

The Chair
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

The Director
DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE

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Dear Ms Pano,

We would like to thank you and the members of the DAC-CSO Reference Group for sharing your Joint Statement of 7 April on Covid-19. The Covid-19 global pandemic requires a global response, and we are pleased to see that the Reference Group's statement shares many of the priorities outlined in the DAC's 9 April Joint Statement on the crisis. As the DAC Joint Statement demonstrates, the response to Covid-19 is a top priority for members and the DAC has already convened an extraordinary dedicated meeting to discuss it.

DAC members share your concern about the depth and scale of human suffering caused by the crisis, particularly in the poorest countries. Important gains made towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals are at risk. As noted in the DAC Joint Statement, this crisis demands a coordinated, inclusive and coherent response from all development actors. DAC members recognise the importance of CSOs in helping affected people and countries respond to the pandemic and its consequences.

We agree that effective international cooperation will be an essential part of the response. Official Development Assistance (ODA) is a valuable means of supporting national responses to the Covid-19 crisis, particularly for Least Developed Countries and other countries with specific needs. The DAC's Joint Statement sets out that members will strive to protect ODA budgets during this crisis. This is a positive commitment when the scale of the economic impact of the pandemic remains unknown.

We would argue that ODA should be targeted to address the specific needs of different country contexts. In some circumstances, this will mean investing in health care, in others, resources will be better targeted to protecting and rebuilding the livelihoods of poor people affected by the pandemic. The principles of development effectiveness, especially partner led development, must be respected. We strongly agree that responding to Covid-19 in fragile and conflict-affected zones may require differentiated approaches that take account of local dynamics and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

We also strongly believe that women and girls face multi-dimensional risks during the crisis, as also reflected in the DAC Statement. We agree on the need to apply a gender lens to investments in Covid-19 prevention and response. Furthermore, we all have a responsibility to uphold the principles of the DAC's recommendation on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment through our work.

We welcome your call on donors to uphold the integrity of aid and the principles of effective development cooperation. As members of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, DAC members are strongly committed to these values and will continue to engage in open dialogue with partners and stakeholders to ensure our aid is as effective as

possible. DAC members also hold one another to account through the peer review process and share evidence of best practice and learning.

We are cognisant of the risk that new legislation and controls put in place to contain the Covid-19 pandemic could have longer-term negative effects on civic space, undermining CSOs' critical role in the Covid-19 response. You will see that the DAC Joint Statement calls for the protection of human rights and freedoms. This includes the right to peaceful assembly, association, and expression, which are central to civic space. The Statement also acknowledges that CSOs should be enabled to play their role as key partners in tackling Covid-19.

We look forward to continuing this discussion during the forthcoming virtual 2020 DAC-CSO Dialogue Meeting in early June. The DCD will continue to liaise with you in preparing this meeting to ensure the discussion is strategic and helpful.

We would like to thank you for your continued efforts and partnership to respond to the Covid-19 crisis. Only through coordinated international action by all actors, will we pull through this crisis and get back on track with our urgent work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susanna Moorehead", with a horizontal line underneath.

Susanna Moorehead
Chair, Development Assistance Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jorge Moreira da Silva", with a horizontal line underneath.

Jorge Moreira da Silva
Director, Development Co-operation Directorate