Workshop Report
A national dialogue on the importance of Dynamic Accountability for a credible Civil Society in light of the Shrinking Civic Space

Thursday, 15 November 2018
Hotel Protea, Kampala, Uganda

A joint event organized by DENIVA and Uganda National NGO Forum with support of the Global Standard for CSO Accountability and the European Union/German Co-operation(GIZ)
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents                                      Page No
1.0 Executive Summary                        3
2.0 Summary of opening remarks at the National Dialogue  3
3.0 Summary of the keynote address          4
4.0 Remarks by GIZ Representative           5
5.0 Launch of Global Standard for CSO Accountability  6
6.0 Consultations on (QuAM) reforms and roadmap  9
7.0 Plenary discussions and reactions from the participants  12
8.0 Closing remarks                          13

ABBREVIATIONS

QuAM          Quality assurance Mechanism
DENIVA.       Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations
UNNGOF       Uganda National NGO Forum
CSOs          Civil Society Organizations
CUSB         Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme
FHRI          Foundation for Human Rights Initiative
A NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DYNAMIC ACCOUNTABILITY FOR A CREDIBLE CIVIL SOCIETY IN SIGHT OF THE SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This dialogue was organized to honor the global accountability week that took place from 12\textsuperscript{th} to 16\textsuperscript{th} November 2018. The aim of the dialogue was to promote civil society accountability by showcasing CSO accountability initiatives from the region and around the globe so as to advance the understanding of the dynamic accountability. The event which brought together 80 participants from CSOs, donors, government and the media was categorized into; (a) Public dialogue on the Importance of dynamic accountability for a credible civil society in the context of the shrinking civic space, (b) The launch of the Global standard for Civil Society Organizations Accountability and (c) Consultations on the NGO Quality Assurance Certificate Mechanism (QuAM) reforms and roadmap. The discussions in each session were lively with contributions from a wide range of participants. The purpose of this report is to summarize the main points made during the national dialogue on the importance of dynamic accountability for a credible civil society in sight of the shrinking civic space.

2.0 OPENING REMARKS

The national dialogue was opened by Hon. Idah Mehangye, the UNNGOF chairperson who applauded DENIVA and other partners that initiated, set up and breeding of QUAM. She noted that QUAM is a tool that will help enhance CSO credibility in the country and thereby called upon all NGOs to embrace QUAM for purposes of “cleaning up their houses.” The chairperson UNNGOF also noted the national dialogue as a platform for Uganda’s QUAM to link with other Global networks championing CSO accountability which in the end creates avenues for learning.
Hon. Idah Mehangye, the UNNGOF chairperson giving the opening remarks during the national dialogue on the importance of dynamic accountability for a credible civil society in sight of the shrinking civic space on Thursday 15, November 2018 at Hotel Protea in Kampala.
3.0: THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Livingstone Ssewanyana, the Executive Director of FHRI giving the keynote address during the national dialogue on the importance of dynamic accountability for a credible civil society in sight of the shrinking civic space on Thursday 15, November 2018 at Hotel Protea in Kampala.

Origin of Civil Society

The keynote address to the dialogue was given by Dr. Livingstone Ssewanyana who is a UN Independent Expert and the Executive Director of Foundation for Human Rights Initiative. He explained the derivation of Civil Society elaborating that civil society comprises of three spaces that dominate society and this includes the family, market and the state. According to Dr. Ssewanyana the free space that exists between the three spaces is termed civil society. This space is greatly contested for by religious Organizations, political parties, corporate associations and the state itself. Dr. Ssewanyana noted that there are 2 types of civil society i.e. Civil society one and Civil society Two. Civil society one doesn’t contest with the state as it focuses more on its members for instance Fathers union, Mothers Union, Funeral Clubs, Sports clubs among others. While civil society two includes those that engage the state for accountability.
What is Dynamic Accountability?

According to Dr. Ssewanyana dynamic accountability is about three aspects i.e. inclusion, participation and embracing feedback. However this is affected by power imbalances from the state, the donor, the community and the governing bodies. To achieve dynamic accountability therefore calls for autonomy, trust and credibility of the sector. Dr. Ssewanyana noted that global standard for accountability focuses mainly on achievement of results and creating lasting impact thus leaving a few questions unanswered i.e. (i) What change do you want to achieve, (ii) what approach/ideology can help you achieve the desired change, and (iii) the processes taken to achieve change. He therefore stressed that for CSOs to achieve change, it would require durable partnerships/collectiveness and also transformative strategies. He also emphasized the need for CSO sector to be vibrant, credible and effective if it’s to engage the state for change. He further urged CSO’s to carry out research and planning so that they can have the moral authority to come out and challenge the government to make it accountable to the citizens.

He also pointed out the need for civil society organizations to compete for visibility by fighting so that services can be rendered to them since nothing can be given on a silver platter. Civil society organizations were also encouraged to position themselves in a manner that brings the people that they serve closer to them so that they can amplify their voice and make their concern part of their agenda. He thus recommended the Istanbul principles which focus on inclusion, human rights, democracy, participation, transparency and accountability among others.
Ms. Ricken Konstanze, the Head of Component GIZ-CUSP giving a remark during the national dialogue on the importance of dynamic accountability for a credible civil society in sight of the shrinking civic space on Thursday, 15 November 2018 at Hotel Protea in Kampala.

Ms. Ricken Konstanze, the Head of Component GIZ-Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (CUSP) noted that the global standard for CSO accountability would not only improve CSO credibility but also build trust amongst state and non-state actors. She acknowledged accountability as one of the pillars that strengthen CSOs. Ms. Ricken also challenged CSO actors to walk the talk by practicing and promoting accountability. She further noted that the global standards came at the right time when the space for CSOs is shrinking which calls for critical reflection on how to strengthen CSO systems.
5.0 LAUNCH OF GLOBAL STANDARD FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ACCOUNTABILITY

Catherine Kanabahita giving a presentation during the national dialogue on the importance of dynamic accountability for a credible civil society in sight of the shrinking civic space on Thursday 15, November 2018 at Hotel Protea in Kampala.

The launch of the global standard for Civil Society Organizations Accountability was presented by Ms. Catherine Kanabahita, the Executive Director of DENIVA. According to Ms. Catherine civil Society Organizations play a critical role in creating unbiased societies and a healthy planet. They work with multiple stakeholders particularly affected people and partners. Ms. Catherine noted that in order for CSOs to be successful, there is need for them to be in constant dialogue with their stakeholders about what they want, what they have to offer and how they can work together effectively to achieve change. “Feedbacks from stakeholders need to inform decisions of CSOs so that they can both continuously improve their performance and build trusted relationships,” she added.
Background of the global standards

The Global standard is diverse and it came as a result to create certification needs of NGOs globally. Building on the Istanbul principles and the rich experience of the sector, accountability initiators from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean worked together for two years to develop a Global standard which captures a globally shared dynamic understanding of accountability.

The global standards which were launched in nine countries during the accountability week are crafted in a manner meant to improve the CSOs by strengthening their effectiveness, connectedness and credibility. In Uganda, these global standards were created by the two promoters of QuAM who sat together and came up with the best. It will therefore be aligned with QuAM to make a difference and set it apart from other global standard tools. All the CSOs are therefore encouraged to endorse the global tool and get involved in its quest to improve them. However this tool is not to replace QUAM assessments but to act as a referring point.

The Global standard can therefore be used on a voluntary basis as a benchmark by:

- CSOs, CSO networks and advocacy groups to improve their accountability standards and practices.
- Governments and donors to create enabling regulations and funding policies for CSOs
- CSO stakeholders to hold CSOs accountable
- CSOs to enable effective partnerships

Components of the global standards

The Global standard includes 12 commitments and associated key actions that CSOs promise to deliver and against which they can be held to account. The Global standard is written in plain English to facilitate dialogue with stakeholders and communication with the wider public; the commitments are organized into three clusters; what CSOs aim to achieve, their approach to change and their internal practices.

The commitments form an integrated whole, with each informing the other and they are deliberately aspirational; the focus is not only on what CSOs do now but what they can do in future. They call on CSOs to enhance their performance, both individually and collectively and to contribute to a better world. Taken together, they tell a powerful story about the role and added value of civil society, now and in the future.

The table below shows the 12 commitments according to their clusters
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster A</th>
<th>Cluster B</th>
<th>Cluster C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What we want to achieve</td>
<td>Our approach to change</td>
<td>What we do internally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice &amp; Equality</td>
<td>People driven work Empowered &amp; effective staff and volunteers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s rights &amp; gender equality</td>
<td>Strong partnerships</td>
<td>Well-handled resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Planet</td>
<td>Advocating for fundamental Responsive decision making change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasting positive change</td>
<td>Open Organizations</td>
<td>Responsible leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When these commitments are fulfilled, CSOs will establish closer links with their stakeholders, continuously improve their performance, develop trust in turbulent times, strengthen their individual and collective impact, and enhance their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.
Staff of DENIVA and UNNGOF and the development partners pose for a group photo after the launch of the Global Standard for CSOs Accountability in Uganda on Thursday 15, November 2018 at Hotel Protea in Kampala.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS ON THE NGO QUALITY ASSURANCE CERTIFICATE MECHANISM (QUAM) REFORMS AND ROADMAP

Sophie Kange (UNNGOF) giving a presentation during the national dialogue on the importance of dynamic accountability for a credible civil society in sight of the shrinking civic space on Thursday 15, November 2018 at Hotel Protea in Kampala.

What is QuAM?

This presentation was given by Ms. Sophie Kange on behalf of the Executive Director of UNNGOF. QuAM is made up of an assembly that consists of promoters and distinct networks. The networks have membership and some are invited for strategic reasons. It was built out of moral high ground for and by NGOS. DENIVA and UNGOF have initially been the promoters of infrastructure and resources for QuAM.
QuAM reforms and roadmap

There is need to create the QuAM council which will have seven members voted by the QuAM assembly. A memorandum is being amended but the requirement to join the QuAM assembly depends on the question whether you are a network or not. All organizations must be quammed and must believe in QuAM to get access to join the QuAM Assembly. Therefore each organization is quammed but represented individually at the assembly.

Feedback from the participants on QuAM reforms and roadmap

The participants suggested for improvement of the QUAM assembly by; (i) increasing the number of QuAM promoters, (ii) having clear responsibilities in the QuAM Assembly, (iii) having all organizations in the network quammed and, (iv) having QuAM organizations in the assembly.

The Participants were then grouped into 4 groups consisting of; Central, Northern, Western and Eastern region. The groups’ assignment was to discuss and give feedback on the proposed road map but also identify Institutions to host regional consultations on the QuAM process.
The table below shows the outcomes of the group discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Identified institution to host the consultations</th>
<th>Proposed reforms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Northern | CEFORD | • The host organization should be QuAMed, have capacity (resources, infrastructure),  
| | | • Should commit to host QuAM.  
| | | • QuAM committee should always consult the communities for feedback. Staff should be subjected to different tool |
| Central | HURINET & Kalangala NGO Forum | • Register QuAM as a legal entity, members should contribute to QuAM financially, technically so as to leverage on different members’ expertise.  
| | | • The desire for a fully functional secretariat with an experienced coordinator  
| | | • UNNGOF and DENIVA should have permanent positions on the QuAM council  
| | | • Develop a media engagement strategy  
| | | • Have standard operating procedures  
| | | • Plan for compliance assessment after the first assessment |
| Western | Kibaale CSO Network in partnership with AICM-Kabale, COVOID-Rubirizi and KICK-Uganda | • There is need to hold regional dialogues on QuAM in addition to the national ones.  
| | | • Committees at the sub national level need stronger capacity not waiting for the QuAM council  
| | | • There should be independent assessors that are not biased. This can be done by inter-changing assessors from one region to another.  
| | | • Hold regular interactions between QuAM secretariat and sub national organizations |
Eastern African Foundation for Civic Education - Tororo

- There is need for regular visits to QuAMed organizations, this call for a strong monitoring mechanism.
- Register QuAM as a legal entity
- Develop a charter for QuAM (guiding document)
- There is need for QuAM that everyone desires
- Engage legal experts to guide CSOs
- Constitute sub regional QuAM committees and empower them; this will also increase QuAM visibility.
- Re-align QuAM to the NGO Act 2016
- The QuAM assessment process should be fast.

**QuAM action plans and milestone**

The action plans and milestones of QuAM were presented by Ms. Catherine Kanabahita, the Executive Director of DENIVA. According to Ms. Catherine the team at DENIVA and UNNCOF made evaluation to find out what it feels like to be aligned with the Global standards. They carried out a retreat for the board members, carried out assessments of minutes of 30 NGOS and refined ideas on how to improve QuAM.

In their evaluation, they noted that QuAM needs to;

I. Have regional consultations yearly

ii. Engage the government on how to collaborate

iii. Create financial sustainability for CSO

iv. Request for a donor conference

v. Hold an award ceremony together with the national assembly.

vi. Develop the second assessment tool and concept paper on the process, structure and obligations of QuAM members.

vii. Develop QuAM IEC materials.

viii. Strengthen partnerships and networking.
ix. Convene donor conference with CSOs.

x. Organize QuAM council meeting.

xi. Convene a National level dialogue on QuAM

Ms. Kanabahita also noted the need for the QuAM council to certify the quammed organizations and have control over both the QuAMed and unQuAMed organizations in the same civic space. She further encouraged the CSOs to change their mindset and start thinking globally.

7.0 A PLENARY DISCUSSIONS AND REACTIONS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS.

A number of perspectives emerged during the general discussions. Several participants noted the need for credibility and accountability of the civil society organizations.

Ms. Jane Nakintu the member QuAM council applauded that QuAM initiative as a tool that helps in building strong institutions. She called for a stakeholder dialogue for the QuAM initiators to get back to the drawing board and re-define QuAM so as to help rebuild integrity and values in the CSO sector.

Dr. Maria Matembe, another participant urged the Civil Society Organizations to have moral ground to question what is right. She also advised CSOs to stop fearing.

James from Mbale, a participant said that NGOs are receivers from donors and therefore there is need for donors to be Quamed so that they are ethical and give money with an authentic moral background. He also called upon CSOs not to get tired of donor fatigue.

Dennis questioned what CSOS are being restricted for that is causing the shrinking civic society space and wondered what could be done so that the government has no power over the CSO’s

Susan Okware talked about issues of credibility and accountability and echoed on the need to have NGOS accountable for the work that they do. She lamented that the credibility of most NGOS are wanting and thus there is need for them to reflect on their credibility.
8.0 CLOSING REMARKS

The closing remarks was given by Hon.Idah Mehangye who started her career in the CSO sector after being inspired by the awareness and strength of co-operatives groups. According to Hon. Mehangye a strong organization should have strong roots, members and results. She was delighted that QuAM was picking up but proposed for
the need to organize a forum for when things have gone wrong to act as a platform for discussions on the way forward. She applauded the development partners and cautioned CSOs not to let them down.

Workshop participants of the national dialogue on the importance of dynamic accountability for a credible civil society in sight of the shrinking civic space on Thursday 15, November 2018 at Hotel Protea in Kampala.