



NOTES for the intervention of Social Watch coordinator, Roberto Bissio, at the plenary of the opening session of the 3<sup>rd</sup> High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Accra, Ghana, September 2, 2008.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I am Roberto Bissio, coordinator of Social Watch, the network that monitors governments' commitments on poverty eradication and gender equity in over 60 countries.

Our members are extremely concerned by the lack of a sense of urgency and corresponding commitments that we see in the latest drafts of the AAA. At the very start of the draft, world poverty is said to affect one billion people and decreasing, whereas the latest poverty estimates by the World Bank say the actual figure was at least 50% higher than that in 2005 and, since then, the food crisis has only worsened it. By underestimating the problem and stating that we are on the right track we fail to see the iceberg and steer our world 'Titanic' in a collision course.

Even after underestimating world poverty in paragraph two and stating optimistically that it is being reduced, in paragraph 3 the commitment is reaffirmed to meet the Millennium Development Goals, but the year 2015 as the target date has been deleted. What does it mean, Mr. Chairman? That we will meet the MDG within the current Millennium?

We do not see in the draft AAA the concrete measures we need to speed up development. Even worse, the current set of indicators that assesses country systems works against the right to development of recipient countries by forcing the opening up of government procurement to foreign corporations that will unfairly compete with local providers and limit the ability of governments to support their small and medium business, women led initiatives, local farmers or cooperatives, etc. The existing asymmetry in power between donors and recipients is made even worse in paragraph 15, allowing donors to choose at will whether they use country systems or not, even after they have been reformed to fit the donors' interests.

If aid is to be efficient for development, it should contribute to the available policy space of developing countries and not limit it by introducing policy conditionalities through the back door on issues like procurement, already rejected by partner countries in the WTO negotiations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman