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Letter to EU Ministers ahead of the EU Foreign Affairs Council - Development meeting on 16 May 2019

9 May 2019

Excellency,

In this year of European elections, it is important to take stock of past achievements and build on them when planning together for the future. The EU and its Member States must maintain and even step up their level of commitment and demonstrate the EU's leadership and the importance of multilateralism. **CONCORD believes that for the next 5 years, the EU should prioritise international development cooperation, as a key policy in its own right. The European Consensus for Development, sets out the long-term, integrated thinking necessary and demonstrates how EU values can prevail over the short-term pursuit of self-interest and so called crisis management.** Only by prioritising these long-term objectives will the EU be able to support global governance and multilateralism to the benefit of all and build genuine partnerships with other regions, countries and peoples. **We expect EU ministers taking part in the May 16 Foreign Affairs Council on Development to express their full support for strong international development cooperation during the next legislative term.**

The EU and its Member States must also ensure the necessary financial and non-financial means to implement such ambition. The global Financing for Development agenda, unfortunately, is not progressing at the pace required to reach the goals of the 2030 Agenda. This message resounded clearly at the most recent ECOSOC Forum and in the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development Report. Not only are international development cooperation targets not on track, but other areas are also lagging behind. For example, there has been little progress on global tax cooperation or a debt workout mechanism, in spite of the deteriorating financial outlook of indebted countries. The new global trends favouring non-concessional resources further exacerbate financial instability. Against this backdrop, the new card that the donor community is apparently willing to play is a renovated push for integrated national financial frameworks (INFFs). As the EU is a champion of INFFs, **we call on the Member States, the European Commission and the European External Action Service to make sure that the principle of national democratic ownership of development priorities is upheld, and that no country will see its access to EU ODA and development cooperation conditioned on the adoption of an INFF which is in conflict with its national priorities and international human rights commitments.**

The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) should remain primarily an instrument aiming at achieving sustainable development, the fight against inequalities and the eradication of poverty in line with international commitments such as the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Busan Partnership for effective development cooperation. Ambitious targets should be included in the NDICI as they can be powerful tools to

steer investments in critical areas such as climate and environment, human development and gender equality, balancing flexibility with accountability. The European Fund for Sustainable Development plus (EFSD+) must include strong and clear social and environmental safeguards. Private finance through the EFSD+ should primarily benefit local markets, sustainable production and local MSMEs and social economy actors. It should not lead to a diversion of resources from public service provision, particularly in key areas such as health and education.

Key commitments of the 2030 Agenda are to leave no-one behind and support partner countries in achieving their own development priorities and reducing poverty. The EU and its Member States should therefore invest in a thorough analysis of the complexity of the policy mix on the development-migration-security nexus, reframe and ensure a fair and coherent policy mix of the nexus at local level, integrated in a long-term vision on sustainable development and reflecting a human rights based approach. This should include a multi-stakeholder dialogue which must privilege the voices of the most affected rights-holders, who are also among the most marginalised people. Interventions must be based on strong local democratic ownership and be locally driven, integrating short-term actions in a longer-term vision. The EU and its Member States should support democratic state-building in Sahelian countries, including through support to active citizenship and independent civil society organisations. ODA for the respect of human rights and sustainable development objectives is inseparable from the enforcement of the rule of law, and open, transparent and accountable local institutions. It is therefore crucial to strengthen the role of local CSOs in monitoring the implementation of migration governance and security operations.

CONCORD and its members counts on you to help us make the most of the opportunities 2019 provides in order to secure the ambitious implementation of EU international cooperation policy, including the means of implementation and strategic links to other relevant policies. We thank you for your time and consideration and wish you fruitful exchanges.

Yours sincerely,



Tanya Cox
Director of CONCORD Europe

For more information, please see background documents below:

- [Joint Synthesis Report – CONCORD responses to the stakeholder consultation](#)
- [The European Fund for Sustainable Development plus \(EFSD+\) in the MFF 2021-2027 Ten areas to consider in the NDICI Regulation](#)
- [Making the EU commitments a reality through smart programming](#)

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