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For Immediate Release

Development Issues Shift Sideways as Euro Debt Crisis Overshadows G20

Paris, France (4 November, 2011) - The Eurozone debt crisis has overshadowed development issues as leaders of the world's leading economies continue their talks at the G20 Summit, ending today in the French resort city of Cannes.

Yesterday, President Barack Obama said the European Union had taken "important steps" to address its debt problems and said he hoped that the heads of the world's leading developed and developing countries could "flesh out" details of a comprehensive strategy to resolve the crisis.

Sam Worthington, CEO of Washington-based NGO Interaction says his organisations' key message is simple: "As world leaders try to address the Greek and Eurozone crisis and seek to stabilise the global economy, they must ensure their efforts are inclusive and do not further marginalise vulnerable populations.

"The G20 leaders must take some steps to generate new forms of resources aimed at addressing climate change and development challenges, endorse regulations that limit tax havens and corruption and approve initial steps that advance greater food security. Whether this will be approved in this atmosphere of crisis remains a big question," he says.

The French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, in a meeting at the Elysee Palace on Wednesday with representatives of the international NGO community, promised that climate finance would still feature on the agenda at the G20, despite pressure from countries that wanted to focus on the economic crisis. This, he said, was an achievement in itself and he pledged to ensure that it would remain in the G20 Communiqué, to be issued later tonight.

“The discussions on the issues are difficult and G20 Sherpas have been negotiating until after 3am this week. The text is not stabilised and there is still space for improvement. The debate with emerging countries is not easy,” Mr Sarkozy said.

At the same meeting with NGOs on Wednesday, Mr Sarkozy also agreed that more G20 progress was possible in the area of food security. He said French policies strongly aligned with strong US leadership since the G8 L’Aquila Summit in Italy in 2009 where \$22 billion was pledged for food and agricultural assistance. He said new consensus to reinvest in agriculture remained strong with goals focused on both the amount and quality of food.

Meanwhile, representatives of the Facilitation group of the International Forum of NGO Platforms (IFP), are asking for transparency in the G20, saying the group is “not a replacement for genuinely representative global decision making” and that it must “ensure its meetings supplement, rather than undermine, the work of the UN and other international fora”. The IFP has also stated that the G20 must put in place processes to ensure that it is more accountable for its decisions and should do so in an open and transparent way.

The IFP is also calling on G20 leaders to focus on issues such as agriculture and food security, financial integrity and tax havens, corruption, the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) inclusive and sustainable development and civil society access and consultation. (ENDS)

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