

ForUM's international engagement 2011-2015 and the way forward



Participants at a Pre-Conference of Parties (COP) workshop in Doha, Qatar in November 2012. ForUM was co-sponsor.

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CONTENTS

Introduction	3
I. Methodology and limitations	3
II. Background on ForUM's role, results reporting and international engagement	4
<i>ForUM's history and role</i>	4
<i>Documenting ForUM's results</i>	4
<i>How does ForUM's strategy for 2011-2014 address LMIC aspects?</i>	5
<i>ForUM's unique global role</i>	6
<i>Challenges and perceptions shaping ForUM's work</i>	6
<i>How to report on ForUM's cooperation with LMIC partners?</i>	7
<i>How does ForUM engage with LMIC partners? The review's hypothesis.</i>	7
<i>Bringing forth perspectives from the South</i>	8
<i>How to meet Norad's reporting requirements on societal impact?</i>	8
III. Review questions - Responses address the output level	9
1. <i>Knowledge exchange and policy development</i>	9
2. <i>Political advocacy and conference participation by partners in the South</i>	11
3. <i>Partners in low- and middle-income countries contributing to Norway's debate</i>	14
4. <i>Processes around regional pre-meetings before international summits</i>	15
5. <i>Participation in and learning from meetings in low- and middle-income countries</i>	16
6. <i>Meetings between LMIC stakeholders and Norwegian parliamentarians</i>	17
7. <i>Meetings between LMIC partners and Norwegian politicians</i>	17
8. <i>Meetings between LMIC civil society and Norwegian trade delegations</i>	18
9. <i>Use of ITC and social media to include LMIC perspectives</i>	18
10. <i>Engagement of Diaspora in Norway in ForUM's work</i>	18
11. <i>Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues</i>	18
12. <i>Balancing achievements with expectations</i>	19
IV. Recommendations	19
✓ <i>Working with partners</i>	19
✓ <i>Norway as investor</i>	20
✓ <i>Cross-cutting issues</i>	20
✓ <i>Diaspora engagement</i>	20
✓ <i>Communications and ITC</i>	20
✓ <i>Translation</i>	21
✓ <i>Reporting</i>	21
V. Conclusion	21
VI. Annex	22
<i>Documents reviewed</i>	22

Introduction

This desk review takes stock of ForUM's cooperation with partners in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC¹) from 2011-2015, highlights best practices, results and challenges, and recommends how to move forward with the cooperation and reporting. Key points from narrative reports and articles by ForUM and LMIC partners will be presented in the review.

ForUM's five advisors spend an estimated 15 per cent of their time managing the earmarked NOK 500,000 cooperation with LMIC partners annually. With these efforts and funds, ForUM supports long-term partners based on their political goals and their level of professionalism, deliverables and representation. The support is meant to promote common policy development, mutual capacity building and practical advocacy through studies, analyses, participation in international meetings and joint events. Additionally, most, if not all ForUM activities include or draw on expertise or resources from LMICs, as the review will show. Showing the difference and synergies between the stand-alone funding of 500,000 NOK and ForUM's mainstreaming and promotion of LMIC issues and expertise is one of the components of this review.

There are several reasons for the review: ForUM wishes to compile and analyze its cooperation with LMIC partners and to increase the reporting on and visibility of this engagement. The exercise is also a response to a request from ForUM's principal donor, Norad, for more information about ForUM's engagement with LMIC partners, and results of this cooperation. Findings of the review may feed into the debate following a multi-stage [study](#) Norad launched in 2012 of eight Norwegian umbrella and network organizations, which includes ForUM. With the study Norad sought to assess the contribution of networks such as ForUM in achieving poverty reduction, increased democracy and respect for human rights.

I. Methodology and limitations

The review examines if the eight goals for ForUM's cooperation with partners in the South in the 2011-14 "Adjusted Multi-Annual Plan" have been met. It is worth noting that these goals appear realistic and in tune with ForUM's role and that they are on the "output" level. In addition to the eight goals being examined, the review analyses four additional questions. The list is not necessarily exhaustive. The review is limited to analysis of annual reports, strategies, narrative reports from partners, thematic reports, write-ups of internal reflections and materials on ForUM's website. The work takes place over a three-week period with some additional days for discussing with and receiving feedback from ForUM.

¹ LMIC and "the South" are used interchangeably in this paper.

II. Background on ForUM's role, results reporting and international engagement

ForUM's history and role

ForUM was formally established in 1993 by member organizations active in the Norwegian Campaign for the Environment and Development (Felleskampanjen). The Campaign raised awareness about the 1987 "Our Common Future Report" by the [Brundtland Commission](#) and the UN Conference on Environment and Development, the "[Earth Summit](#)", in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. □

ForUM's goal from the outset has been to [raise the profile](#) of the Global South and the interconnectedness between development and the environment. On its [website](#), ForUM says: Our way of working shall "promote the perspectives of civil society in the South in development policy making." According to the work plan for 2011-14, "ForUM cooperates with international networks (which include South-based networks) in all thematic areas."

Today, ForUM has 48 member organizations, all in Norway. ForUM's [website](#) presents this goal first: "Facilitate a common policy regarding international environment and development." ForUM receives 88 per cent of its funding from Norad (Chapter 160.70), while the Ministry of Climate and Environment and membership fees cover the rest.

ForUM has evolved from being a meeting place for policy debate to a policy forum seeking to influence development policies through coordinated advocacy and lobbying. ForUM is a network and an "agenda setter", providing government officials and politicians with consolidated, high-quality policy positions from civil society. One might say that ForUM has had a head start on a number of newer Norwegian think tanks that over the past years have begun to address development issues. How ForUM may maintain a leading role in this field in the future is an issue for this review.

Documenting ForUM's results

It is a tall order, not to mention impossible, to prove a direct results chain between ForUM's analysis and advocacy effort and the stipulation that Norway's Parliament gave in the national budget (St. Prp. 1), namely that funding received by, among others, ForUM should lead to "reduced poverty, increased democracy and respect for human rights through a strong civil society".

FORUM'S WORK ILLUSTRATES THE NORWEGIAN SAYING "MANY BROOKS MAKE ONE BIG RIVER", MEANING THAT FORUM'S ANALYSIS AND ADVOCACY ARE A NECESSARY PART OF NORWAY'S BROADER INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT.

In addition, Norad's internal rules stress that the target groups are civil society organizations in the South, and the poor and marginalized groups that these

organizations work for, and that funded activities must take place in countries on the list of countries qualifying for Official Development Assistance (ODA).

On a global level concrete results have been achieved where ForUM's networking and advocacy efforts played an important role in shaping the content and garnering support. Examples include the [Arms Trade Treaty](#) of April 2013 that to date has 130 state signatories, the [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#) that 195 countries signed in December 2015 and the UN's adoption in 2015 of [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#). Whether a signed international agreement such as the Arms Trade Treaty qualifies as an output or outcome could be up for discussion, but generally the effect of an agreement on people's lives, not the agreement itself would count as "outcome" when measuring results. The Treaty will have clear consequences for national policies on arms exports, and ultimately reduce irresponsible weapons exports that fuel conflict and human rights abuses.

How does ForUM's strategy for 2011-2014 address LMIC aspects?

The strategy presents eight focus areas for ForUM's work:

- Climate and energy
- Finance and Reform
- Corporate social responsibility
- Trade and WTO
- Peace and human security
- Food security
- Freshwater and sanitation
- Aid and development policy

Of the five political expected outcomes in "Climate and Energy" and that are reported on, four address actions that the Norwegian government should do. Only Outcome 4 is about partners in low- and middle-income countries: "Active and competent partners in select countries and regions in the South advocate for the needs and viewpoints of poor and marginalized groups in national and international climate debates.

All four expected political outcomes in "Finance and Reform" are geared toward Norwegian authorities. Of the five expected political outcomes under "Corporate Social Responsibility", the first addresses both national and international government cooperation, while the rest relate to the Norwegian government and administration. Under "Trade and WTO", three of the four expected political outcomes concern the Norwegian government. The expected outcome concerning LMICs reads: "Civil society organizations in the South have more influence on national and international trade policy".

Under the "Peace and Human Security" headline, all three expected political outcomes target the Norwegian government. Another topical area is "Food security". Of the six expected political outcomes, the first calls for participation from civil society in a strengthened Committee on World Food Security, while four address Norwegian authorities and one takes up an issue to be handled at a UN climate conference. "Water and Sanitation" has three expected political outcomes,

all geared toward Norwegian authorities. Under “Aid and development policy” all four political outcomes relate to Norway’s decision makers, while only one of the ten output goals addresses LMIC partners directly: “ForUM will ensure that a wide range of Southern representatives gets involved in this debate.”

ForUM’s unique global role

The review shows how every ForUM activity embodies Norway’s official development cooperation goals of reduced poverty, increased democracy and respect for human rights through a strong civil society. ForUM is spot on in terms of strengthening civil society, as it is a supporter, networker, clearing house and advocate for civil society expertise and voices from the South.

Unlike several other Norway-based humanitarian and development organizations such as Save the Children, The Norwegian Refugee Council, CARE and Norwegian People’s Aid, ForUM does not have direct beneficiaries among the most destitute groups such as displaced persons or others whose right to food, shelter, health care, education and security have been violated. Reporting on how many persons have received food, education, pre-natal care, mine-cleared fields or legal aid due to ForUM’s advocacy efforts would be mere guesswork and is outside its range. Nonetheless, ForUM’s beneficiaries of the annual 500,000 NOK are selected because they help to carry the voice of vulnerable groups in their country or communities. Without ForUM’s support, these LMIC representatives might not have been able to speak and lobby at international conferences and a number of studies with local perspectives would have remained unwritten.

Challenges and perceptions shaping ForUM’s work

An interesting challenge is how ForUM and its members best may add value and knowledge to policy making in a world where academic and professional expertise about specific LMIC issues increasingly is shifting its weight from the global North to the South. At the same time, technological advances and migration have made communication between all parts of the world easier and nearly independent of national borders. How ForUM can take advantage of such developments could be a topic for follow-up discussions of the review.

As global interaction and interconnectivity grow, so does the need of Norwegian businesses, civil society and government to understand and adapt. ForUM fills such a need, by providing knowledge and analysis via its national membership and international network. Therefore, it is important to spell out how ForUM brings viewpoints from low- and middle-income countries into Norwegian and international fora, as this was the main reason why it came into being in 1993. “Promoting the perspectives of civil society organizations in the South into development policy making” is the first point under “Our ways of working shall contribute to” on ForUM’s website about itself. It is important to stress that ForUM uses input and participation from LMIC partners in all work areas, and this review will describe how this has been done.

It is a paradox that as LMIC expertise about development issues steadily increases, ForUM’s reporting and strategies emphasize less its initial role as a channel for

perspectives from LMIC countries to reach Norwegian and international policy makers. Advocating for perspectives of LMIC partners could for instance be an expressed goal for the communications activity. New technologies for sharing and editing texts and recording video and sound and posting on social media have made this easier than it was just a few years ago. Entire networks may also be built via closed or open Facebook groups and the equivalent on Twitter.

Intriguingly, in a questionnaire reply to Norad dated 17 January 2014 diversity among ForUM's membership is labeled "barrier in the North" to ForUM's role as agent of change: "A diverse membership with differing opinions and agendas may hinder consensus in certain policy areas." This needs analysis, since diversity here does not refer to ethnic diversity but rather the variety of issues the members cover. There are very few staff or board members with LMIC origins or links among ForUM's 48 members. Ethnic and cultural representation here could be relevant for a network dealing with development issues in LMICs. Finding consensus in diverse groups is a challenge no matter what type of diversity, probably. ForUM and its members seem to limit themselves to tackling their current diversity reality, which is one of issues and to a much smaller degree multicultural backgrounds of their staff. It is a pity if finding consensus among the 48 member organizations is seen as such a barrier that ForUM struggles to be an "agent of change". This barrier might also impede ForUM in taking on further diversity in the shape of staff with origins in the South. Since ForUM's goal is to advocate in behalf of voices from the South, it seems very relevant to set a goal to recruit people hailing from LMIC countries and to encourage the 48 member organizations to do the same. This issue is discussed in more detail in the recommendations section under "Diaspora engagement."

How to report on ForUM's cooperation with LMIC partners?

Materials provided for the review and ForUM's website show that cooperation with LMIC partners and/or advocacy for LMICs' rights and perspectives is included in nearly every section of the annual reports and other documents and web articles. However, the annual reports describe specific activities and outcomes related to cooperation with LMIC partners on less than a page, as part of reports that total up to 40 pages. A final report to Norad covering 2011-14 has the same trait, with LMIC cooperation and issues blended into nearly all narratives and outcome reporting. Here too, there are a small number (four) of goals and outcomes addressing LMIC issues in particular. This way of reporting could give the impression that a majority of ForUM's goals and outcomes do not include cooperation with LMIC partners; however ForUM usually engages LMIC partners even if it is not described at the outcome/impact on society level.

How does ForUM engage with LMIC partners? The review's hypothesis.

The review gives an opportunity to demonstrate why a network such as ForUM may exert positive influence on important processes, both at international, national and grassroots levels, that aim to reduce poverty and enhance democracy and respect for human rights. Concrete examples show how ForUM uses the expertise of its networks in LMICs to achieve sustainable and accountable policy and practice in areas such as *business, financing for development, Norway as investor, climate, food security and arms trade.*

- ✓ A hypothesis for the review is that each ForUM goal and corresponding activity is underpinned by professional input from LMIC-based organizations or individuals and that ForUM takes LMIC perspectives into account in all analysis and advocacy.
- ✓ If the hypothesis holds true, the review can be added to documentation of ForUM's role as channel and promoter of LMIC perspectives in Norwegian and international debates on development and environment.

Bringing forth perspectives from the South

ForUM's advancement of LMIC issues and perspectives has been ingrained since the beginning 23 years ago, to the point that its staff may not find it necessary to flag this in every report, seminar or article. This is understandable, yet it poses some problems:

- a) With LMICs becoming increasingly adept at addressing their own problems, growing education levels in the South etc., aid/development organizations based in industrialized countries are constantly under scrutiny for their added value. Someone becoming acquainted with ForUM today and who does not have time to read up on the history, goals and results of the network may overlook ForUM's built-in and consistent advocacy in behalf of vulnerable groups in LMICs;
- b) How global challenges affect Norway and its interests abroad, such as aid, trade investments and Norfund's investments are often high on ForUM's agenda. To an outsider this could be misinterpreted to mean that LMIC concerns come second, however ForUM always promotes practice that will increase accountability to LMIC stakeholders in these activities. The review will give examples of this; and
- c) ForUM's work may appear to be focused on Norway because ForUM's main advocacy target are Norwegian authorities. The Secretariat lies in Oslo, funding comes from the Norwegian Government and membership fees from Norwegian civil society organizations. Yet, of the 48 members, 22 of the full members are involved in development work in the South. It appears as if ForUM's staunch advocacy for policy and action benefiting justice and sustainable development mainly in LMICs becomes somewhat overshadowed by the visibility of its work to influence Norwegian decision makers.

How to meet Norad's reporting requirements on societal impact?

ForUM's overarching goal is inextricably linked to Norwegian foreign aid's objective of fighting poverty and increasing democracy and respect for human rights. Yet a network such as ForUM will face problems in attributing concrete societal impact to its analyses and advocacy. ForUM is part of a larger effort to achieve responsible and accountable policy on global development and environment issues. Norad asked for, but did not require the results report 2011-14 to focus on outcomes/society impact. The agreement signed with Norad for the same time period formulated goals mainly on the output level. Descriptions of ForUM's research and advocacy cooperation with LMIC partners do not fit easily into an outcome level. Some results in or near the "outcome" realm are reported where

LMIC civil society are involved, an example being the concerted campaign that led many countries to sign the Arms Trade Treaty. Massive survey and research efforts that surpass the scope of this review would be necessary in order to measure if ForUM's work directly caused societal impact in all its thematic areas. It is understandably also hard to report on outcome/effect results since these were not set as goals for 2011-2014.

It should be kept in mind that ForUM's main advocacy targets are Norwegian authorities, and that the results chain that ForUM is able to and for all practical purposes required to report on stops there. ForUM is not responsible for politicians' decisions to act or not on ForUM's advice. In a similar vein, it is beyond ForUM's onus to ensure direct impact on civil society and the lives of people in LMICs; however, gleaning their perspectives is key to ForUM's analysis and advocacy. The review gives a clearer picture of how ForUM balances its own goals with the expectations of its donors and partners.

Norad's request for more reporting on engagement with LMIC partners and results of such cooperation can be seen in light of the approximately 500,000 NOK that is spent on partnerships with LMIC partners annually. A more thorough reporting on these activities and results than what has been included in annual reports and the results report to Norad appears to be justified. A review such as the one at hand, is therefore pertinent.

III. Review questions² - Responses address the output level

1. Knowledge exchange and policy development

Has the cooperation with LMIC partners contributed to exchange of knowledge and a coordinated policy development with selected LMIC partners and via international networks ForUM and the partner jointly are part of?

- ✓ Yes. Such efforts are at the core of ForUM's activities and have been steadfast in the reporting period. An illustration is the cooperation with and support over several years of the international Climate Action Network. ForUM's climate group is the NGOs meeting point when it comes to international climate policy. A [report](#) on the Pre COP Workshop 2, November 2012 outlines how 50 participants from the South were trained on advocacy and networking while presenting 20 of their own case stories. By developing a concerted advocacy policy on climate issues the participants and ForUM were able to use examples and initiatives at the national and regional level to influence the policy processes. There was gender balance among the participants, however cross-cutting issues were not mentioned in the report.
- ✓ Knowledge shared and documented at workshops such as the one in November 2012 and similar engagement with civil society in LMICs are

² The first eight questions are the same as the eight outputs listed in the "adjusted multi-annual plan for ForUM for 2011-2014". The last four questions have been made specifically for this review.

crucial for ForUM to write policy papers. As a purveyor of LMIC civil society perspectives, the workshops ForUM funds feed facts and perspectives into major documents such as a 13-page [analysis](#) published before the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa in July 2015. Stakeholders including the Norwegian and other governments, international actors, civil society and media may draw on the insight and recommendations in ForUM's reports.

- ✓ Cooperation with NGOs in other countries through NGO networks including Afrodad and Latindad has been central to progress in the work on development financing and reform. Developing common ideas about solutions and joint action strategies have been crucial for achieving the goals.
- ✓ For ForUM as board member of the Control Arms Coalition it has been a priority to help collect and coordinate action by international civil society and key countries.
- ✓ ForUM has been on the board of the international network OECD Watch (which has most of its more than 90 member organizations in the South). The network has lobbied actively to strengthen and clarify the OECD Guidelines and ensure greater harmonization in how these are used in the different member states. OECD Watch had a central place in the working group that negotiated the Guidelines.
- ✓ Following up on its complaint against Cermaq ForUM arranged a 2-day workshop in Chile in 2012 with approximately 25 participants from NGOs, trade unions and indigenous groups, as well as experts from Peru and Argentina. ForUM used the specific case for providing training in the use of the OECD Guidelines, discussing lobby strategies and building regional networks. In this connection ForUM assessed the extent to which a joint appeal by ForUM, Friends of the Earth Norway and Cermaq had led to visible changes in the groups concerned. The [report](#) was published in English and Spanish. ForUM expressed in its 2012 Annual Report (page 16) its disappointment with Cermaq's follow up to the joint appeal.
- ✓ ForUM collaborated with [Energia](#) (an international energy and women's network) and Norad for a workshop on Energy + and gender in Oslo in May 2012. This was a preparation for Rio+20 where Norway raised the same theme. The workshop provided clear recommendations on integrating gender in partnership dialogues, developments of country programs and the framework for measuring performance. It was specifically pointed out the need for close involvement of women at all levels, "gender-budgeting" gender disaggregated data and developing gender sensitive indicators.
- ✓ ForUM funded a [Workshop on Grievance Mechanisms](#) to address Business & Human Rights in India, New Delhi 30 October - 1 November 2014. The workshop gathered community representatives, activists and civil society organizations to deepen their understanding of the interaction between movements, campaigns and institutional grievance mechanisms.

Participants learned from peers how to improve the lives of those harmed by business-related human rights abuses. It also provided a snapshot of India's business and human rights challenges and context-specific strategies for change. How India may meet international standards was part of the discussion. Practitioners specializing in these mechanisms presented on the National Contact Points of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the accountability mechanisms of international financial institutions, namely, the World Bank Inspection Panel, the International Finance Corporation's Compliance Advisor Ombudsman, and the Asian Development Bank's Accountability Mechanism. Two members of the ForUM secretariat contributed to the seminar and participated in the discussions.

- ✓ ForUM co-funded a six-day OECD Watch [seminar](#) for civil society organizations of Pernambuco and other states in Brazil to expand their knowledge about the various mechanisms to address corporate misconduct. By using the situation at Suape as a detailed case study, the seminar enabled participants to develop practical skills and receive advice from experts in the application of complaint mechanisms to address social and environmental impacts caused by multinational companies. OECD Watch shared its expertise and experience with the OECD Guidelines complaint mechanisms as tool to address corporate misconduct. Expert organisations were invited to provide valuable insights into the general corporate accountability context in Brazil.

2. Political advocacy and conference participation by partners in the South

Has the cooperation with LMIC partners supported policy partners in the South so that they may be active in international processes, both via knowledge sharing, facilitation of joint political advocacy and direct support of their participation in international meetings and processes?

- ✓ Yes. ForUM's support to CAN-International's Southern Voices program enabled them to train a large number of civil society representatives in the South, who may have an important impact on their own governments. For instance, some 40 southern representatives met well prepared for COP 18 in Doha. The program has been very successful - both in nurturing resource persons from civil society in countries in the South who participate in the negotiations, as well as in creating broader and more informed debate in some low- and middle-income countries. (More information about recent CAN cooperation under point 3.)
- ✓ To strengthen the global informational and promotional work that was necessary to gain acceptance for the new international arms trade agreement initiated and funded ForUM new joint sites international civil society on www.controlarms.org in English, French and Spanish (and Arabic from the beginning of 2012) and partially financed a separate campaign conference over 60 participants from 36 countries. Five men and six women from 11 LMIC countries were sponsored to participate in the Global Campaigners Conference in 2011. The most significant output of the

conference was the “Speak Out: Control Arms Now!” campaign which garnered 250,000 signatures globally.

- ✓ ForUM funded translation of lobbying and core campaign materials into French and Spanish before the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (Prep Com) in 2012. The communication activity contributed to the adoption of the ATT. This expanded the reach of Control Arms lobbying, by providing campaigners with the materials they needed to effectively lobby their governments in the weeks before the conference.
- ✓ Throughout the period, ForUM ensured that affected communities and participants from the South could be heard in the negotiations for a new arms trade treaty (ATT). Travel grants brought 20 key ATT activists from Africa, Latin America and Asia to negotiation meetings (several of them were disabled victims of violence who was speaking at the UN), lobby collaboration and side events at the UN. Many of the countries in the South have had weak delegation capacity to resist pressure from powerful countries, primarily in the North who wanted a diluted agreement, while many of these countries in the South are hit hard by irresponsible arms trade.
- ✓ ForUM’s contribution allowed three women from Indonesia, Tunisia and the DRC to attend the DipCon in New York in March 2013. They joined 218 other



Irresponsible arms trade fuels poverty, abuse and corruption. In 2013, the UN adopted an Arms Trade Treaty. The picture shows champions for a lifesaving global treaty: Norway (with poster) surrounded by the Control Arms Coalition including ForUM (with flag).

campaigners from over 75 organizations in 56 countries to successfully lobby and advocate for a strong, effective ATT. The high turnout of campaigners allowed for close cooperation among a wide variety of members and organizations, and provided a unique opportunity for a large portion of the coalition to meet and discuss strategy and future plans. Thanks in part to this cooperation, and the dedication and hard work of Control Arms campaigners more broadly, an ATT was passed on April 2, 2013 with 156 countries voting in favor. This unprecedented achievement would not have been possible without the ongoing engagement of campaigners from all over the world and by providing an opportunity for campaigners from the global south to be present at this historic conference, ForUM helped ensure that the voices of those most affected by armed violence would be heard.

- ✓ ForUM supported documentation and awareness-raising about the relationship between armed violence, irresponsible arms trade and development by financing a report prepared by Amnesty International and IANSA (an international network with large participation from the South).
- ✓ In Rio+20 ForUM hosted a side event "Energy+ International Civil Society Consultation," a dialogue between the Energy+ and international civil society representatives. The meeting developed concrete recommendations for action and suggestions on how civil society should be involved in the collaboration.
- ✓ ForUM attended two rounds of negotiations in New York on the outcome document for the Rio+20 summit. At the last round of negotiations in New



In 2014, a group of 43 Mexican students disappeared in south-western Guerrero state. Their relatives have been searching for them ever since. At the first Conference of Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Mexico, ForUM and Control Arms joined Mexican survivors and civil society in a marking against impunity.

York ForUM held a meeting between LMIC partners and the Norwegian delegation.

- ✓ During UNCTAD's 13th Conference in Doha (2012) ForUM's representative served as a link between what happened on the "inside" of the negotiations and civil society representatives "outside" since Norway was one of only two countries that had civil society representation in the delegation.

3. Partners in low- and middle-income countries contributing to Norway's debate

Has the cooperation with LMIC partners brought their perspectives in a given area into Norway's political debate?

- ✓ Yes. In 2011, ForUM made a complaint against the Norwegian Government's Pension Fund for violating the OECD Guidelines by investing in the Korean company POSCO. This was in collaboration with Indian, Korean and Dutch civil society organizations associated with OECD Watch. Especially the Indian coalition was instrumental in providing facts and documentation.
- ✓ In 2012, ForUM handed over 250,000 signatures to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the global petition "Speak Out: Control Arms Now!" which asked for a strong Arms Trade Treaty. Organizations listed a number of points that they asked Norway not to give up on during the negotiations.
- ✓ ForUM has shared findings of several studies of Norfund investments in businesses in East Africa, including large-scale plantations. There has been disagreement between Norfund and several of ForUM's membership organizations regarding the development impact of such plantations. ForUM has raised the question if this is the best way to use aid funds. Norfund has lobbied for and received a bigger share of Norway's aid funds in the period covered by this review.
- ✓ Throughout the period, ForUM supported Climate Action Network International's Southern Capacity Building Program, and on several occasions during negotiation meetings Norwegian negotiators gained an opportunity to discuss and learn from civil society representatives from the South. Here, Southern climate positions have been presented, and participants have discussed developing countries' specific circumstances. In 2015 two CAN "fellows" (young activists trained in advocacy, coordination and network building in the southern CAN-nodes), one from Malaysia and one from South Africa, contributed at a preparatory workshop before the UNFCCC-conference in June. They brought important perspectives and positions to the table in discussions that involved several government climate negotiators. They also engaged in in-depth conversations with ForUM-staff on climate strategy in the build-up to the Paris COP21.
- ✓ Throughout 2011, ForUM supported Climate Action Network International's Southern Capacity Building Program. On several occasions during negotiation

meetings, ForUM facilitated discussions where Norwegian negotiators could learn from representatives from the South.

- ✓ Green economy turned out to be one of the themes of the Rio+20 process where there was considerable disagreement between high-income and LMIC countries. In Norway ForUM highlighted green economy through a conference in Oslo, with participation of Southern representatives. Representatives of international civil society also participated in a seminar on water, food and energy in May 2012, from which a set of recommendations were presented to Norwegian authorities.
- ✓ As a follow-up to the Rio+20 process ForUM held a debate under the Globalization Conference in November 2012 where International Development Minister Heikki E. Holmås was one of the presenters. The meeting put the spotlight on the outcome of the conference. A representative of Third World Network participated in the panel

4. Processes around regional pre-meetings before international summits

Has the cooperation with LMIC partners facilitated good processes: regional pre-meetings ahead of international processes ForUM wishes to affect, support for their analyses and participation in international meetings?

- ✓ Yes. ForUM funded in 2011 a study of the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) about African Development Bank financing of water projects.
- ✓ In 2011, ForUM financed and facilitated (Page 6) LMIC representatives' participation in Arms Trade Treaty negotiation meetings at the UN and in the annual meeting of the African Development Bank.
- ✓ During a major conference on land grabbing in the U.K. in 2011 ForUM supported the participation of three delegates from the South. All benefited greatly from the conference and took the knowledge with them in their work to halt such practices in their home countries, where large areas of land are being taken over by foreign capital interests.
- ✓ In 2012, ForUM funded a 32-page study of climate change impacts on the lowlands of Nepal ("Effects and Perceived impacts of climate change in lowland Nepal"). The study has been useful for organizations in Nepal, including in their cooperation with the government and in understanding how climate change is perceived by the rural population.
- ✓ Three participants from the South who were sponsored by ForUM contributed to the lobbying that culminated in adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in June 2013.
- ✓ Work with the regional development banks has prioritized the African Development Bank. ForUM organized meetings between African civil society networks and Norwegian political leadership under African Development

Bank annual meetings in 2012 and 2013, and funded African civil society participation and coordination in this regard.

- ✓ The two CAN-fellows sponsored by ForUM were key in organizing debates and civil society input to the national debates in South Africa and Malaysia on the countries' respective INDCs (Intended National Contribution) to the Paris climate agreement.

5. Participation in and learning from meetings in low- and middle-income countries

Has the Cooperation with LMIC partners ensured participation in meetings in the South to gain knowledge about their positions on ForUM's thematic areas?

- ✓ Yes. The need for a greater international and more targeted investment in sanitation was highlighted through the publication of the report "[Sanitation for all: An engine of economic growth for urban Africa in 2011](#)". The report was presented at, inter alia, the Third Africa Conference on Hygiene and Sanitation in Kigali, Rwanda.
- ✓ At the COPs 17, 18 and 19, ForUM organized meetings between the Norwegian delegation head on adaptation, and Climate Action Network's adaptation group. This has been highly appreciated and gave the Norwegians a better understanding of the need for targeted adaptation for the numerous small food producers who are highly susceptible to climate change.
- ✓ ForUM contributed to a continuation of the dialogue project "Sustainable energy investments in the South" in 2011. The project conducted a study trip to Statkraft's hydropower development in Laos, Theun-Hinboun Hydro Power Project in Laos and expansion project Theun-Hinboun Expansion Project (THXP). The team studied the demanding process related to the relocation of 4,000 people from 14 villages as well as compensating the load facility means in the downstream areas. The project otherwise has prepared a comprehensive compendium of international standards that are relevant to development of hydropower projects.
- ✓ Throughout the period, ForUM representatives have participated in meetings in LMICs and in many instances organized joint discussions among civil society representatives from the South and government delegations. An illustration is the participation of ForUM's member organizations The Norwegian Council for Africa (NCA) and SLUG at the UNCTAD Summit in Doha in 2012. The NCA wrote an [article](#) about the conflicting views between North and South, lobbying by involved parties and the agreement that was achieved in the end.
- ✓ Obtaining visa and transit visas for partners from the South to join conferences can be difficult. Several LMIC civil society partners of ForUM member organizations were unable to attend Rio+20 in Brazil in 2012, as this [article](#) explains.

6. Meetings between LMIC stakeholders and Norwegian parliamentarians

Has the cooperation with LMIC partners enabled ForUM to help coordinate meetings between parliamentarians and organizations in the South and Norwegian parliamentarians.

- ✓ Yes, however to a modest degree. Activities include a meeting in Norway's parliament with a Brazilian partner organization (2011).
- ✓ At COP20 in Lima in 2014, ForUM held a meeting with members of the Norwegian Parliament's Energy and Environment Committee where the two CAN-fellows participated, together with other South-representatives from CAN international's "emissions" group, and contributed to an interesting discussion on controlling emissions from developing countries.
- ✓ ForUM has facilitated many meetings between Norwegian delegations to negotiation processes and LMIC partners. However, it has been more difficult to involve Norwegian parliamentarians. This is because Norwegian parliamentarians have not always been present during international processes, and LMIC cooperation has primarily taken place on international arenas and not via visits from LMIC partners to Norway.

7. Meetings between LMIC partners and Norwegian politicians

Has ForUM facilitated meetings between its partners in the South and Norwegian politicians in the government and parliament?

- ✓ Yes. Representatives from the South participated in several of ForUM's events in Norway in 2012, where representatives of the Norwegian government also were present.
- ✓ Of the 18 meetings or seminars ForUM organized in 2013, several had participants from the South and Norwegian politicians. Examples are given under questions (2) and (4).
- ✓ In 2014, ForUM facilitated meetings between Southern representatives and Norwegian delegations in international meetings. Some examples: In connection with the UN climate talks ForUM held five meetings between LMIC representatives and special negotiators on REDD, adaptation and climate financing. Representatives from the South also participated in several ForUM events, including a side event that was held during the annual meetings of the World Bank and the IMF, in cooperation with SLUG, Save the Children and Eurodad. LMIC representatives also joined a conference in October in Oslo, entitled "Norway as investor: Still a pioneer?"
- ✓ In 2015, ForUM funded participants from the South for the Financing for Development (FFD3) conference in Ethiopia, and facilitated meetings between them and Norwegian government delegates and others. An [article](#) describes the activities and outcome.

8. Meetings between LMIC civil society and Norwegian trade delegations

Has ForUM facilitated meetings between Norwegian trade delegations and civil society organizations in the South?

The last time ForUM was part of a Norwegian trade delegation was in or around 2006.

9. Use of ITC and social media to include LMIC perspectives

Has the cooperation with LMIC partners exploited and benefitted fully from advances in technological communication means such as Skype and social media in order to include LMIC perspectives?

All of ForUM's annual reports on the years covered in the review stress that social media and web articles have been used actively to share news and analysis. In the 2013 annual report, ForUM writes that it uses social media also to communicate with international partners. The 2014 annual report says ForUM held regular Skype meetings with Nordic partners. Several of ForUM's staff participated in Skype meetings of the Beyond 2015 coalition, a global network engaging in the SDG process. These links to a [search result](#), an [article](#) about COP, a Twitter [profile](#) and one of its [tweets](#) illustrate web advocacy by some of ForUM's partners in the South.

10. Engagement of Diaspora in Norway in ForUM's work

Has ForUM reached out to Diaspora members and networks in Norway and among LMIC partner organizations?

Yes, to a limited degree. None of ForUM's members are diaspora organizations, but some engage diaspora groups in their own development work. A strategy for engagement with Diaspora groups in Norway is proposed in the recommendation section. As persons of minority and immigrant background are few and far between on ForUM's staff and board, it could be useful to include a diversity recruitment plan in the next strategy.

11. Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues

Has ForUM mainstreamed gender and diversity, climate and anti-corruption concerns³ in its cooperation with LMIC partners?

From the consulted materials it is clear that these cross-cutting issues are part and parcel of ForUM's work. Annual reports and website materials address them at an advanced level, as one should expect from a network that is preoccupied with human rights, the environment and good governance. Reporting could however be done in a more systematic way,

³ These were the three cross-cutting issues guiding Norwegian development cooperation in the period covered by the review.

both to bring more attention to the benefits of integrating these issues in all programs and to meet donors' reporting demands. An example where ForUM could address for instance gender issues more explicitly and with input from LMIC partners is in the area of Norway as an investor. A 2015 [evaluation](#) of Norfund found that "... no systematic gender mainstreaming is conducted as part of the investment cycle." (page xi) The same principles (attached to receiving or managing Norwegian public funding for development cooperation) on addressing cross-cutting issues apply to Norfund as to ForUM, and being a watchdog ForUM could lead the way.

ForUM's commitment to cross-cutting issues is also reflected in having an approximate gender balance of staff, recycling of office materials and transparent accounting reports. In terms of ethnic diversity and representation of persons living with disabilities and other social characteristics, ForUM has a way to go. Suggestions on how to report systematically on cross-cutting issues and how to improve diversity among staff and board members are handled in the recommendation section.

12. **Balancing achievements with expectations**

Has the cooperation with LMIC partners helped to balance ForUM's goals and achievements with the expectations of donors and partners?

Yes, as far as available materials show. As this review and ForUM's annual reports and other materials demonstrate, ForUM and its members and partners give a wide array of inputs to the Norwegian government's position papers, reports and participation in international fora. ForUM's [2013 annual report](#) says Norwegian state secretaries stressed how useful ForUM's expertise and input were to the Post 2015 process (page 14). In a public debate where Norwegian home-grown viewpoints or other Western concerns often dominate, the need for cross-sectorial global networks such as ForUM seems pertinent.

However, the reporting on cooperation with LMIC partners and results could be more specific and systematic, something this review tries to offer in itself and via recommendations for further action.

A useful follow-up to this review could be to interview stakeholders or do a survey about their experiences with ForUM, whether their expectations are being met and what improvements they may wish to see.

IV. **Recommendations**

Suggestions apply to these areas:

- ✓ **Working with partners** a) Think more strategically and systematic about the financial support to LMIC partners. There is room for improvement on how ForUM uses the cooperation with the South in its political and communication effort in Norway. b) Cooperation spanning several years is

recommended, as it ensures predictability for both partners and ForUM. c) Board Membership in key global coalitions may provide better knowledge of consequences in the South and how civil society can contribute, which provides a better basis for policy development and advocacy.

- ✓ **Norway as investor** a) Draw more on LMIC partners that monitor Norwegian investments and their consequences. A partner like Cividep strengthens grassroots involvement, but also performs political work. ForUM could showcase organizations such as Cividep's work in its analyses and on the website and social media. b) Enter into partnership with strong LMIC organizations to enhance the political work in this field. c) There are large numbers of declarations, principles, agreements and outcome documents seeking to improve corporate accountability, such as the UN Global Compact and ensuing initiatives. Although valuable and necessary, implementation is too often lacking. To help these documents become true, practical tools, it may help to launch targeted awareness campaigns using text, audio and video via social media. Businesses wish to keep their reputation untarnished. A company's documented lack of respect for human rights and environmental standards spreads fast on digital platforms including social media. ForUM has a forte in its global network of civil society organizations, which via partners work hands-on to end violations of laws and international standards. ForUM has shown with its study in Chile of Cermaq's subsidiary Mainstream the value of consulting with people directly concerned to get the full picture. Authors of the study interviewed workers, trade unions, civil society organizations addressing indigenous peoples and labor standards, public officials, scientists and more. These discussions revealed Mainstream's less than optimal effort to ensure workers' rights, workplace safety, gender equality and health, and below par handling of fish health and environmental issues.
- ✓ **Cross-cutting issues** ForUM should have a gender policy and collaboration with LMIC partners on the issue. Women are especially underrepresented in decision-making in the South, and are often hardest hit by consequences of climate change, human rights violations, corruption and poverty. A gender policy needs to have clear goals and be supported by an action plan that includes responsible actors, resources, a timeline and accountability framework.
- ✓ **Diaspora engagement** In early 2016, persons of 1st and 2nd generation from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania made up 9,1% of Norway's population, according to Statistics Norway's [website](#). Many are involved in Diaspora organizations that could be asked to contribute to ForUM's analysis and advocacy. A good strategy could be to set up a Diaspora network under ForUM's umbrella. Such a network could give easy, local access to information about LMIC countries' resources and challenges and how Diaspora members engage. Via a Diaspora network ForUM and its 50+ member organizations could also encourage persons with connections to LMIC countries to apply to vacancies, in order to diversify its staff.
- ✓ **Communications and ITC** Develop a communication strategy that stresses communication with LMIC partners and spells out its modalities while maintaining the dialogue with members and stakeholders in Norway. There is huge potential to exploit digital tools more in communicating with LMIC partners and in including their perspectives in ForUM's advocacy. Platforms

like Skype could help to include LMIC representatives in meetings and seminars in Norway, and vice-versa. Seminars may be streamed live via Periscope or Facebook or higher resolution tools for larger events. Quick and free surveys among LMIC partners may be held via Twitter or Survey Monkey, which may feed into ForUM's advocacy. Virtual town hall meetings may be held on Facebook. Free podcasts may be made and shared in social media via e.g. Audioboom and SoundCloud. Quizzes on ForUM's thematic areas may be made and shared publicly via Kahoot!, and may be used in seminars and conferences. Slideshare and Scribd are good platforms for uploading presentations, meeting reports and even videos, in order to share them in social media. Crowdsourcing is a method that could benefit the ForUM network, both in terms of financing, engagement and visibility.

- ✓ **Translation** The English-language website should mirror the Norwegian pages. Visits to ForUM's English-language articles were higher than previously assumed, the 2013 annual report says (page 12). Translation into English of as many articles and reports as possible would be beneficial to partnerships and advocacy, and to ForUM's international outreach via social media. Select translation into Spanish (as was done with the report on Cermaq in Chile) and other relevant languages would also be useful. Translate ForUM's annual reports into English, and other languages as needed.
- ✓ **Reporting** Make the engagement with LMIC partners more central to ForUM's annual report. Include a concise summary of all engagement with partners in the South. In addition, engage LMIC partners directly in ForUM's work on cross-cutting issues, which are often a litmus test of how organizations govern themselves. Highlights from this effort should be showcased on the website and shared widely in social media. Reports could be made using new digital tools to meet stakeholders' and the public's demands for fast, visual or audio communication about complex issues.

V. Conclusion

Materials consulted in the review corroborate ForUM's belief that environment, development and peace policies should be developed in close dialogue with partners in the Global South. Reporting on activities and results shows that ForUM is adept and consistent in this effort. The review's hypothesis hence holds true. Here it is again:

- ✓ A hypothesis for the review is that each ForUM goal and corresponding activity is underpinned by professional input from LMIC-based organizations or individuals and that ForUM takes LMIC perspectives into account in all analysis and advocacy.

Information about activities and results related to cooperation with LMIC partners could however be more pronounced and systematic in annual reports, on the website and in social media.

To further its cross-sectorial work with LMIC partners and advocacy vis-à-vis Norwegian policy makers, ForUM could benefit from adopting a communication strategy that makes full use of digital tools and builds a full-fledged website in

English. Before embarking on a more active and digital communication path with LMIC partners it is crucial to consult with them via interviews or surveys to learn if and/or how they wish this to happen.

VI. Annex

Documents reviewed

Document name	Reviewed y/n	Utility (1 = very useful, 5 = not useful)	Comments
1. Sør-samarbeid, fagmøte nr. 1, 28. aug. 2013	Y	1	Overview of existing partnerships and strengths and weaknesses.
2. Hva sier ForUMs strategi om Sør-samarbeid? 28. aug. 2013	Y	1	Three slides on strategy, added value, ambitions and expectations.
3. Sør-samarbeid fagmøte nr. 2, 4. sept 2013	Y	1	Brings up key issues and challenges in LMIC cooperation. "Must involve LMIC partners more in our work, not just finance reports and activities".
4. FORUM Grant Report: Southern Participation at March 2013 DipCon	Y	1	On advocacy by LMIC participants for ATT.
5. Avslutningsrapport til Norad: ForUM 2011-2014	Y	1	Important regarding the outcome level.
6. Final Report: FIAN Study on Perceptions of Rural Terai Communities on Effects of Climate Change from the Human Right to Food Perspective: A case of Betahani and Sonpur VDCs in Banke, Nepal. December 2012.	Y	1	Data collected from 319 household for analysis on 32 pages of food security of the rural communities from the right to food perspective.
7. Narrative report from advocacy visit to AfDB headquarters on Indigenous Peoples, 2012	Y	1	On safeguards, positive reception by AfDB and Executive Directors.
8. Justert flerårig plan for ForUM, 25. mars. 2011	Y	1	Gives basis for LMIC cooperation and eight output goals.
9. Sør-samarbeid, utkast rapport (2014)	Y	1	Much has been translated and used in this report.
10. Questionnaire response to Norad 17 Jan 2014	Y	1	Useful on ForUM's phases, role as change agent,

Document name	Reviewed y/n	Utility (1 = very useful, 5 = not useful)	Comments
			results and lack of Diaspora members.
11. Mainstream / Cermaq's progress in contributing to sustainable salmon aquaculture in Chile http://www.forumfor.no/assets/docs/Cermaq-study.pdf	Y	1	Good example of obtaining perspectives from various LMIC actors on effects of Norway's investments abroad.
12. Årsmelding 2011 http://www.forumfor.no/assets/docs/ForUM-%C3%85rsmelding-2011.pdf	Y	1	Four short paragraphs about LMIC cooperation on p 5-6. Study was made: "Effects and perceived impacts of climate change in lowland Nepal".
13. Årsmelding 2012 http://www.forumfor.no/assets/docs/rsmelding-2012.pdf	Y	1	4 short paragraphs on p 9 about LMIC cooperation.
14. Årsmelding 2013 http://www.forumfor.no/assets/docs/ForUM-%C3%85rsmelding-2013.pdf	Y	1	Most of the international cooperation occurred in the networks and was to a lesser degree based on funding from ForUM.
15. Årsmelding 2014 http://www.forumfor.no/assets/docs/ForUM-%C3%85rsmelding-2014-ID-37023.pdf	Y	1	Headline on p. 10 is "International Cooperation". The seven paragraphs (including one on Nordic cooperation) may be further elaborated on for the review.
16. Kartleggingsrapport om paraply- /nettverksorganisasjoner 13. desember 2011- 16. mars 2012	Y	1	Activities and results are held up against Norad's stipulation that they should take place in LMICs.
17. FORUM Grant Report: Global Campaigners Conference - February 2012	Y	1	On lobbying by three sponsored participants from the South at 4 th ATT PrepCom and GCC.
18. Report on: Workshop on Grievance Mechanisms to address Business & Human Rights in India, New Delhi 30 October - 1 November 2014	Y	1	Useful on holding businesses accountable for violating human rights, labor standards, and environmental laws.

Document name	Reviewed y/n	Utility (1 = very useful, 5 = not useful)	Comments
			Closely linked to cross-cutting issues including gender, human rights of indigenous peoples, anti-corruption and the environment.
19. Report on OECD Watch Capacity Building Seminar Gaibu (Pernamuco) Brazil, September 2014	Y	1	A six-day seminar with 20 Brazilian participants about corporate misconduct during port construction.
20. Control Arms Final Narrative Report June - Dec 2014	Y	1	Lists successes and some mention of LMIC countries and two LMIC participants in UN 1 st committee. Useful info about gender issues.
21. Strengthening capacity in Southern CAN nodes (140708)	Y	1	Project description, stressing role of young professionals in LMIC as climate policy advocates.
22. Strengthening Capacity in Southern CAN Nodes Narrative Report - January 2015	Y	1	About the development and achievements of three selected Fellows: Adrian Yeo from Malaysia, Neoka Naidoo from SA, and Amit from the Pacific node. No mention of gender perspectives or other cross-cutting issues.
23. From Process to Politics , An Experience-Based history of ForUM as a Network Organization, by Line Aarholt Hegna, 2010	Y	1	Valuable on ForUM's development and dilemmas regarding independence from the state and balancing members' priorities.
24. ForUM's Strategy 2014-2017.	Y	1	Spells out overarching and idealistic goals.