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Para: "wcobbett@citiesalliance.org" <wcobbett@citiesalliance.org>

De: Mikael Atterhog <Mikael.Atterhog@sida.se>

Fecha: 15/11/2010 11:17

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Asunto: RE: Meeting of the Consultative Group: Mexico City 16/17 November 2010

Please copy this email and distribute it to all CG-members

Dear Billy,

Unfortunately, Sida is not able to participate in the Cities Alliance annual CG-meeting in Mexico City due to travel budget constraints. We would like to wish Cities Alliance success in its deliberation and we hope to be able to participate next year. Although we can not participate, Sida would like to express its views on some of the issues on the agenda.

## 1. THE CHARTER

The starting point of this process must be the agreement that was reached at last year's consultations at Mumbai. For those who do not have this easily accessible, here is the relevant section:

### **"Item Eleven: Governance of Cities Alliance**

#### CHARTER:

Norway, Sweden, France and Germany presented a proposal on the way forward for the governance of the Cities Alliance. The proposal suggests a two step phase for the revision of the CA Charter,

Phase 1: A limited immediate process is initiated to look at:

- Membership issues, in particular how to include cities, LGAs, NGOs, Foundations and other types of new members
- The decision making structure - roles, functions and necessary composition of EXCO, CG and Advocacy Panel

Phase 2: A full revision of the whole charter is undertaken after the 2011 independent evaluation and a proposal is presented to the CG for decision at its 2012 meeting.

This issue was discussed for some time, during which some members noted that the paper was not circulated prior to the meeting to EXCO, which had considered similar Working Group recommendations on the Charter.

**Decision Twelve:** The proposal was referred to the forthcoming meeting of EXCO for action.

//End of extract

With this reference, Sida's believes, although we agree fully on the actual need for a major revision of the charter, that this process has not been managed well as it has not been inclusive (especially compared to other similar CA processes). Furthermore, the minutes clearly states that only a "limited immediate process" shall take place this year.

The process has been "exclusive" for two reasons: (1) As far as Sida is aware of, non-EXCO members of Cities Alliance have not been informed (except on an ad-hoc basis) about the fact that the agreement from Mumbai has actually been revoked until 11 days (and 6-7 working days depending on time zones) before the Consultative Group meeting will take place (email dated 5 November). We believe that on such a critical issue for Cities Alliance, it would have been necessary to inform all the members immediately as this process is initiated. We also believe that members have been given much too short time to review and consider this issue. (2) The old (and the proposed revised) charter (page 6) specifically states that the revision of the charter is a task for CG and not a task for EXCO. This makes it even more relevant to seek the views of all members. Hence, Sida believes that a first draft of the revised charter should have been sent out to ALL members and not only EXCO. Finally on this issue, as Cities Alliance is supposed to be a partnership-based organization, it is, in our view, particularly problematic for CA compared to most other organizations that the charter revision process has not been inclusive. Although "decision no 12" from Mumbai above, it can also be questioned whether EXCO actually have been mandated to prepare a proposal for a complete revision of the charter.

On the issue itself, Sida agrees, as mentioned, that there is a need for a complete overhaul of the charter. Here are our preliminary views on the proposed revised charter:

- (a) In general, we believe that the proposed revised charter is a huge improvement compared to the old charter.
- (b) Re the critical issue of full and associate members. Sida agrees, for the time being, with the proposal regarding the types of members in these two categories and the

proposal regarding voting rights. We further believe that this issue need to be reviewed during 2011 during the process of evaluating CA.

- (c) Sida believes that there is a need for an election committee to make the process of electing members of EXCO more transparent than what has been the case previously. This committee would also be tasked with proposing a manager of CA (next time around) as well as members of the advocacy panel. The election committee should be elected by CG.
- (d) Page 7. The meaning of the word “Staggered” is unclear to us.
- (e) The communication between EXCO and the CG needs to become more transparent. Sida believe that it should be stipulated that the agenda and background documentation of the EXCO-meetings should be circulated to all members at least 2 weeks in advance. We believe that the minutes of the EXCO-meetings (and the CG-meetings!) should be circulated to all members within one month. This should be included in the charter.
- (f) In the revised charter, EXCO will be given a lot more responsibilities and power. Sida believes it EXCO therefore needs to meet more often. Previously, it has not been uncommon with only one meeting apart from the meeting immediately prior to the CG-meeting. Sida believes that it should be stipulated that EXCO should meet at least once every fourth month.
- (g) Location of the secretariat. Sida has compared to charters of other similar organizations, and can not find any other organization in which it is described in the charter where the organization should be located. Sida believes that the section on the location of the organization should be removed.
- (h) Sida believes that the following responsibilities should be added to the list of primary duties of the secretariat: (i) Quality assurance. To ensure that the work of CA is of the highest international standard; (ii) Maintenance and updating of a RBM-system; and (iii) Regular independent and transparent evaluations of CAs entire work programme and all other aspects of the organization.

In summary, Sida believes that the revised charter, although this is really an improvement, can not be adopted as the process has not been inclusive and appropriately managed.

## **2. MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY UPDATE**

Sida struggle to understand the relationship between this document and the original MTS. You will recall that the MTS is sub-divided into four “objectives” whereas this so-called update is divided into four “pillars” (in-country programmes was not a component at all). In addition, whereas the original MTS was 32 pages, the stand-alone update is 30 pages!! In fact, Sida’s view is that it would have been better to write a new MTS. You will recall that it was originally conceived that the MTS would be rolling and updated each year so this would be consistent with the original perception. Regarding the MTS,

Sida has the following preliminary (we have not had time to review the update in detail) comments/questions:

- (a) Sida really welcome the increased focus on low-income countries and secondary cities although Sida had not conceived the new in-country programmes as one of CAs key modus of operandii. Sida is particularly interested in reviewing the findings of the evaluation in 2011 regarding this “pillar”.
- (b) The MTS for 2008-2010 mentioned that the Monitoring & Evaluation system would be overhauled (page 31) and members have been presented progress on this issue at several CG-meeting, but we have yet to see a finalized product. Sida notes that it is on the agenda again but, reviewing the inbox, we can not find any documentation for this agenda item. What has happened on this issue since Mumbai? When will a M&E finally be launched?
- (c) On the first item on the summary in the MTS update (“Overall, the Secretariat proposes a business model that is predicated on the more active involvement of CA members”). More active involvement by more members is an aspect that was included in the MTS 2008-2010 and an aspect that has continuously been highlighted by the secretariat, but the fact of the matter is that most members appears not have the capacity to engage actively at the local level. Sida, as one example, can only engage in a very small number of countries and this is typically predefined by who happens to be working at a particular local Sida office. Sida’s view is that the presumption that members will be more involved at the local level in the future is not feasible and sustainable, and the Cities Alliance model must take into consideration this weakness of its membership. It is unrealistic to believe that the situation will improve - in fact, most donor agencies appear to be facing staff cuts and perhaps also funding cuts.
- (d) Sida believes that it is appropriate that the selection of countries for in-country programmes will onwards be the responsibility of EXCO based on substantive documentation from the secretariat. In addition, it would be interesting to know for what reason the secretariat believes that it is useful to have four in-country programmes. What is the plan and timeframe regarding how many countries to work in?

Sida has previously been advocating that Cities Alliance should really analyse what is its most appropriate niche and what can be its added-value given that there are already many actors out there and that its secretariat and funding is likely to remain constrained. We have argued that the wide membership of most international players in urban development has been CAs foremost intrinsic value and that it should make the most of this. Our view was that CA main role could be to create an urban platform at the international, national and local level for stakeholders to meet and discuss ideas, and find out what other stakeholders are doing; so that there could, at least, be some coordination and cooperation. This may not imply that CA staff will be doing the actual coordination but that it creates the means (=a platform) for this happen. This should at least take place in Uganda, Ghana and Vietnam where CA is now more engaged. We believe that identification of CAs most appropriate niche(s) should be one of the main tasks for the evaluation in 2011.

### 3. CITIES ALLIANCE FINANCIAL AND BUDGET REPORT

It is rather difficult to comment on these figures. Sida only has the following comments:

- (a) Whereas the electronic title of this pdf-document was “4 - Work programme and Financial Plan”, the document itself had a different name “Cities Alliance Financial and Budget Report FY10-FY11“. Sida could in fact not find any work programme within this document or in any of the other files sent for the meeting. There is a sub-chapter entitled “Work programme priorities” but this does not at all meet the requirements of a work programme.
- (b) Sida notes that there has been a steady increase in total allocations since FY2007 although there have also been previous peaks.
- (c) It would have been useful with a more detailed backward- and forward-looking analysis and conclusions regarding income and expenditure trends in the portfolio. It would also have been useful with some assessments whether the general funding situation is satisfactory or not.

### 4. CITIES ALLIACE EVALUATION

Sida has not had time to review this document.

Best regards,

Mikael Atterhög

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**Mikael Atterhög, PhD**

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