooperation in which church relief organisation *Adveniat* engages in Latin America, are nevertheless justified. Church aid organisations actively look for possible partners, introduce their own ideas for projects or accept proposals submitted by people who are excluded, by their organisations and by their "advocates" as an invitation for partnership. The commitment also leads to development partnerships with non-church partners who are close to the poor or are representatives of the poor respectively their self-help organisations. Contact with the poor, an appropriate development concept and the proven effectiveness of the support represent the decisive criteria for cooperation. In the non-Christian setting of Asia and Africa, in particular, the churches work with other religious communities, including Muslim, Buddhist as well as with secular organisations, while in the specific situation of China and Vietnam they even cooperate with state and quasi-state partners. In doing so, the Catholic Church meets the recommendation expressed

the South". Study by the Group of Experts on "World Economy and Social Ethics", Bonn 1996 (also available in German 1995).

by the Pope to engage in interreligious cooperation and to work together with all "people of goodwill".

All the problems already mentioned above in respect of other (non-state) development cooperation appear in this field, too. In individual cases this can additionally lead to church-specific conflicts which frequently come about when the strongly hierarchical or "paternalistic" structures of the local churches in the South work with the church aid organisations of the North that represent an understanding of the church with greater lay responsibility and open development policy work in society.

Since the local church in the South is consulted as a "sister church" as a matter of principle by the church aid organisations in the North when applications are placed for the funding and support of projects in the jurisdiction of the local church, this may, in individual cases, lead to particular conflicts,

- when the church partners – in their capacity as the applicants – for example development and social services, specialist offices or religious orders, plan their development projects in such a way that the local church respectively the local bishop considers it to be unimportant or even wrong, or even sees it as "competition" to projects carried out by the local church, or
- when non-church partners in regions, where the local church only has a weak presence or has not developed an option for the poor, apply for aid for projects which the local church is hardly able to judge in terms of its development policy significance and these projects are possibly even seen as "unchristian" or as "directed against the church" and are consequently rejected.

Even when the aid organisation then tries to solve or diffuse the conflict through dialogue between the local church and these partners, this does not always succeed. Occasionally, such conflicts impede or disrupt important partnerships or mean that they can only continue to operate in conflict with the local church.

Although it is the aid organisations, in particular, that undoubtedly share the above-outlined normative yardsticks and, in many respects, have also embarked on new paths in practice, for example, by attempting to represent and advocate the concerns of their partners in the North, they also find themselves facing a fundamental dilemma: on the one hand, they have to account to their sponsors (including the state) for the resources they receive, while, on the other, they want to pass on more responsibility to their partners. Presumably, it will be necessary to continue taking a two-way approach towards initiating the

corresponding reforms. On the one hand, participation will have to be combined more strongly with responsibility, namely on the basis of jointly adopted criteria, while, on the other, it will be necessary to very generally apply the principle of subsidiarity to relations within the churches and among their various players, which would directly impact the work of the aid organisations as well.

Controls and transparency

Church organisations and initiatives have many advantages for creating partnerships in developing countries, because they share a common value base with the partner churches. Despite continuing cultural differences, the joint definition of goals builds on a fundamental consensus based on the shared Christian faith. This means that they have outstanding potential for agreeing on common goals and on how to implement these. This community of interests, membership of the same church and, consequently, the greater mutual trust mean that controls and transparency are sometimes not considered to be necessary at all. However, professional and independent controls, detailed activity reports and thorough evaluations are just as necessary in church cooperation as they are in cooperation between civil society organisations, without then limiting the independence and autonomy of the partners.

In the meantime, this is also being recognised in more and more areas. One example is the qualification of partners in the field of development funding and the opportunity to use project resources in their own countries in the form of so-called "partnership funds" which has been developed by the church relief organisation *Misereor*. Particularly qualified partners personally decide on the project funds for many cases, hundreds of small individual projects. Only the budget for the overall programme, its regional or sectoral objectives, the funding conditions as well as the procedural rules and controls are jointly agreed and accounted for by the "fund partners" and the aid organisation. The independence and responsibility of the key church partners extend so far that they have been actively involved in the funding policies for whole countries and sectors for many years now.

The appropriate rules and controls on the use of funding have been specifically adapted and simplified for these partnership funds. However, it continues to be necessary for the aid organisation to control the use of funds, be it at the level of such a fund or at the level of individual projects. This control is an accountability commitment towards the local church taxpayers and donors who

have to be able to have trust and confidence in the fact that funds are used in accordance with their given purpose. Information on this must be made easily accessible. This is why church relief organisations also need a certain degree of administrative expenditure in order to be able to ensure that funds are used effectively.

Reciprocity in the partnership

Fortunately, understanding for the need for reciprocity in the partnership is growing in the field of church development cooperation, in particular. Visits in both directions which enable both sides to get to know each other, intensive experience exchange, the adoption of new theological and pastoral approaches all mean that relations between the churches in the rich and poor countries have long ceased being a one-way road. Indeed, forms of reciprocal financial support are even being increasingly practised. For example, the Latin American Church donated 10,000 dollars for the victims of the River Oder floods in Germany. In Honduras, special, nationwide collections were carried out to help the flood victims in Passau with whom they had contacts through a partnership action. In the meantime, highly-qualified church staff from developing countries perform many tasks and responsibilities on behalf of the universal church and hold positions in the Vatican and in the central governments of the religious orders in Rome and, in some cases, in Germany as well. However, reciprocity is also put into practice by the given influence of the churches in industrial countries being put to political use in calling for necessary reforms to the global economy and national legislations (removal of agricultural subsidies).

5 Final Remarks: From Rhetoric to Reality

The term "partnership" is popularly and quickly used in church, civil society and government declarations. As a guiding principle it is fully justified. However, the path from rhetoric to reality in development cooperation is mostly still a long one. The North-South divide, the differing interests which often undermine the goodwill in development cooperation, and the practical problems which every form of development cooperation must face are obstacles which need to be overcome.

All the more the ten basic rules of partnership are observed in development cooperation, all the more will the conditions be legitimate. From a socio-ethical perspective, it is important that conditionality is responsibly arranged as part of the implementation of development policy goals. Conditionality should serve a fairer world order which supports the poor countries in the creation of more humane living conditions. This is why conditionality needs to be negotiated in a spirit of partnership and fairness, needs to apply reciprocally for both partners and, in the event of dispute, needs to be bound to fair rules. Only when agreements are accepted by all – especially by the more influential parties in developing and industrial countries – will the path to a development partnership open up which extends far beyond financial and economic relations.

The partnership-based commitment to a fairer world relates to various action levels. Firstly, *social development in the partner countries in the South* must be promoted by supporting the poor and their partners in the implementation of the reforms and structural changes that are needed there. Secondly, *structures and frameworks in the societies of the donor countries*, in Germany, the European Union, and in other industrial countries, also need to be changed through a change of organisation and awareness towards economic and ecological sustainability. Thirdly, this also makes it possible to arrange the *international structures and frameworks* for developing countries differently and to create coherence between various development policy fields. Fourthly, the partnership will extend beyond the field of development cooperation to include all other fields of international political cooperation and will, through *international dialogue*, open up a mutually-enriching learning field.

This report aims to encourage more partnership. By presenting the deficits, it intends to sharpen the awareness for the spirit of partnership and, at the same time, to prevent excessive ideology; and by presenting the various paths it aims to provide orientation and to invite stakeholders to put this into practice. And especially so in our own country, in Germany, the willingness to engage in partnership-based solidarity with the poorer countries of the "one world" must not wane, but must rather be increased – even and especially in times of economic crises.

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