

Demanding Innovation

articulating policies for demand-led research capacity building

An international policy seminar organized by
ECDPM and DGIS (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Development Cooperation)

Maastricht, 10-12 October 2001

Declaration of Maastricht **12 October 2001**

Recognizing that the development of Northern societies is dependent on a well-structured framework of research and an appropriate system of financing;

Recognizing that research has not fulfilled its potential to bring about the sustainable development of societies in the South;

Recognizing that this insignificant contribution of research to sustainable development has resulted to a large extent from the academic orientation of local research and the prevalence of Northern paradigms rather than being oriented towards concrete issues and problems confronting the South;

Recognizing that the capacity of Southern researchers to analyze in a longer-term perspective the pressing issues of their societies is crucial to enable them to solve development problems;

Recognizing that there is often insufficient interaction between researchers and end users in communities and the private sector, intermediaries and policymakers, with the result that many Southern researchers are insensitive to the needs of their societies;

Recognizing that broader communities of Northern and Southern researchers and donors have eloquently argued for the potential contribution of demand-led research to the development and social transformation of societies in the South;

Recognizing that preliminary meetings in the EU on the change in direction of science and technology and meetings of representatives of developing societies in Ghana have taken place and that two complementary DGIS-funded research projects—the RTD Project (See Legon Statement) and the Comparative Study of Donor-Supported Research Capacity in the South underscore the importance, feasibility and effectiveness of demand-led research, and the responsibility of governments and research institutions in the South as well as the donor community involved in development work to support it;

Recognizing that the success of demand-led research for development requires a constituency of like-minded researchers, end users, intermediaries, policymakers and donors to champion it;

Recognizing that the need to build such a constituency led to the organization of the Seminar *Demanding Innovation: Articulating policies for demand-led research capacity building* involving researchers, research users and policymakers from 56 countries with different geographic, political economic, cultural and technological development;

Recognizing that the participants of the Seminar, who met from October 10-12, 2001 in Maastricht, after intense discussion and debate, concluded that capacity for demand-led research in the South is limited and must be developed at all levels;

Recognizing that the participants concurred that donor support for such research will go a long way to ensuring that the South will overcome the constraints to its potential development;

Recognizing that the participants unanimously agreed to issue this joint Declaration in light of their experiences and the conclusions of the Seminar;

Resolve that the researchers and representatives of the private sector, donors, intermediaries and policymakers in the Seminar should build a constituency for demand-led research, committed to the production of knowledge that can address poverty, inequality and environmental degradation as well as the overall development and social transformation of Southern societies.

Further resolve in this regard that the Seminar intends to refine and ratify a Platform of Action that aims to cover the responsibilities, objectives, strategies and activities of stakeholders of demand-led research.

The Platform of Action urges research communities and institutions

- ❑ to enhance the knowledge base in the substantive and geographic areas where they work in a manner consistent with the needs of relevant stakeholders and with the view to ensuring its utilization;
- ❑ to advocate for the appropriate support and infrastructure for demand-led research in institutions of higher learning, autonomous research centers and local communities;

- ❑ to develop appropriate training programmes in order to build a critical mass of demand-led researchers and to refine participatory research methodologies;
- ❑ to establish databases that fully document the results of demand-led research.

The Platform of Action asks governments in the South and policymakers to take full responsibility for the direction of science and technology in their respective countries and for the development of demand-led research by giving support to such research that will contribute to the formulation of policies and the development of mechanisms for prioritizing science and technology-related options;

The Platform for Action also specifies capacity building plans that will empower end users, particularly those in local communities and the marginalized sectors to take full advantage of the knowledge base created by researchers and to translate their needs to demands to the research community and policymakers;

For donors, the Platform of Action emphasizes the following:

- ❑ the need to support development research and to address the asymmetric character of North-South research collaboration by granting greater autonomy for programmes and projects initiated in the South, in the spirit of more trust and less prescription;
- ❑ the conceptualization of and experimentation with structures and mechanisms that could enhance demand-led research;
- ❑ the importance of long-term commitment to mutually agreed upon lines of research and the development of various capacities for demand led research;
- ❑ the value of developing appropriate systems of evaluation and monitoring

For the European Union, the Platform of Action calls upon it

- ❑ to ask the Commission to reconsider recent decisions with respect to the organization and funding of development research in light of the need for and proven effectiveness of demand-led research;

- ❑ to maintain and/or establish effective mechanisms aimed at supporting demand-led research, and intensify the consultations and capacity building underpinning it;
- ❑ to meet with relevant groups to discuss the implications of proposed changes in the EU's system of research funding;

Also resolve that the champions of demand-led research will strive to enlarge the space for meaningful and productive exchange between different actors within communities, across national boundaries and between North and South;

Further resolve to foster participatory and democratic approaches to research at every stage of the process, from agenda setting to enabling social innovation.